

(about 8, 2000

MAKING MEN AT FORD'S

Impressions in 1915

"There are over 18,000 men down there and there is nothing we could possibly want done that some one of them could not do - or learn to do. The other day we wanted a model of this plant to send to San Francisco. "Go into the Shop and you will find a man who can make it" I told the boys and we did. He spoke little English but he had learned to model in Italy. I'd rather find my man down there and help him to do the thing than to have the most expert outside help possible. You make the men and you needn't worry about your business."

It was Henry Ford talking. From his office window he looked out on a rising wing of a plant 2,000 feet long and covering in its various floors                    acres. The day before that the plant had turned out 1,335 cars; that day there were 18,665 men at work in the factory.

"They come from all over the world" the pleasant voice went on. "There are fifty-three varieties. The last one says he comes from the Garden of Eden, the only one who ever escaped. Made a boat of fourteen goat skins and sailed down the Tigris. What'd you think of that"? Maybe they are ignorant, but they learn and jump at the chance, perhaps they've gone bad but what's that. It don't mean they are bad now. Its nonsense to say a man's always bad because he did something wrong once. He's a different man now. Nobody has a right to say he can't change. He can. Try him. He'll do right if he has a chance and you follow him up. Some of them are more to be trusted

*Handwritten notes:*  
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than many a man who has never broken a law. Besides all the men who break the law aren't caught. There are about 400 men down there who have served terms. We won't give one of them up without a fight. It isn't the men we have to fight, its people that ought to be helping them. Why we are fighting just now to keesone poor fellow at work. He did some fool thing when he was only a boy eighteen years old - some boy trick - was sentenced and paroled, married a girl and ran away, came up here and was doing fine when he was discovered and taken back. We fought until we got him back but they haven't pardoned him yet. Taint right a boy like that. We've been down two or three times to see the governor, but there's politics mixed with it. I'll spend a million dollars to clear that boy. A great state like that refusing pardon to a fellow likt that who is trying to go straight. That's no way to make a man."

I had come to hear the opinion of a man who was proving that abundance and cheapness are the most profitable policies in the world; that the cheaper you can make the price of a good and needed thing the more money you will make. I was hearing the most impressive expression of faith in the common man and his powers, as well as the eternal nature of the spirit within him, that I ever heard in my life. It was the unconsciousness, the of-course-it-is-so nature of it that took your wind. He was not talking a theory he was talking facts and something he was seeing demonstrated a hundred times a day; but I probed him in abundance.

People ought to have things they want - everything necessary. There's no reason why everybody shouldn't if we manage it right, wasn't afraid of making too much of a good thing people want. It's our business to make 'em so cheap that everybody can buy 'em. Take these shears" and he picked up a handsome pair of large shears on his desk, "they sell for three or four dollars I guess. No reason you couldn't get them down to ten cents. Yes, ten cents", he repeated as I gasped. "No reason at all. Best in the world, - so every little girl in the world could have a pair. There's more money in giving everybody things than keeping them dear so only a few can have them. I want our car so cheap that every workman in our shop can have one if he wants it. Make something everybody can have that's what we want to do. And give 'em money enough. The trouble's been we didn't pay men enough. High wages pay. People do more work. We never thought we'd get back our \$5.00 a day. Didn't think of it. Just thought that something was wrong that so many people were out of work and hadn't anything saved up and thought we ought to divide, but got it all back right away. That means we can make the car cheaper, and give more men work and do more things. Of course when you're building and trying new things all the time you've got to have money, but you get it if you make men. I don't know that our scheme is best. It will take five years to try it out but we are doing the best we can and changing when we strike a snag."

This roughly and unsatisfactorily reported is the essence of what I heard Henry Ford saying. But it is only the outside of what I heard. It has none of the amazing simplicity, the mixture of sweetness and of steel, of vision and practical shrewdness, of humor and authority and of belief - belief in men & in nature and belief

in the goodness and rightness of things which were as much a part of the man as his smile, his eyes, and his breath.

I knew what he was doing for men by his amazing application of the theory of abundance. He believed in it as in no other economic theory - abundance - cheapness - freedom of trade. He had not only believed it but had the courage to try it, to prove it and he and his colleagues are going on re-proving it every month of every year with a confidence and daring that is boyish, joyous and revolutionary. But what was he doing with men - the men who carried out the million details of his plan, was it abundance for them? Life and chance for them? The 18,000 down there in the roaring shops from which <sup>the</sup> smoking hot skeletons of the little car sped out, two or three a minute all day, what was he doing with them? "Making 'em" he said. Was he?

