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COMBED-WOOL SPINNER
AND MACHINE SETTER
OF THE VAL-DES-BOIS MILL (MARNE)

WORKER,
UNDER THE SYSTEM OF PERMANENT VOLUNTARY ENGAGEMENTS,
FROM
THE INFORMATION GATHERED ON THE SPOT IN 1894,
BY
MR URBAIN GUÉRIN.



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Léon Harmel, le Bon Père du Val-des-Bois

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No. 83.

COMBED-WOOL SPINNER AND MACHINE SETTER

OF THE VAL DES BOIS MILL (GUARNEY)

WORKER,
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PRELIMINARY OBSERVATIONS
DEFINING THE CONDITION OF THE VARIOUS MEMBERS
OF THE FAMILY.

1. The Société d'Économie sociale, in multiplying its monographs of workers of the Two Worlds, is above all concerned to bring to light, through constantly renewed analyses, the facts, customs and principles closely bound up either with the prosperity or with the suffering of families, workshops and nations. To this end, it prefers to direct its investigations to the households of peasants or workers who best represent the average conditions of popular life. But it also endeavours to study, by the method proper to it, those organisations of labour which, on various grounds, commend themselves to public attention. It is for this reason that it publishes the monograph of a worker of the "corporation of Val-des-Bois", as it had already made known the Familistère of Guise and the Co-operative Paper Mill of Angoulême, through studies by the same author. Very soon the "Miners' Mine" of Monthieux and Rive-de-Gier, the fishermen's community of Fort-Mardyck, etc., will follow in their turn. *Les Ouvriers des Deux Mondes* will thus place in their gallery of methodical monographs the documents best suited to show the relative value of the principal solutions proposed for easing the conflict between employers and workers.

DEFINITION OF THE PLACE, THE INDUSTRIAL ORGANISATION AND THE FAMILY.

§ 1.

STATE OF THE SOIL, OF INDUSTRY AND OF THE POPULATION.

The family lives in the commune of Warméreville, on the banks of the Suippe, in the department of the Marne, formed from part of the old province of Champagne. Warméreville belongs to the canton of Bourgogne, which depends on the arrondissement of Reims; it is 195 kilometres from Paris. It is a station on the small railway line that runs from Bazancourt to Bétheniville and Challerange and serves the Suippe valley. At this last station it connects with the main line that links Paris with Reims, Mézières and Charleville, and follows the Meuse valley as far as Givet.

Champagne does not call up the idea of a picturesque, smiling or fertile country, but of bare, dusty plains, scorched by the sun in summer, in which the gusts of wind raise clouds of a white and penetrating dust. Yet, although this description is still accurate for certain parts of the Champagne Pouilleuse, it would not be so for the surroundings of Warméreville, nor for the part of the department that stretches along the edge of the Ardennes, nor for the arrondissement of Rethel, formed from part of that old province. Many plantations of pines, called savarts, have been made on the most arid plains; they have given the land a value it did not have before, and, instead of stretching over vast bare horizons, the view is broken by clumps of dark green woods in which the wind makes a sound recalling that of the sea. At Warméreville itself the landscape is not without charm: the Suippe flows between a few woods and meadows, green in spring and studded with flowers, and at the back of the landscape, in the direction of Reims, rise the hills that surround that city. Seen from afar, in a country where there are no great unevennesses of ground, espe-

cially at a fine sunset, they take on the appearance of mountains. That, indeed, is the name the people of the district give them.

The climate is close to that of the surroundings of Paris. Only at Warméville the river brings many thick fogs; and so vegetation there is always behind that of places farther from the water. The soil, as in most of the department, belongs to the chalk formation.

The Suippe valley is essentially industrial; on the banks of the river the mills crowd against one another. Thus, at Beine, 1 power-loom weaving mill; at Bétheniville, 2 combing works, spinning mills and power-loom weaving mills; at Dontrien, 1 spinning mill and power-loom weaving mill; at Pontfaverger , 3; at Saint-Hilaire-le-Petit, 3 cloth factories; at Saint-Masmes, at Guerlet, 1 carded spinning mill; at Warméville, besides the Harmel establishment, 1 combing works, dye works and spinning mill; at Bazancourt, 2 spinning and weaving mills; at Boulton-sur-Suippe, 1 spinning mill, combing works and power-loom weaving mill; at Vaudésincourt, 1 power-loom weaving mill; at Isles-sur-Suippe, at Neuflize, 1 spinning mill and power-loom weaving mill; at Haurné, 1 power-loom weaving mill. Val-des-Bois is therefore not situated, as its name might seem to suggest, in a wild country, far from all industry, in which the employers would have had every facility to mould at their ease a working population sheltered from every other influence.

