

"Listen, then, M. Hardy, like a true machinist, has pronounced three cabalistic words, ASSOCIATION—COMMUNITY—FRATERNITY. We have understood the sense of these words, and the wonders you have seen have sprung from them, to our great advantage; and also, I repeat, to the great advantage of M. Hardy."

"It is that which appears so extraordinary, M. Agricola."

"Suppose, mademoiselle, that M. Hardy, instead of being what he is, had only been a cold-hearted speculator, looking merely to the profit, and saying to himself: 'To make the most of my factory, what is needed? Good work—great economy in the raw material—full employment of the workman's time: in a word, cheapness of manufacture, in order to produce cheaply—excellence of the thing produced, in order to sell dear.'"

"Truly, M. Agricola's, no manufacturer could desire more."

"Well, mademoiselle, these conditions might have been fulfilled, as they have been, but how? Had M. Hardy only been a speculator, he might have said: 'At a distance from my factory, my workmen might have trouble to get there: rising earlier, they will sleep less: it is a bad economy to take from the sleep so necessary to those who toil. When they get feeble, the work suffers for it; then the inclemency of the seasons makes it worse; the workman arrives wet, trembling with cold, enervated before he begins to work—and then, what work!'"

"It is unfortunately but too true, M. Agricola. At Lille, when I reached the factory, wet through with a cold rain, I used sometimes to shiver all day long at my work."

"Therefore, Mlle. Angela, the speculator might say: 'To lodge my workmen close to the door of my factory would obviate this inconvenience. Let us make the calculation. In Paris, the married workman pays about two hundred and fifty francs a year,* for one or two wretched rooms and a closet, dark, small, unhealthy, in a narrow, miserable street; there he lives pell-mell with his family. What ruined constitutions are the consequence! and what sort of work can you expect from a feverish and diseased creature? As for the single men, they pay for a smaller, and quite as unwholesome lodging, about one hundred and fifty francs a year. Now, let us make the addition. I employ one hundred and forty-six married workmen, who pay together, for their wretched holes, thirty-six thousand five hundred francs; I employ also one hundred and fifteen bachelors, who pay at the rate of seventeen thousand two hundred and eighty francs; the total will amount to about fifty thousand francs per annum, the annual interest on a million.'"

"The average price of a workman's lodging, composed of two small rooms and a closet at most on the third or fourth story.]

"Dear me, M. Agricola! what a sum to be produced by uniting all these little rents together!"

"You see, mademoiselle, that fifty thousand francs a year is a millionaire's rent. Now, what says our speculator: 'To induce our workmen to leave Paris, I will offer them enormous advantages. I will reduce their rent one-half, and, instead of small, unwholesome rooms, they shall have large, airy apartments, well-warmed and lighted, at a trifling charge. Thus, one hundred and forty-six families, paying me only one hundred and twenty-five francs a year, and one hundred and fifteen bachelors, seventy-five francs. Now, a building large enough to hold all these people would cost me at most five hundred thousand francs.* I shall then have invested my money at five per cent. at the least, and with perfect security, since the wages is a guarantee for the payment of the rent.'"

"This calculation is amply sufficient, if not excessive. A similar building, at one league from Paris, on the side of Montrouge, with all the necessary office, kitchen, wash-houses, etc., with gas and water laid on, apparatus for warming, etc., and a garden of ten acres, cost, at the period of this narrative, hardly five hundred thousand francs. An experienced builder has obliged us with an estimate, which confirms what we advance. It is, therefore, evident, that even at the same price which workmen are in the habit of paying, it would be possible to provide them with perfectly healthy lodgings, and yet invest one's money at ten per cent.]"

"Ah, M. Agricola! I begin to understand how it may sometimes be advantageous to do good, even in a pecuniary sense."