Could you make men by the extraordinary and origin-  
seemed  
al plan of which I had been hearing - a plan which as reported/to be  
a mixture of paternalism and autocracy - if not social and economic anar-  
chy? A plan depending on one man's will and many men's notions of the  
private lives of others. I had said "No" to myself and more than one of  
my doctrinaire friends said no. It was paternalism and it was paternal-  
ism that had wratched Pullman and that we all instinctively quoted as a  
final answer to his efforts to make life more tolerable. Certainly this  
was not the paternalism that I dreaded for that was founded on a profound  
disbelief in the capacity of men to do for themselves. This claimed  
that every man, convict, ignorant, weak could do for himself if you  
gave him chances in accord to his individual needs and handicaps.

That is, that you literally could make men - make them out of the flotsam and jetsam of human life.

Henry Ford is not a religious man, that is he does not go to church or contribute to churches, but if this was what he meant it looked as if he had caught the only truth which ever could make permanent the doctrine of abundance he practiced. How was he making men? The rough answer outside was by giving everybody who behaved himself \$5.00 a day and there were fifty or more investigators - "spies" we called them outside - that were actually engaged in discovering and pronouncing on the behavior. It was \$5.00 that I turned to first. Why, when and how \$5.00? About all that I had been told by Henry Ford was that he did not think it was "right" so many should be out of work - that the ordinary wage wasn't a living wage." Little by little I gathered up the story of that \$5.00. It is as Fordesque as the ambition to cut the price of the car until every workman can have one.

*Begin*  
Chapter III. The Plan *Generous and*  
*Simple*  
*Efficient*

It began to take form when <sup>four</sup> three years ago a legal department was established in the plant and a head was put in and told to look around and see what he could do. The new man at Ford's began looking around and at once he saw the crowd at the gates. A citizen of Detroit familiar with all its industries told me that <sup>(4)</sup> three years ago four, five and six thousands were to be seen daily waiting at the Ford factory - every few minutes a man would come out - fired - and as he came out there would come a call for a new man. "Could he run a drill, handle a plane, use a paint brush?" "Sure he could" and he went in. Sometimes he stayed, often he was out in a half a day and another called. "Hired and fired." A hundred, two hundred, five

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hundred a day - that was employment at Ford's three years ago.

In his search for things to do <sup>the new mill</sup> Mr. Robertson

watched and studied pay rolls. At the end of three months he had some figures. The manager of the factory said they couldn't be true. One day Mr. Ford's right hand man, Mr. Couzens, <sup>then</sup> asked him what he was doing, he showed him the figures. They were alarming enough to startle even a stand-pat manufacturer - to a man like Mr. Couzens tingling to his finger tips with the future they were a shock and a condemnation. They showed that to keep up a force of 12,000 men Ford's was hiring 60,000 a year. What did it mean? How could it be corrected? The whole establishment tackled the problem. They cut the hours from ten to nine and raised the wages <sup>15</sup> ~~12~~. They had already made their "conditions" good. They improved them, but the hiring and firing continued as it was.

Somebody analyzed it in this way. There can be but three reasons for our unstable labor force:- conditions, wages and ourselves. Our ~~Conditions~~ are good, our wages the highest. It must be "ourselves" - which is entirely Fordesque. I ventured once to compliment <sup>an officer in the Navy</sup> Mr. Wills on certain revolutionary developments in the foundry. "It is the most wonderful foundry I ever saw" I said with enthusiasm. "It's a rotten foundry" he flung back. "We see one so much better. You must think everything is rotten all the time or you won't be working to do better." And that is Wills and it explains many things at Ford's.

The question then was:- "What is the matter with ourselves". To help find out they sent out on a tour of factories a man in the management, Mr. Lee, a practical steel man with an amazing

bump of human kindness and an instinctive and profound sense of human nature. He came back with the depressing report that "hiring and firing" seemed to be the rule in a great many factories. But he had ideas - his own and other peoples and altogether things were thrashed over until early in January 1914 - the present system was put into operation.

The \$5.00 a day idea of which we have heard so much is an incident in this system. The base of it is the thorough going-over they gave all the multiplied tasks in the concern resulting in their classification according to the skill each required. The making of a Ford car is a highly specialized operation. Each man does one thing and the thing he does travels from his hand to that of the man who is doing the next thing on a never-stopping moving platform or conveyor. If you haven't finished your task it travels just the same. Each task is fitted to the task preceding and the one following as perfectly as one cog in a wheel fits the cog in its sister wheel. It is a stream, a river of efforts all flowing by the shortest course and with the least possible friction and delay to the mouth where at the rate of two or three a minute smoking chassis dart out to meet shining bodies flowing from an upper floor. There are 6500 distinct operations in a car.

A first look at the workers as they swiftly and steadily perform the task, the travelling track on which everything possible is mounted, brings them, gives one an impression of nothing else in the world that I have ever seen so much as an ant heap. And just as it takes study to see that an ant heap is possibly the most perfect co-operative colony in the world so it takes study to see that this plant is not a congregation of unrelated scrambling over-speeded, over-crowded operatives.