Warméville extends over both banks of the river, but most of the houses stand on the right bank. There is no other monument in its territory than the church, part of which is very old, but which shows no remarkable architectural character. The houses are entirely lacking in distinction.

Here now are some statistical figures on the commune, first on its area, which is 2,326.6140 hectares, divided as follows:

	Hectares.
Food crops	775,2000

Artificial meadows	394,5700
Fallow land	377,5000
Natural meadows	51,5330
Orchards	3,2045
Private gardens	30,0000
Woods and forests	297,5410
Marshland	269,0000
Non-agricultural land	128,0655

According to the last census, the population is 2,364 inhabitants, of whom 1,834 are natives of the commune and 530 outsiders. As regards sex, the first group comprises 901 men and 933 women; the second, 255 men and 275 women. There are only 33 persons living alone as against 539 families, which are divided as follows according to the number of their members: 130 of 2 persons, 97 of 3, 107 of 4, 66 of 5, 54 of 6, 85 of 7 and over. The number of members in each family is, as can be seen, rather small. We are not here in a land of large progeny, and, as in many other communes, the number of children decreases the nearer one comes to rural property. This can only find the means of establishing itself on systematic sterility. A family of farmers has one or two children; three seems a considerable number; above that they are exceptions, and many families would say: a monstrosity. Workers' families, on the contrary, are more prolific; to them belong almost exclusively the high numbers of children.

As regards age, the statistics record 54 persons from 70 to 74 years old, 26 from 75 to 79, 12 from 79 to 84, 5 from 85 to 89.

The population is divided as follows with respect to occupation: 315 persons living from work on the land, 1,656 from industry, 26 from transport, 153 from trade, 5 belonging to public administrations, 34 to the liberal professions, 57 living on their income.

Finally, the movement of the population for the year 1894 gives the following figures: 55 births (of which 3 illegitimate, not coming

from men or women workers of the Harmel firm), among them 25 girls and 30 boys; 12 marriages, 1 divorce in a household of outsiders who were not employed at Val-des-Bois; 36 deaths, of which 19 males, comprising 11 single men, 5 married men and 3 widowers, and 17 females, of which 8 single women, 4 married women and 5 widows.

The municipal council comprises 16 members proposed by the employer who today bears the title of director of Val-des-Bois. They belong to a moderate shade of opinion; some are very religious. The various occupations are represented as follows: 9 farmers, 5 tradesmen, 1 industrialist, 1 accountant. A rather singular fact: in a commune where the industrial element plays so important a part, no worker belongs to the communal assembly, whereas it contains 5 tradesmen. This is a gap. There is no truly representative system except where all interests have representatives in the local councils as well as in the political assemblies.

Mr Harmel's establishment, the larger of the two set up at Warméville, stands on the very bank of the river; the river divides into two arms, one of which encircles part of the houses and gardens occupied by the employer's family, who thus live in the midst of the workers. In front of the workshops stand trees whose greenery strikes a gay and cheerful note in summer, while the river, wide at this point, happily completes the landscape. Thus the factory presents an appearance very different from most of those which, situated inside a town, have a dark, sad look and seem to condemn those who work in them to a hopeless existence.

The Val-des-Bois spinning mill comprises combing, dyeing, carded and combed-wool spinning, twisting and fancy yarn. The principal markets are abroad: in Germany, Sweden, Russia, America and Spain; formerly it did a fairly large turnover with Italy, but the breaking off of commercial relations with France closed that market to it. Russia likewise, since the commercial treaty concluded with

Germany, has greatly reduced its business with France. A similar cause made it impossible for it to continue its relations with America and Spain. The raising of tariffs was such that it amounted in reality to prohibitive duties; but the Harmel family, which draws a powerful strength from its unity (§ 21), did not let itself be discouraged by this change of commercial policy, so disastrous to its interests. With the same spirit of initiative that drove English industrialists to set up factories in Russia on the day that power raised its tariffs, it founded two establishments, one in America², the other at Sabadell in Spain.