"And I am almost certain, mademoiselle, that, in the long run, affairs conducted with uprightness and honesty turn out well. But to return to our speculator. 'Here,' will he say, 'are my workmen, living close to my factory, well lodged, well warmed, and arriving always fresh at their work. That is not all, the English workman who eats good beef, and drinks good beer, does twice as much, in the same time, as the French work-

man,* reduced to a detestable kind of food, rather weakening than the reverse, thanks to the poisonous adulteration of the articles for consumption. My workmen will then labor much better. How shall I manage it without loss? Now I think of it, what is the food in barracks, schools, even prisons? Is it not the union of individual resources which procures an amount of comfort impossible to realize without such an association? Now, if my two hundred and sixty workmen, instead of cooking two hundred and sixty detestable dinners, were to unite to prepare one good dinner for all of them, which might be done, thanks to the savings of all sorts that would ensue, what an advantage for me and for them! Two or three women, aided by children, would suffice to make ready the daily repast, instead of buying wood and charcoal in fractions, and so paying for it double its value, the association of my workmen would, upon my security (their wages would be a sufficient security for me in return), lay in their own stock of wood, flour, butter, oil, wine, etc., all which they would procure directly from the producers. Thus they would pay three or four sous for a bottle of pure, wholesome wine, instead of paying twelve or fifteen sous, for poison. Every week the association would buy a whole ox, and some sheep, and the women would make bread, as in the country. Finally, with these resources, and economy, my workmen may have wholesome, agreeable, and sufficient food, for from twenty to twenty-five sous a day.'"

"The fact was proven in the works connected with the Rouen Railway. Those French workmen who, having no families, were able to live like the English, did at least as much work as the latter, being strengthened by wholesome and sufficient nourishment."

"Buying pennyworths, like all other purchases at minute retail, are greatly to the poor man's disadvantage.]

"Ah! this explains it, M. Agricola."

"It is not all, mademoiselle. Our cold-headed speculator would continue: 'Here are my workmen well lodged, well warmed, well fed, with a saving of at least half; why should they not also be warmly clad? Their health will then have every chance of being good, and health is labor. The association will buy wholesale, and at the manufacturing price (still upon my security, secured to me by their wages), warm, good, strong materials, which a portion of the workmen's wives will be able to make into clothes as well as any tailor. Finally, the consumption of caps and shoes being considerable, the association will obtain them at a great reduction in price.' Well, Mlle. Angela! what do you say to our speculator?"

"I say, M. Agricola," answered the young girl, with ingenuous admiration, "that it is almost incredible, and yet so simple!"

"No doubt, nothing is more simple than the good and beautiful, and yet we think of it so seldom. Observe, that our man has only been speaking with a view of his own interest—only considering the material side of the question—reckoning for nothing the habit of fraternity and mutual aid, which inevitably springs from living together in common—not reflecting that a better mode of life improves and softens the character of man—not thinking of the support and instruction which the strong owe to the weak—not acknowledging, in fine, that the honest, active, and industrious man has a positive right to demand employment from society, and wages proportionate to the wants of his condition. No, our speculator only thinks of the gross profits; and yet, you see, he invests his money in buildings at five per cent., and finds the greatest advantages in the material comfort of his workmen."

"It is true, M. Agricola."

"And what will you say, mademoiselle when I prove to you that our speculator finds also a great advantage in giving to his workmen, in addition to their regular wages, a proportionate share of his profits?"

"That appears to me more difficult to prove, M. Agricola."

"Yet I will convince you of it in a few minutes."

Thus conversing, Angela and Agricola had reached the garden-gate of the Common Dwelling-house. An elderly woman, dressed plainly, but with care and neatness, approached Agricola, and asked him: "Has M. Hardy returned to the factory, sir?"—"No, madame; but we expect him hourly."

"To-day, perhaps?"—"To-day or tomorrow, madame."

"You cannot tell me at what hour he will be here?"—"I do not think it is known, madame, but the porter at the factory, who also belongs to M. Hardy's private house, may, perhaps, be able to inform you."

(Continued on page 5.)

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