The operations are of all grades and in the attack they had made upon their own management their most scientific and significant performance was classifying these operations according to the skill each required. This was not an unheard of thing in factories though it has been unfrequently applied where there are multitudes of so-called unskilled and monotonous tasks. As a result of this study they divided the work of the shops into eight classes. The rates per hour for these classes were fixed at 34 <sup>38</sup>/<sub>κ</sub> 43 - 48 - 54 - ~~61~~ - 68 and 73 cents. When these rates were announced it was also announced that henceforth the factory would operate on an eight hour day. It makes good wages as you see if you reckon it. They ran from \$2.72 ~~to~~ the most skilled class. To my way of thinking the classification of tasks was the most important factor in the new system because it opened way to unskilled men in an intelligent fashion. They see what the job ahead, which draws better pay, is and they, if they have it in them, will work for it.

Along with this classification there went a new and rigid rule about discharge. They had come to the conclusion in their self-examination that floaters were usually the work of an impatient foreman, that not infrequently it was a matter of like or dislike whether a man stayed or went. Moreover a man was given a chance at only one kind of work and often not fairly tried out at that. This was what they discovered and to remedy it they organized one of the most revolutionary employment departments in practice that I have ever heard of.

It provides (and enforces) that a man be given a fair chance in the class to which he is admitted - a month or six weeks is the rule. If at the end of the time he has not reached a certain required output he is - not fired - but transferred to some other machine where he is given a chance. "The poor devils of course say they can do anything you ask them" explained Mr. Couzens. "Any one of us would if we were out of a job and no money in our pockets." And they transfer and continue to transfer until they find something the man can do. "I don't say we fulfil the Bible injunction and try a man ninety nine times, Mr. Robertson told me, "but I think we might if we had time to"!

Along with this new procedure in regard to discharge went, or have gradually evolved, rules in regard to the old and the down and out. Never turn away an old man; never turn away a man that has been branded - this is Henry Ford's rule. Whether it is applied to the letter or not I do not know. There are a great many old men and a great many branded men in the country and even Ford's capacity has its bounds. I do not know that cases of both meet you on every hand. A case in the first group which interested me particularly was that of an "old man", a workman of good record who because of his age had been unable to find anything. "Send him over we'll find something for him" was Mr. Ford's order to the friend who had told of the case. He was put on a job where his back gave out in less than a day. The foreman changed him and again he failed. This happened three times and the man discouraged and weeping said "You see, I'm worn out. Its no use", and he refused to go back. He was ashamed ~~he~~ to do so he said. But if he would not go to Ford's, Ford was ready to come to him. An agent appeared. "We want you"

he said "We'll find work you can do" and they did. "Think of that" he told my informer "1,000 men and they had to have me". Of course they did. Its part of their business.

They find work for the old and they find it for the broken ~~victims~~ victims of drugs and alcohol. "I want to try, I believe I can succeed if somebody will believe in me and be patient" a shaking victim of cocaine told Mr. Hawkins, the head of the sales department, a man who draws \$75,000 a year, ~~has brought the sales of the car up from~~ ~~He has~~ ~~men under him scattered over~~ states and ~~who personally finds time to talk at least once a month with a score of men who are trying to come back.~~

"Baly I must be put where nobody can look at me. I can't be looked at, couldn't you just let me dust around somewhere alone"?

"Of course we could. Don't you worry". Nobody will look at you. We need somebody for just that kind of work". And so somewhere in a corner in that plant a man is slowly but surely coming back. Day by day his hand is steadier, day by day his confidence is ~~stronger-~~ stronger. He knows he won't be forsaken. He knows that if he slips he'll be pulled back, heartened up, and when he's himself there'll be rejoicing and a job among men for him, and nobody will have known of the struggle, and the victory. Nobody but God, himself and Hawkins!

One of the problems of this determination to keep men, fit them to something, never discharge if it can be avoided, comes out of the propensity of the occasional man to be disgruntled. ~~Whenever this~~ ~~is,~~ he is by nature, habit or both cantankerous. He does not like his job. The practice is ~~to~~ change him until it is firmly established

that his trouble is tempermental. The easy and obvious way would be to fire him, but "we're making men, we can't"! Now there is no molly-coddling about employment at Ford's. The heads are not that kind. If a man won't fall in line why it is discipline, punishment he needs and for some time they tried a novel kind. The man who would not accept any one of the several tasks offered was sent to the foundry and put to work next to the infernal clatter of a dozen or more cylinder shakers. He was told that there were plenty of men glad to work there - A month was generally enough to make him beg for his old task. It does not sound exactly pleasant and to one who hears a cylinder shaker for the first time it sounds like torment. It worked out this way. Mr. Lee began to realize that in making this particular work a punishment he was treating unfairly the trade of a large group of valuable men. He stopped it at once on this realization and took his problem to Mr. Ford and here was the solution.