Before the fire of 1874, the workshops had several storeys; but since the rebuilding of the spinning mill there is only a ground floor. Nothing is left to be desired as regards air, lighting and the height of the ceiling, which is 4.60 m under the beams and 6 metres under the ceiling. Ventilation is provided by fans, each of which removes about 10,000 cubic metres of air an hour. Seventy special appliances cool the air in summer and warm it in winter, so as to maintain a temperature that is at once favourable to working the wool and suitable for the health of the workers. Every precaution has been taken to stop the engines immediately in case of danger, as well as to prevent the accidents that might be caused by the steam engines being set in motion and catching the workers unawares.

The work is divided into eighteen divisions or different workshops: 1. Yard and labourers; 2. Scouring; 3. Combed-wool carding; 4. Carded-wool carding; 5. Combing and yarns; 6. Preparing for combed wool; 7. Combed-wool spinning; 8. Carded spinning; 9. Fancy spinning; 10. Twisting; 11. Spooling; 12. Reeling; 13. Dyeing; 14. Dyed yarns; 15. Joinery; 16. Repair shop; 17. Stokers; 18. Packing.

The statistics of the working population of the Val record 1,169 persons, divided as follows: 399 men, 420 women, 350 children; but there are only 211 women working in the mill, of whom 66 are under

2. The American establishment has been closed since the time when the notes for this monograph were taken.

18. Among the men, 48 are from 13 to 18 years old; the foremen and clerks number 39, the workers 267, and the other 45 are employed on various tasks.

As regards length of service, 50 workers have more than 25 years of service; 42, from 15 to 25; 56, from 10 to 15. In recent years, 7 families came in 1892, 6 in 1893, 7 in 1894, not to replace other workers who had left, but because of the extension of the work, which called for new hands.

The workers work ten and a half hours. Night work unfortunately exists, but it occupies only a very small number of workers, seven combed-wool spinners with their piecers. The reason for the re-appearance of this work, formerly abolished, is the dispatch of a number of machines to Sabadell, a mill founded in Spain, as we said above, to escape the almost prohibitive customs duties established since the denunciation of the commercial treaty with France. Production had to be kept at the same level; hence the introduction of night work, which is one of the most regrettable practices of modern industry. Only an imperative reason, then, led the management of the Val to introduce it temporarily in its own works: in the fierce competition of the textile industries, intensive production alone can ensure profits; whoever does not keep up with his rivals is soon outdistanced and beaten. When the machines sent to Spain have been replaced, night work will cease.

Great precautions have been taken to prevent the mixing of the sexes when leaving and entering the workshops; the women leave a few minutes before the men, and special doors are reserved for them when they come back in; during work they are strictly forbidden, on any pretext whatever, to go into the men's workshops.

Sunday rest is observed in the strictest manner; even tidying up is absolutely forbidden, and if there are urgent repairs that cannot be carried out during the week, they can only be undertaken on presentation of a slip signed by an employer the day before.

Wages are settled every fortnight, on Saturday evening, and pay takes place on the following Thursday, market day, when work resumes in the morning.

Here are some figures for the average daily earnings made by workers of various trades during fortnights taken as examples. For carded spinners, 5 workers, 6.23 fr., 6.30 fr., 4.53 fr., 4.50 fr., 5.40 fr.; these figures refer to a period from 15 May to 26 August 1894. Let us now take combed-wool spinners and twistors; taking their average wage over the same period, we find for 5 of them the figures of 5.27 fr., 5.15 fr., 5.81 fr., 5.72 fr., 5.62 fr.; the previous year, from 1 July to 30 December 1893, the same workers had made average earnings of 5.05 fr., 4.73 fr., 5.40 fr., 5.48 fr., 5.43 fr., 5.14 fr. The difference, as can be seen, is slight, and the worker does not go through those alternations of rising and falling wages that make the balance of his modest budget so difficult. Moreover, at Val-des-Bois the firm does not one day increase its production in large proportions, only to cut it back afterwards and consequently dismiss workers taken on only for a time. Wages there are permanent, and it is a title of honour of the Harmel family to have always maintained them and to have kept its staff, even in the hour of the most acute crises. A great landowner once said that he took pride above all in having given work to the workers; few facts should earn the Harmel family so much the gratitude of the families it has employed. Neither in 1848 nor in 1870 was work stopped; yet in the first of those two years most of the factories had closed, and during the war everything was lacking, coal especially, and money; communications, moreover, were cut, and the manufactured yarns piled up in the warehouses. We observed the same fact at the Guise works³. A few years later a fire broke out in the mill and destroyed most of the buildings, which were

3. Monograph of the Fitter-Overseer of the Guise Works (*Ouv. des Deux Mondes*, 2nd series, vol. IV.)

then five storeys high. Without delay the employers rented another spinning mill and so kept their workers in work.

