

THE GOLDEN-RULE FACTORY:

THE LATE MAYOR JONES' CONTRIBUTION TOWARD THE SOLUTION OF INDUSTRIAL PROBLEMS.

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"THE BUSINESS of this shop is to make men; the making of money is an incidental detail." Such is the unique motto under which the S. M. Jones Company has carried on a successful business during the past ten years. The head of that firm has been the late lamented Golden-Rule Mayor of Toledo. Modern political economy is teaching that men, not wealth, are the end and aim of all productive efforts; that our complex industrial system exists for the benefit of mankind,—of all men, not only employers and capitalists, but employees as well. This doctrine has a strange ring when sounded in the ears of many well-meaning people, and is said to be impractical, visionary. Manufacture and commerce are often looked upon merely as methods of making money, of amassing material wealth without regard to the welfare and happiness of the workers.

Primitive man toiled early and late in order to satisfy the simple wants of himself and family. Primitive industry was always a means to an end, never an end in

itself. This believer in humanity, in the common people, would return to the old-fashioned but ever-correct idea that men, not goods, should be the true product of modern industry; and has dared attempt to work out the problem concretely in order that the way may be made plain for those who come after.

In 1894 the now famous shop was opened on its present site. Previous to that time, Mr. Jones had been engaged in the oil-fields both as an employee and an employer. Upon coming to Toledo, he was for the first time brought into actual contact with the conditions existing in cities. He felt that many laboring men received such low wages as to make it impossible to maintain a decent standard of living for themselves and their families. Early in his career as an employer he accepted, and ever afterward adhered to, the doctrine of a "living wage." The usual or customary wage was never the sole factor in fixing the remuneration of his employees.

His peculiar beliefs and methods were of gradual growth. He first began to print words of caution and rules of con-

ded upon the pay-envelopes. Soon the sole rule of the factory—"Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, even so do ye unto them"—was printed on a piece of tin and hung up in the shop. Last Christmas this was framed by the employees and now occupies a conspicuous place in the dining-room of the factory.

Painted on the wall of the shop-building over the entrance facing Golden-Rule Park is another characteristic motto: "Every man who is willing to work has a right to live. Divide up the day and give him a chance." Acting upon the sentiment expressed in the first sentence of this motto, all applicants for work were hired as vacancies occurred, no investigation as to the character or the previous record of the person asking for a job being made. The "No help wanted" sign was not displayed; if work could not be given, the applicant received a kind word of advice or admonition, as the case seemed to require. Eight hours was adopted as the proper length of the working day, and was the practical result of the belief in "dividing up the day." Another important innovation was the inauguration of a profit-sharing scheme. Early in the history of the firm, the men were made stockholders in the company and were made to feel that their interests were closely identified with the prosperity of the business.

The building itself is a dingy, weather-beaten affair; it is not a modern factory and has few of the conveniences of the up-to-date shop. Mr. Jones evidently minimized the effect of material environment; he believed more strongly in the influence of man upon man. In one corner of the lot stands Golden-Rule Park and Playground; on the second floor of the shop are found Golden-Rule Hall and Dining-Room. In these the Mayor took particular delight. Here his theories regarding the brotherhood of man were practically and theoretically demonstrated.

Golden-Rule Park comprises about one acre of ground. It is nearly square and is situated at the intersection of two streets. On one side the shop is located, and the

fourth is bounded by a high board-fence. Several trees furnish shade; but no ornamental shrubbery or fountains adorn it. Along the wall of the shop a narrow border of flowers is planted. Seats are scattered about the park under the shade of the trees. Swings and a sand-pile are provided for the children. At almost any time of day children may be seen playing. Mothers wheel their babes here to enjoy the shade of the trees. On the fence at one side of the park a motto from Walt Whitman is printed in large letters: "Produce great persons, the rest follows." This little oasis in the industrial desert of the city furnishes a convenient and much-needed breathing-spot for the families living in the vicinity of the shop; and it is used as freely as any public park. Men and women, rich and poor, high and low, are all welcomed, any time, all the time.

Near the center of the little park, under a large, spreading willow-tree, is placed a platform surrounded by benches. Here, on Sunday afternoons in the summer season, the Mayor, his employees, their families and friends would assemble. An address was usually given by Mr. Jones or some other man of broad and liberal views. The Golden-Rule Band, selected from the employees, furnished instrumental music. Frequently a chorus would sing some of Mayor Jones' compositions. In the winter season the service has been held in the hall. These simple exercises were conducted without pomp or needless ceremony. At the conclusion the Mayor walked quietly among the people assembled, talking freely and kindly to all.

The dining-hall has justly been termed "the most democratic dining-hall in the world." There are no reserved tables, distinguished guests walk in with the workers, and take any convenient vacant chair. Worker and student, employer and employee, rich and poor, sit in absolute equality around this unpretentious board. Here is pure democracy. Fraternity and equality, plain living and high thinking, are the watch-words. The dining-room is a symbol of the great broth-

erhood of man in which the late Mayor so fervently believed. On the walls hang many pictures and mottoes, the latter taken chiefly from the Bible. It is not a beautiful room, but it is permeated with the spirit of fellowship, kindness and forbearance. The table is only a board; no cloth adorns it. Jeffersonian simplicity reigns supreme. Yet around this board some of the great thinkers and doers of the nation have gathered and gained inspiration and experience. It was a custom of the late Mayor to invite guests to take dinner with him at the shop. Every Friday noon a smoke was enjoyed. After dinner, talks and music were the order of the day.

This shop does not, perhaps, offer a solution to the question of the relation of labor to capital; but it does teach us that sympathy and kindness have a place in the busy business world. Here is a concrete, tangible example of what a liberty-loving humanity-loving idealist, dreamer, and practical business-man can do. It proves that business is not necessarily industrial warfare. The ultimate question, as the quotation on the park fence asserts, is the improvement of men. Progress takes place only as men improve. The worker is a man, the brother of the employer and of all other men; he is not a machine. Industry is more than bread and butter; it is education; it is life. As Mr. Jones

has told us: "To live we must work, and we must work to live. It is not birth, nor money, nor a college education that makes a man; it is work."

That old, discredited and discarded rule of business, known as the Golden-Rule, has been for a decade the rule and guide of a successful and growing business. Here was charity for all. No weak and erring sinner was turned away because of his short-comings or past failures. Within the walls of the plain, unpretentious structure men felt a power which uplifted and benefited each and all. Through the instrumentality of this business, Mayor Jones taught, by example as well as by precept, the brotherhood of man. He was distinctly a man of peace, a believer in the power of "love," a man who never lost faith in the honesty of purpose of those with whom he was associated. He has taught us the lesson that work, the accomplishment of some service to humanity, is rather to be desired than great riches; that rules, regulations and laws cannot make men good or solve the vexed question as to the relations of man to man. Kindness, forbearance, unselfishness, and love should influence each in his treatment of others. Mr. Jones' life points out to all that love, not force, is the most potent influence in the world for good.

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