"What that kind of men need," said Mr. Ford "is to help some other fellow. They're got in the habit of thinking only of themselves and of course they think they're the worst treated fellows in the world. The next time you find one put him into a car with an investigator and let him see some real hard luck. Then tell him its up to him to help out one of the fellows you have shown him. Make him spend some of his money. That will cure him."

This entirely unconventional and profoundly human solution is perhaps as good an introduction as one could have to the "Ford's <sup>Trade's</sup> \$5.00 a day paternalism" of which we hear so much at Ford's. And it has about the same relation to the fundamentals in the Ford scheme. These

fundamentals are as I see them:-

A careful classification of tasks from less to more skilled; an hourly graduated wage to fit the task; eight hours a day; no discharging save by the needs of the business; transferring until a task that a man can do is found; considering a man's temperament as a handicap and using your <sup>own</sup> ~~own~~ sense to correct him; finding a place for the old and the branded. That's something of a program as it stands but with it go the features that have made the Ford group as famous as sociological experimenters as they have <sup>long</sup> been as mechanical.

It was inevitable that in their self-examination they should have included some reflections on the relations of their profits to their labor force. Their profits the year that their investigations were crystalizing were tremendous - probably \$24,000,000. As Henry Ford owns 59% of the stock of the Ford Motor Company - the disposition of these profits were in his control. He wanted a share of them to go to labor. He had concluded that the distress he saw was due to the fact that men did not have enough to live on and to get ahead. If they were laid off they were on the street. It wasn't right. He decided to give over \$10,000,000 of the profits of labor. The eight hour day, the classification of service and the increase in wages were features of the profit sharing, though not usually recognized as such by the outsiders. Another feature was adding enough to the wages of workmen who were willing to subscribe to certain conditions to make their daily wages \$5.00 in the first class, \$6.00 in the second, \$7.00 in the third. As the great numbers at Ford's are usually in the classes called unskilled and so came into the \$5/00 group, it was the \$5.00 group

which the public with its dislike of detail seized and remembered.

"Hunkies getting \$5.00 a day" - that is Ford's to the public.

"But why \$5.00"? I happened to ask Mr. Couzens this.

# "Well, he said, "its a good round number, easy to say and there's a bank note of that denomination. I dared Henry to make it that and the way I happened to do it was this. I was reading the January number of the *Metropolitan* Magazine. The editor is a socialist and he was answering a subscriber who had asked him why if he believed in socialism he ran his business along capitalistic lines. He answered that he must if he would live; that you couldn't change anything in business and life unless everybody changed too. "Now", said Mr. Couzens wrathfully, "that's an asinine answer. That editor ought to know that if you wait to make a change until everybody is ready nothing will ever be done. So I came down and dared Henry to make it \$5.00". It is not necessary to know what Mr. Ford said. We know what he did. He never <sup>took</sup> takes a dare evidently. # If he hesitated it probably was on the reflection that making it \$5.00 really meant considerably more to Mr. Couzens with his 11% of stock than to him with his 59%. At all events there was no delay. Four or five days later it was announced that Henry Ford was to divide \$10,000,000 in profits among his employees - giving every man \$5.00 a day. The eight hour day, the high wage, the classified ~~tasks~~ - the \$6.00 for class A, and the \$7.00 for class C, ~~T~~ were overlooked.

It was to be \$5.00 on conditions, and the conditions caught the public more slowly b\_ut quite as grippingly as the wage.

They were "undemocratic", "an interference with private rights", "paternalism" and certainly they sound of all these more or less vague things. The extra money was to be earned and could be earned only by a selected class of labor. No one, man or woman was eligible who could not convince the Ford Motor Company that he was clean, sober, honest and thrifty!

The Ford Motor Company did not take his word for it. It had prepared machinery for investigation through the lives of its employees and it was announced that upon the results of these investigations the profits would be awarded. The departments to which its peculiar work was committed is known as the Sociological Department. At its head is Mr. John R. Lee to whom I have already referred. Under him at the start were 80 investigators as they were called - each equipped with a list of names and addresses and they were also armed with certain common sense advice. Mr. Lee and his lieutenants were all chosen from the shop. Mr. Ford would not have it otherwise. "We are making men. The material is there, bring it out".

Mr. Lee in his previous factory visiting had seen enough of the admirable work women are doing in industry to believe that they would be preferable to men as investigators. Mr. Ford would not have it so. "This work is with the lives and habits of men, many of them rough and drunken". I should not have said in advance he was right, I rather think now he was.