To the wage is added a supplement, under the name of family wage, which is beginning to be practised in a few industrial establishments and whose aim is to proportion resources strictly to the needs of the family (§ 7 and § 19).

At Val-des-Bois the employers have been careful not to entrust the foreman with absolute powers, whose often too harsh or sometimes brutal use arouses so much discontent among the workers.

The disciplinary fines imposed by the foreman become final only after an employer has approved them, and the proceeds are paid into the Mutual Aid Society, so that the employer cannot be suspected, as unfortunately happens in other industrial establishments, of making personal profits from the penalties inflicted on the workers. The fines amounted to 22.65 fr. in 1892, 24.30 fr. in 1893, 10.85 fr. in 1894, a very modest figure. If a worker has committed a serious fault, the employer always rules on the case after hearing the worker. Workshop discipline is very strictly maintained as regards licentious talk, swearing and blasphemy. Thus, while we were there, one or two workers were punished with a two-day suspension for jibes, and almost insults, addressed to a young worker who wore a scapular. In addition, there is a Factory Council working since 1885 (§ 18), which studies all measures relating to work and the hygiene of the workshops; workshop councillors, delegated by the women workers, play the same part for the women's workshops.

Anxious to fulfil his duties as an employer, Mr Jacques Harmel, the former Good Father, created associations among his workers, and thereby earned lasting claims to their gratitude. This attempt, indeed, was all the more remarkable because it took place at a time when the employer was too often only the master and when the workers' participation in the works created for their benefit was regarded as an almost revolutionary innovation.

Mr Léon Harmel, the present Good Father, exercises a considerable influence and also enjoys great prestige among the workers. They see in him the soul of the establishment, just as they gladly acknowledge his spirit of justice and his wholly fatherly solicitude for them and for the moral and material improvement of their lot. Yet the workers of the Val are not angels; they do not escape the dispositions peculiar to every situation, and the old feeling of criticism towards their superiors sometimes shows itself among them, as among all subordinates, even among those, such as priests, whose obedience ought to include feelings more than human. The master is not always the enemy, but the subordinate likes to criticise him and readily imagines that he might perhaps do more for him. If the Athenians could not bear always hearing Aristides called "the just", some workers of the Val grow impatient when the blessings of their lot are praised too much before them, when they are placed above all others as having a far more advantageous situation. Once this allowance is made for human weaknesses, which a great many of them know how to avoid, they acknowledge that the Val-des-Bois establishment offers them very valuable advantages, especially to large families; these find a higher remuneration than they would have elsewhere, thanks not only to the various employer's institutions, but also to the family wages (§ 19). They also value these institutions, and above all, perhaps, the council that allows them to make their complaints heard, being assured that they will be received in a spirit of justice and charity (§ 18). Certain arrangements of detail, made with a lofty purpose, are much appreciated. Thus is regarded, as we were able to observe, the kindly care of the employers in having the barber come to the mill on Saturday, a few hours before the workshops close, so that the workers do not spend a long time at his shop on Sunday morning waiting their turn, at the risk of missing Mass or of attending it in a slovenly state. As good manners often have more effect than highly perfected institutions, the workers are also touched by the warm,

good-natured cordiality with which the Good Father talks with them. In 1893, indeed, he invited all the workers to his table, one section after another.

At the Val, as in all establishments, a very sharply marked distance separates the clerks from the workers: the former regard themselves as part of the general staff, as placed above the workers, as quasi-employers; the latter, regarding the others as people who work much less than they do, take offence at their claim to pre-eminence.

Drunkenness is rare among the workers: they do not dislike a little glass, which is quite legitimate and brings no ill effects; but never, or almost never, is a worker of the Val dismissed for being visibly drunk on entering the workshop. Among the women the taste for finery is rife: at Sunday Mass they vie with one another in extraordinary colours, and in hats of no less brilliant hues and no less ambitious pretensions; the brightest red wins many preferences. Seen from afar, the people coming out of Mass would remind an inattentive or absent-minded observer of the same scene on a Sunday morning in a great city; but the more than doubtful taste of most of the outfits would soon bring him back to reality.

As regards moral conduct, there is nothing to reproach in the girls of the Val families. A fault ending in an illegitimate birth is quite exceptional. But the chaplains who have the moral direction of the working population express less satisfaction concerning the young men. They are by far the least commendable part of the population, despite some good elements. A spirit of independence, a lessening of respect for paternal authority and consequently for all authority, a marked tendency to selfishness, the rejection of all constraint: such are the traits they say they have observed in many of them, though they belong to religious families. It is the moral upheaval seen everywhere, resulting from the glorification of the false dogmas of the Revolution and from the blows dealt, especially over the last twenty years or so, to all social forces and to the natural authorities.