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The investigation spared no one. One of the most distinguished and intelligent citizens of Detroit told me that one day a Ford investigator stopped at his gate. The man looked in bewilderment at the handsome and commodious dwelling, consulted his book, started up the walk, hesitated, looked again at his book and came on. The gentleman understood. One of his sons home from college and wanting something to do had found work at Ford's. His "conditions" were being looked into:- cubic air to a person, sanitation, health, and family relations!

He went out to meet the investigator. "Its all right" he said, "come in and I'll answer for the boy". And he did - gladly. "Its a good thing" he said, "as sound an educational work as goes on in the town. It is purely for the purpose of setting a standard of living for people who never knew one or raising that if those who because of poverty or trouble or bad habits have lowered "that they once held".

This preliminary investigation settled of course, those who were already following the standard of life which Ford had set - 60% of the men were admitted at once to the profits. That is they "graduated" as Mr. Couzens put it to me. I had thrown the word "paternalism" at him. A more individualistic citizen would be hard to find. He hates anything which has the sound of doing for a man what he ought to do, and have a chance to do for himself. The word "Pension" is a red rag to him. "We have no right in this country to allow conditions that make pensions necessary. I hate the word". This feeling helps to explain the \$5.00. "Its not paternalism" he said, "its education." As soon as a man has proved that he knows how to lead a decent life we don't bother our heads about him, 60% of the

men graduated at the start. We are educating the rest. We'll get 'em all in soon"! As a matter of fact they have 90% of them "in" now, i. e. "graduated":

And how? They must be "clean"! ~~natural-right~~ Ford's gives no extra profit to the worker who insists on his "natural right" to "go ditty". Dirt is fought throughout the great plant to the amount of \$60,000 a month, and it shows it. That such work could be done with such order and such cleanliness it is hard to believe. And the authorities mean the men shall match the shop! It has happened in more than one case that a man has gone to his foreman or inspector and asked why he did not get the "big envelope", as that containing the profit sharing is called. "You're too dirty" he is told bluntly. "Look at your shirt, you neck, your hands." There have been transformations wrought there that are startling and actually comic. I shall never forget the spotlessly shining face, and neck and arms of a foreigner of the type that I never before have seen clean either in America or Europe. He looked as unfamiliar as the facade of an ancient church which had been put under the grinder. He had worked hard to effect it. It had involved the family and its habits. But it was done and done for good and all. Clean<sup>li</sup>ness had come to stay in that household - and the profits also.

I doubt if there is another machine shop in the country where there are so few grimy faces, and so many white collars! It took me sometime on my rounds to discover what was "different" in the looks of the men at Ford's. I finally analyzed it into clean faces and white collars!

The attack on dirt is carried into the home. The most delicate case the one that "stumps" the investigator is an untidy and unclean housekeeper. I went with one of them to visit his "hardest case", a woman he was trying to reform. He had been at it for four months and he was game for six more. He will need them and I rather think will win out. This woman, American born, supported by her son, a boy of twenty, had let go every outward decency of life she had ever known. The inspector found her living in a one room shack with two rabbits, several hens, a cat and a dog; filth every where. She is not a bad woman, nor entirely ignorant. She belongs to the shiftless "not over-bright" class. She also has a largely developed sense of "American independence" - the "inalienable right" to be as shiftless and disorderly as suits you. After a month of fencing the investigator called her bluff and set out to force her into decency. In four months he has succeeded in getting her out of the shack and interested in building a little house, in reducing her live stock to a few chickens which she promises to put into a coop as soon as it is warmer, and in making the beds. The last victory she takes pride in. They are made as soon as she and her son are out of their rooms: - and this is partly due to her pride in them each having a room - and the boy: He is so pleased that he works two hours a day on the growing house.

Paternalism? If you will. It seems to be very like the procedure of the "worker" in a social settlement, the investigator of a variety of philanthropic, xaxxi religious and civil agencies. It "looks into" conditions and reports. Its difference is that it comes out of a relation which in most cases is more intimate and personal than even the religious connections of the worker. Moreover the reason for the investigation is entirely personal. The "good" of the

worker is the only excuse - and if the worker does not like it he has escape which is very difficult when any one of the other classes are on his trail. He soon learns that it is not curiosity, creed, the neighborhood or the state for whose good the investigation is being carried on. It is for his good, "I hated you when you began this" I heard a little woman tell an inspector "but I know now you're one of the best friends I ever had".

Generally speaking the women are strong allies of the company. It is not the higher wages that has won them so much as *(the emphasis put on)* there is no attempt to bring men to signing the pledge so far as I know, no interference with the regular glass of beer. Its "getting drunk", which prevents the "big envelope" (the \$5.00 a day) going to a man or taking it away. There are numberless cases of men picked out of the gutter - put through a "cure" and now on the straight road. They will go to any length in their war on the liquor habit. Mr. Lee, the head of the Sociological Department says emphatically "we'll do anything". He tells of one case where a man who had boldly made himself drunk in the presence of an investigator was carried bodily to a cure. Today, so far as one can tell, he is forever done with liquor. "Sating out of his wife's hand" he was described to me! The loyalty of that wife to Ford's is eternal.