The working population of the Val shows no strong political passion; at Warmériville contests are of a peaceful character. It has accepted the Republic, as it had accepted the Empire before, as it would accept the government called to succeed it, while judging severely the men who hold power. The scandals of the Panama affair have engraved in their minds a conviction whose echo we often found in our conversations: that today's politicians too often have no other concern, on coming to power, than to fill their pockets, and can be sure of impunity, since justice dares not touch the bigwigs. At Warmériville the moderate candidate, Mr Adrien de Montebello, won the majority, 300 votes, against 97 given to the radical candidate, who personified a marked anti-religious policy, and 28 wasted votes, out of 540 registered electors.

Almost all the workers read newspapers; in particular *la Croix* of Paris, *l'Avenir* (formerly the *Croix de Reims*), the *Petit Moniteur* and formerly the *Courrier des Ardennes*, many workers being natives of that department.

Socialism has no followers at the Val. Its theories, moreover, attract French workers less than its appeals to passion, its revolutionary incitements, its war cries against those who hold capital, especially when they are joint-stock companies. Here the workers live in peace with their employer; those who have influence over their companions are all imbued with religious ideas; the apostolate of the worker by the worker has indeed been the method used by Mr Harmel (§ 17). Besides, there is only one working-class settlement there, numerous no doubt, but not numerous enough to tempt those eager for seats in the legislature. A group of workers nevertheless takes a keen interest in social questions; they met to draw up the programme that was discussed at the workers' congress of Reims, a programme calling for the reforms intended, in the mind of their promoter, to make the working-class family more stable, freer and more secure in its future (§ 20).

§ 2.

CIVIL STATUS OF THE FAMILY.

The family comprises four persons:

1. Alfred Joseph J *, head of the family, born at Warméville	48 years.
2. Marie A *, his wife, born at Château-Porcien	33 —
3. Jeanne, their daughter, born at Warméville	14 —
4. Louis, their son, born at Warméville	12 — .

The worker's father was attached to Val-des-Bois as a messenger, then he was a servant at Isles-sur-Suippe. He died tragically at the age of seventy-one. Having fallen asleep in a wood not far from the river, with a pipe still alight that set fire to the ground around him, he succumbed to the burns with which he was covered. His mother is still living; she draws the tubes made to fit the spindles used in spinning mills. Her earnings amount to 1.50 fr. a day, but they are not regular. She lives with one of her daughters⁴.

Children were more numerous formerly than they are today. Thus one of J*'s grandmothers had eleven sons; his father had three brothers and two sisters, and of his marriage were born four sons, Alfred among them, and three daughters. Like him, his three brothers work in the mill; two are spinners, one a locksmith; his sister, who looks after his mother, is married to a turner, overseer of the forge and bandmaster; she has stayed at home, where she has five children to look after, a number now considered very high.

Born of working parents who lived at Château-Porcien, the wife still has her grandmother there. The family was careful to choose the children's godparents from among its members.

4. Since our visit to the Val, the worker's mother has died, at the beginning of the year 1895.

§ 3.

RELIGION AND MORAL HABITS.

No disagreement disturbs the harmony of the household. The husband lets his wife run their home as she sees fit; she gives him full freedom to attend the meetings he must take part in and to go to the circle (§ 11) with his friends, knowing she has no misconduct to fear from him. Both are much concerned for their children. The little girl seems very intelligent; the little boy, less developed in this respect, like many children of his condition, seems to show some aptitude for mechanics. His father would be happy to see him go into the mill later on. The two children were brought up in the schools founded by the firm, the little girl in the Sisters' schools, completed by a housekeeping school particularly valued by the families; the little boy in the Brothers' school (§ 17).

Rather short, with red hair, Alfred J* has a *fox's face*, a very true image of his shrewdness and cunning, proverbial among many people of Champagne. A ready talker, he took keen pleasure in telling us about his past life, about the institutions of the mill and the principal persons who play a part in it, mingling very shrewd judgements of men and things. One of the oldest hands of the firm, and as such a member of the company of *veterans*, he received in October 1894 two diplomas of honour, one from the Société industrielle of Reims, the other from the Association générale du commerce des tissus in Paris. His easy-going character leads him to do his companions favours; and so he agreed to play the bass drum in the mill's band, although this instrument, heavy for marching, unsuited to showing off a soloist's talent and so little sought after, ought to have gone to a younger man.