The man once cured has, too, nothing but gratitude. One of the most wonderful temperance lectures I ever heard was from a man of thirty who had been brought into line through the determined efforts of a Ford investigator. He was a clean, fresh boy still solemn

Society: True

when I was a boy with the wonders of his redemption. "Lady" he said, "if, somebody had talked to me as these people have, if there had been anybody to be interested in me like they are, I'd have money enough laid up to live without working. I'm a good workman, always was when I was sober, but generally I was in the gutter. I wasn't happy, no drinking man is. When I went home nights nothing looked right to me. I didn't like the way my supper tasted and I didn't like my wife's looks. I was breaking down too, I hadn't a friend. Talk about the saloon keeper being a man's friend. He is when you have money to spend, cant do enough for you, /ats you on the back, cashes your orders, lets you sit and read, do anything so long as you drink, but when you stop, he stops. I met a saloon keeper today that I've paid a lot of money to and he didn't even speak to me. Nothing in it. I'm happy now and so's my wife. I like my home and I eat good - why I've gained twenty-five pounds since I stopped" and so on, an earnest, convinced testimony to the benefits of sobriety.

Of course there are those that fall down. But that does not mean they are given up. The truth is the Sociological Department at Ford's seems to hate to give up ~~xxxxxxx~~ a man as much as the Sales Department hates to give up an order. There're "making men" and they wont accept defeat. That they're held to this by Henry Ford is certain. "Tell the committee they'll have to Guess again" he sent word in reply to a report that said a man was hopeless and better be discharged. "Do you mean to tell me that a great big concern like this with all the time and money and men it needs must give up a poor weak wretch that probably never had a chance. Make a

man of him. Find a way".

I don't know that Mr. Ford would always feel this way. I have no idea that he is a saint, but that he ever feels this way and tries to make his judgment practical is so revolutionary in industry that it must be reckoned with.

Another social function which the department for making men has taken on itself is that of regulation domestic relations. Outside of the Chicago Court I have never seen anything that approached what is doing at Ford's for marital difficulties. Everybody in the place is strong for the wives. Nobody who neglects his wife or allows her to overwork can any more hope for a profit sharing envelope than if he were openly unfaithful or promiscuous. Your honor is involved and a man who is false to his honor is not of the metal that the system will encourage whatever his skill as a workman.

Here, of course you are venturing on uncertain grounds. To ask a man for his marriage certificate, for proof that he gives his wife a fair share of his wages, for the house, and that he considers her health and tastes as well as his own - one certainly staggers at the idea. But after all if we applaud this work by the courts who are only officially interested, who have no adequate follow-up system and are always over-worked, why condemn it in those who are personally interested and whose sense and practice are really amazing.

You must show your marriage certificate and suppose you have none! A man and woman came weeping to Mr. Lee one day. What was going to happen to them. The investigator would soon be around. They had no certificate. "Why" he asked and an old story came out. The wife several years ago came to this country to escape a drunken and cruel husband. After several years she had fallen in with her present

"man". She had tried to get a divorce, but had been told it was impossible. She had tried to find her husband, but never had succeeded. Finally the two had become their own law. They were happy, had children and were comfortably off, must it all be destroyed now?"

"Don't be silly" said Mr. Lee "that's easy. Of course you can get a divorce. I'll see to that and you can marry and have the certificate and nobody will be the wiser." It was done. It does not matter how.

And does that couple object to the paternalism of Ford's?

Some of the "reconciliations" that are being engineered by these big plain serious inspectors would baffle the patience and ingenuity of a saint:- Vain, irresponsible girls, reckless, untrained boys, flying apart in childish bursts of jealousy or anger, pulled back, steered, interested in getting a pretty home, brought to their senses by a child, made to see the reality of things by "talking to" given in English which is often ungrammatical has a raciness and picturesqueness which are the envy and despair of any writer whose profession has not destroyed his sense of word values. Their ingenuity is unending. "I've played Pedro until I'm ready to bust" said an investigator throwing himself down one day in Mr. Lee's office. "It's that B Couple. They have got to get used to enjoying themselves together and to get in with their neighbors and I've been going out there for a month getting up parties and everybody is crazy over Pedro. Seems to me I'll never be able to play a game again as long as I live."