The wife looks gentle and polite; she expresses herself with a certain intelligence. But her limp features offer no salient trait to which memory might cling; no sooner out of sight than forgotten. She keeps house very well.

They both have the merit of having remained on very good terms with the other members of their family (§ 2).

Husband and wife both show very religious feelings. They are careful to follow the precepts of the Church, never fail to attend Mass on Sunday, and receive the sacraments. The wife belongs to the association of Christian Mothers, the daughter to that of St Philomena, the son to that of St Aloysius Gonzaga, the husband to the Catholic Circle.

Several workers of the mill took part in the great pilgrimages of labour to Rome, for which that of the employers in 1885 gave the signal. Alfred J* was a member of that of 1887; he was presented to the Pope, who spoke to him personally. It is a memory he likes to recall. The impression of that scene has always remained very vivid in his memory. Before that he had been to Lourdes.

Alfred J *is very attached to the Harmel family; he keeps a revered memory of the former Good Father, Mr Jacques Harmel, and has remained very grateful to him for having created religious or economic associations among his workers. He likes to recall that he was one of the first workers who formed the religious nucleus around which all the others gradually came to rally, and in this he showed real courage, for the practice of religion was judged by most of his companions to be women's business. After First Communion and the renewal, a man was expected to keep out of it. In his family, J* had a very sharp struggle to sustain with a brother-in-law who threatened to fall out with him if he persisted in conduct that seemed to him most extraordinary.

As regards beliefs, indeed, until 1870 the majority of the population of the village showed religious feelings; a certain number of men made their Easter Communion. But the war and the revolution of 4 September produced a profound upheaval; "people no longer had confidence in anything", our worker told us, while at the same time, in Le Play's forceful words, "corruption was descending into the deep

foundations of the nation". The church began to be less frequented. The spread of anti-religious newspapers, to which J* attributes a great influence, came to quicken this movement, and today very few men come to the services, and fewer still fulfil their Easter duty.

So great was the astonishment when, some thirty years ago, breaking with these habits of indifference, if not hostility, workers of the Val set about becoming true Catholics again. The thing caused a scandal: when these courageous Christians appeared in an inn, they were scoffed at, insulted and mocked. If they approached other workers, if they tried to speak to them, these scattered as if they were in the presence of plague victims. Nothing stopped them, and today one of the characteristic traits of the working population of Val-des-Bois is its religious practice. Almost all the working-class families attached to it do not confine themselves to attending Mass; they also fulfil their religious duties in the mill chapel, not only at Eastertide but also at the principal feasts (§ 17). The Fathers attached to the mill belong to the order of the Sacred Heart, founded by Abbé Dehon of Saint-Quentin. Some workers prefer to go to the parish priest, who cannot console himself for seeing his church almost deserted while the chapel overflows with the faithful (§ 17). However, on the feast of Corpus Christi he has at least the joy of gathering for the procession a large escort, which winds through the streets of Warméville and the roads belonging to the commune. In its ranks is the village band, whose echoes help to give more solemnity to this beautiful feast, which always has the gift of moving working-class families as much as others. The prohibition of processions, wherever it has been imposed by anti-religious passions, has provoked keen regret and many protests. The Val-des-Bois Band often goes to a neighbouring village that has no brass band to enhance its processions; it takes part in those held in the yards and grounds of the mill: on the Patronage of St Joseph, the 4th Sunday after Pentecost, and on the feast of

Our Lady of the Factory (Notre-Dame de l'Usine), the Sunday after 8 September.

The display of these religious feelings among the workers, rare today, especially in the region of Val-des-Bois, has led some people to call into question their sincerity as well as their spontaneity: they see in it the result of pressure from the employers or of a calculation on the part of workers seeking by such means to win the good graces of their superiors. Now Mr Harmel, who has received the name of Good Father, given to his father, has always left the greatest freedom to his staff; thus one of the oldest workers not only refused to take part in this movement, but only very rarely even enters a church, without having been treated any differently from his companions who are moved by different feelings. We have seen what courageous struggles the first workers brought back to religious practice had to sustain. Their sincerity cannot be suspected, but no doubt many workers go to church and receive the sacraments because the others do so; perhaps, too, some imagine, quite wrongly, that if they acted otherwise they would not be looked on with favour by the management of the mill. It is a human feeling and easy to understand. Elsewhere it holds back from showing their faith honest but timid souls, drowned in an indifferent or hostile population; for workers are too closely mingled with one another to have the energy to react against the ideas of those around them unless they feel strongly supported. There is a human respect for good as well as for evil, and custom always exercises a great influence on men's actions. "What do you expect," some peasants once replied to a lady who asked them their reasons for giving up their Easter Communion, "what do you expect, Madam, it isn't the custom any more!" The work of Messrs Harmel nonetheless remains as one of the most remarkable that a deep and ardent faith has called forth.