A tragedy to which Mr. Ford is giving his personal attention came up while I was in the plant. Some time ago a man who had

served a term in a penitentiary for trying to kill his wife applied <sup>for work &</sup> was sent to Mr. Ford. He told his story. It was the familiar one of a boarder and a weak woman. The man had no compunctions. He had "done his duty" paid the price and now wanted work. "I can make good" he said confidently.

"And how about your wife and children?" said Mr. Ford "what are you going to do for them? You can't make me believe she was the only one to blame, what was your part?" He seems to have forced his "part" on the man. The upshot was a re-union which had been going on with apparent success for some time. Then the man came to see Mr. Ford, the boarder had reappeared, telephoned his wife. It was hopeless. "Not at all" said Mr. Ford. "We'll get the boarder out of the way". And here comes in the law. At Mr. Ford's hint an <sup>city</sup> officer notified the boarder that he was under surveillance and than any further attention to the woman in question would cause his arrest. Will it succeed? If interest, good sense and patience can do it.

There are numberless cases of lesser tragedies which have succeeded. It seems to me that the result which pleased everybody <sup>most</sup> from Mr. Ford down was the way in which the lives of women were being made more tolerable - often very happy. They will drop a discussion any day of their eternal search of ways of making the car cheaper to listen to the story of a woman has brought in of her new life. "I never went to a movie before" one amazed and radiant wife told Mr. Lee. She had been brought up by her husband, a "thrifty" Russian Jew, to work from 4 A.M. to 11 P.M. keeping boarders. "Boarders"

*Amalgam*  
*Amalgams*

are a ~~menace~~ to the Ford Sociological Department. They're a menace to the health and often the morals of the wives. Therefore it is either no boarders or no profits!

Perhaps this attitude gives a little light on the kind of thrift required if the worker is to get the "big envelope". It must be a thrift consistent with good standards of living. No matter what your bank account there are no profits if the sanitation is bad, the house disorderly, the children ragged, the wife overworked and unhappy. You must spend your money wisely and the content and health of the family is counted as ~~a part of it~~ *is a just measure of success*. This explains many of the ~~things~~ *things*

~~practices which are~~ encouraged by the Sociological Department which many a social worker would regard with disapproval. I visited a little house gay with a variety of upholstered furniture, cut glass and resplendent ornaments. "Why did you encourage that" I asked.

"She's a feather weight, that woman, nothing but gaw-gaws of her own will ever keep her steady. She ran away from John and the baby because she said she didn't have anything but what was ugly and old-fashioned. 'Get 'em John!' I said, 'Get her all she wants and she'll stay put taking care of them". And there she was in lace dust cap smiling and triumphant.

But what a miracle of understanding and sympathy to find in a man taken from a machine to help bring back erring mortals to peace and decency!

It's the spirit of the place. "Say", said a man who had come in to see Mr. Lee (apparently anybody at any time can come to see Mr. Lee as they can Mr. Ford) "Say I can get a car dirt cheap, don't you

think I might buy it? My wife and the kids would like it. I could take 'em out evenings and Sundays." "Let me see your bank account" said Mr. Lee, "Sure buy it" he said. The man stopped at the door. "Say" he said, "It's a Buick!"

"Buying homes" is one of the marks of thrift which is especially pleasing to the sociological Department. The natural inclination particularly of foreigners, to acquire land and a home of their own has given an enormous boom to real estate around the neighborhood of the plant. I heard complaints that the Ford officials were speculating in real estate & running a land office - for their own benefit. The "land office" turned out to be a bureau of advice about values and titles and terms of payments. Speculators appeared in the neighborhood as soon as the profits, and as soon as Mr. Lee heard of their operations he took a hand. Certain particularly hard bargains he succeeded in breaking and now it is known to every one in the plant that he can get advice if he wants it. If there had not come to be a very general - I do not mean universal confidence in the management of the new scheme, its sincerity, sense and interest, such a bureau of advice would have little following. But the men come for everything. "They want advice" Mr. Lee said to me. "That's human. There isn't anything we all hate so much as having to make up our minds." There's something in that and there's more in the belief that the average ignorant man, particularly of another land, has in <sup>that he feels</sup> ~~getting~~ counsel and he <sup>can</sup> trust. This trust crops out in many ways. I was particularly interested in evidence of this which I picked up from the head of a <sup>Medical School.</sup> "The men who come to our classes from Ford's Detroit Techn

haven't a doubt they'll be advanced if they do our work."

There are constant exhibits of the efforts of the management to keep faith with the men on this point of advancement. Its a big proposition to handle when you have 18,000 men and it is not easy to discover what a man can do more than he is doing. The interest and watchfulness of the management oils the system. And there is always rejoicing over a discovery. "Say" what do you think? Mr. Lee said to a group that was watching Ford's movie called "The Making of an American", "The hero of that picture used to run a locomotive in Russia! he's a crack engineer. He's a quiet patient fellow and has a mean job in the shop. He was so intelligent about this picture that they asked for easier work for him and then it came out what he could do."