§ 4.

HYGIENE AND HEALTH CARE.

Husband and wife are both endowed with excellent health, which they have partly passed on to their children. The latter, however, have often had sore eyes, especially the little boy.

In case of illness, the Mutual Aid Society gives its members free medical care, as well as medicines. The doctor of the mill and of the Mutual Aid Society lives at Bazancourt, a commune neighbouring Warméville. Confinements are attended by midwives, to whom the Aid Society pays a fee. The dispensary is kept by Sisters; they are consequently called upon to give first aid in case of accidents, as well as to give consultations to the workers, and above all to the women workers, for the commonest minor ailments. They also serve as nurses in serious illnesses. A woman of the district enjoys a great reputation as a masseuse for sprains and other accidents. It is to her above all that the workers turn.

No particular disease is rife at Warméville. The commune has not escaped the influenza epidemics that have spread through the whole of France. There, however, they did not take on the infectious character they had in other places, where they wrought cruel havoc among all classes of the population, more perhaps than any other epidemic.

The meticulous precautions taken by the employers have made accidents very rare in the mill. The society gives an additional allowance in such cases, and if the accident prevents the injured man from returning to work, a pension is paid to him (§ 18).

Here, moreover, is the average mortality of the mill's staff. It is 18, of whom 9 children, 5 women and girls, 4 men and boys.

Cases of longevity have often been recorded at Warméville. Thus, in January 1895, the Reims newspapers reported as an extraordinary fact the deaths of six old people at the age of 83 within

the space of a few weeks. The healthiness of the district does not by itself explain this fact; the generous measures taken by the employers also have a large share in it. Thus the aged parents of workers, taken in by their children employed in the mill, are admitted to the benefits of the Mutual Aid Society, although they themselves have never worked there (§ 18). It is a premium on family spirit.

§ 5.

RANK OF THE FAMILY.

The worker is highly regarded by his superiors, who rightly see in him one of their most solid supports among those they employ; although he has not risen to the highest degree of the trade hierarchy, the employers do not forget that he was one of the first nucleus around which many companions gradually came to gather. For their part, the workers hold him in great esteem in memory of the real courage he showed on that occasion. They know, moreover, that his very deep attachment to the employer does not prevent him from defending their interests, and they have shown their confidence in him by appointing him at once member of the Factory Council, which consults with the management on the means of satisfying the just claims of the staff, member of the officers of the Union (or Corporative) Council, and finally member of the board of directors of the Cooperative Society (§ 18).

THE FAMILY'S MEANS OF EXISTENCE.

§ 6.

PROPERTY.

(Furniture and clothing not included.)

Real estate.

0'00

The family owns no real estate and, moreover, cares very little about ever acquiring any. Mr Harmel had thought of creating a co-

operative housing society that would have made its members joint owners of the buildings, but the workers refused: they would, they replied, have drawn from their money only an insufficient income, lower even than that of the savings bank.

Securities.	568 ^f 00
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One City of Paris bond of 1871 yielding about 3 per cent, 418.00 fr.; — two shares in the Cooperative Society, one fully paid up and the other only half paid up, 150.00 fr. — Total, 568.00 fr.

Money	4.577 ^f 80
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The family keeps at home the money strictly necessary for its daily expenses; whatever it has left over it invests, either in the savings bank or with a capitalisation society; it had to give up a life insurance policy taken out with the L'Urbaine company, because the rate of the premium to be paid seemed to it rather high, and it considered other arrangements more advantageous.

Sum deposited in the savings bank and built up by successive deposits, 4,542.80 fr.; — sum kept as working capital, 35.00 fr. — Total, 4,577.80 fr.

Domestic animals	7 ^f 00
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The family used to keep chickens, but it had to give them up because of the high price of grain; it sometimes has, and only for part of the year, a little lamb.

4 rabbits fed on peelings and gathered grass, 7.00 fr.

Special equipment for work and industries.	1.558 ^f 75
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1. *Equipment for knitting work.* — 1 knitting machine bought in England and paid for with part of the savings entrusted to the savings bank, 1,500.00 fr.