"That's what I told you" said Henry Ford. "There are 18,000 men down there and you can't find a thing in the world some of them might not do."

The management aims to keep faith and the men know it. So far as my observation went there is only one thing that won't be tolerated and that is lying - lying about having a job when they apply at Ford's. In the month before my visit I was told that but two men had been dismissed and in each case it was because it was discovered they had had work when they applied. The fact is they only want the unemployed and it is all they will take if they knew it. The complaint was general in Detroit and over the country when the profit sharing plan was announced that all the "best men" would go to Ford's. Mr. Ford said emphatically "I don't want the best men I want to

give the poor fellows a chance." And he is sticking to his rule.

A man familiar with Detroit manufacturing life who spent a month in the plant studying the new operations of the Sociological Department told me that he knew this rule was observed and if they were deceived the men were discharged. As they are now losing only a hundred or so men a month, this in contrast to the four or five thousand lost two years ago - there is a long list of applications. When a man is wanted, an inspector takes the dozen or so of earliest applicants and looks them up at a time. If the man has work his name is dropped from the list. The first man without work is given the position if fitted for the task.

Several important manufacturers in Detroit told us that their fear of losing their best men had disappeared. "Ford has his force. He is keeping it more nearly intact than any other man here and he won't accept a man from another factory if he knows it."

And this is the way they have been trying for something *to make men at Ford's* *How has it worked? Let us see what has happened over a year now to make men at Ford's.* *They worked out a scheme primarily to stop floaters & to cure a condition which was in conflict with their common sense and their ideas of "rights" and humanity. To their own amazement this cure has proved one of the most profitable things they have ever done. Beyond a doubt it has proved Henry Ford's theory that if you make men they will make business. It is the slogan now of the whole mammoth factory and the figures prove it. Here is one set from an official. "In 1913 we made \$24,000,000. In 1914 we cut the price of the car \$50.00, distributed \$7,000,000 in profits, in addition to wages and our profits, rose from \$24,000,000 to \$30,000,000"* *And*

*merely 3 years*  
*after*  
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*experience*  
*#5*

here is another official set of figures. "In February 1913 - 16,000 men working ten hours a day made and shipped 16,000 cars. In February 1914 the first month after the new plan was started 15,000 men, working eight hours a day made and shipped 26,000 cars" and it was the men who did it. Men who are glad to stay and to work.

I confess I was not prepared to believe it. I made my first visit to the Ford manufacturing department with dread. I feared the confusion and speed I thought it meant - the white faces and the sweat and the spent energy. I had lost my fear of Ford's paternalism. That which one tries to do for another based on faith in that person's powers to come back or to go ahead is the greatest thing <sup>me</sup> a man can do *for another* and it doesn't matter what you call it. But two cars a minute, endless conveyors, work travelling from hand to hand. Could it be and be endurable! Let me quote the answer of a man skilled in labor operations who went into Ford's with their full permission to "live with the men" and did for a month. He went in with much the same feeling I had at the start and he says:-

"What impressed me particularly during the time I spent at the Ford plant were the enthusiasm and alertness of the working force as a whole. There is no piece work, no gang-work, or premiums or bonus system at that plant. All shop employees except a few foremen are paid by the hour, yet they show the same attention, interest and quickness of action as are shown by piece workers in other plants. I have heard it said that the health of the Ford employees is being sacrificed by the whip thus held over them and that some of them are becoming physical and mental wrecks. Although I noticed the alertness of the employees

mentioned above I did not see anything that indicated they were driven or expected to do more than a reasonable amount of intelligent work in a given time."

This is an authoritative judgment from a man used to shop work and deeply interested in the human side of the question. I might have spent a month and my judgment would be worth less than this. I have only impressions to offer. They are given for what they are worth. I never felt a stronger sense of team work. I never heard or rather saw - one doesn't hear much but noise in the Ford shop - so many men whistling and smiling, in a shop. I never had so many look me in the face in a friendly fashion and as I have said I never saw so many clean faces and white collars in that kind of a factory.

The paternalism at Ford's seems to work. It may be it is like the theory of production which has carried them fortune. It is one this country has fought. You must not make "too much". You must "keep up the price". You must buy cheap and sell dear. You must build walls around your markets and suffer no man's competition. Ford's is laughing all this <sup>forwardly</sup> narrow policies out of the market place. As I journeyed away from Detroit with this bundle of impressions, so contradictory to my preconceived opinion I was put down at a hotel table with two men who fell to talking business.

"Yes" one said, "we took the order. I didn't believe we could make a cent but an order from Ford's is a big advertisement. They cut us down to the last penny and told us we'd make money if we'd figure as close as they did. I thought it was guff but the queer thing is we

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