2. *Tools for working the garden.* — 1 spade, 4.50 fr.; — 1 rake, 0.75 fr.; — 1 small pickaxe, 2.00 fr.; — 1 very large wheelbarrow, 20.00 fr.; — 1 shovel, 1.50 fr. — Total, 28.75 fr.

3. *Laundry equipment.* — 1 copper set over a hearth, 20.00 fr.; — 1 tub for washing at the river, 0.60 fr.; — 2 washing beetles, 0.40 fr.; — 6 flat irons, 5.00 fr.; — 2 vats, 4.00 fr. — Total, 30.00 fr.

Total value of the property.

6.711^f55

§ 7.

SUBSIDIES.

The employers of Val-des-Bois have clearly repudiated the theory and the practice that limit the relations of a mill owner with his staff to the strict payment of wages; they would not believe they had fulfilled their duty towards a worker if they were content to pay him the wage he had earned. To provide him with a secure existence, to enable him to bring up his family, to shield him from the abusive and ruinous exploitation to which he is too often subjected by small shopkeepers, to guarantee him resources in difficult moments, such as illness or accidents: such has been their concern. No doubt the Mutual Aid Society and the Cooperative Society could perhaps not, strictly speaking, be classed among subsidies; the worker, indeed, does not receive the advantages they procure for their members without paying anything; he pays and, in return, he is entitled to relief or to goods. In several industrial centres, moreover, the workers have themselves taken the initiative in founding these useful institutions; but would they have done so at Val-des-Bois? Would they, without the employer's impetus, have joined their efforts in order to reduce the uncertainty of their existence or, a still more difficult task, would they have launched into the creation of a Cooperative Consumer Society, whose running in the early days, however simple it may be, calls for some understanding of business? One may doubt it. The Champagne worker does

not have a marked personality and often lacks the spirit of initiative; it is therefore the employer who can claim the honour of these foundations, and on that account the benefit the worker derives from them, notably from the Cooperative Society, has rather the character of a subsidy.

We can say as much about housing, whose moderate rent is due to the building of workers' housing estates by the management of the mill (§ 18).

The whole family, at its different ages, benefits from these useful institutions; thus the children have at their disposal a school savings bank, which instils in them from their earliest years the habit of saving, the taste for order and the thought of providence. A house-keeping school has been created, run by Sisters; it gives the girls essential notions for keeping house, and the women workers over sixteen attend it on Saturdays, from five to half past six, without any deduction from their wages. A savings bank has also been created for the workers and, according to the statistics recently drawn up by the management, the company of veterans, that is to say the 42 households whose heads have been longest at the mill, possesses a sum of 225,000 francs, distributed, of course, unevenly. A Society of St Vincent de Paul relieves families in hardship (§ 17).

Another very interesting subsidy is the one that gives the family a wage supplement proportionate to the needs of the family; this supplement is provided by an institution called the *Family Fund* (§ 19).

Concern for subsidies is in reality the characteristic feature of the Val-des-Bois mill; for, according to the deed of partnership, at each half-yearly stocktaking the distributable profit is divided by the number of general partners plus one, and one of these shares is what the management calls the share of Our Lady of the Factory, that is to say, it is assigned to all the moral, economic and religious institutions that have been created little by little and are today in full flower (§ 18).

§ 8.

WORK AND INDUSTRIES.

The worker's work. — After being employed successively in various ways (§ 12), the worker is today a combed-wool spinner and machine setter. His task consists in repairing the machines, and then in making the changes needed to start up the different varieties of yarn; he can assemble and dismantle a machine and work on it when a worker is not very experienced. Because of his special duties, he does not come to work at the same hours as the other workers. Thus everyone comes in at a quarter to six in the morning; at half past eight there is a quarter of an hour's break to eat in the workshop the breakfast each has brought; at noon most of the workers go out for an hour to take the main meal at home; and finally, at six in the evening, everyone leaves the workshops. But Alfred J*** leaves home at half past five in the morning and arrives a little before the others, because he is in charge of supervising the turbine; he stays until one o'clock to watch over the machines and the workshop during the absence of the other workers, and to carry out the small repairs needed to start up the machine. Unlike most of the workers, who are paid by the piece or by the hour, he is paid by the month and receives a monthly sum of 168 francs.

The wife's work. — The wife attends to the housework; it is she who buys and prepares the food, keeps the house fairly clean, and watches more particularly over the children's upbringing, since the father is kept in the workshop all day. But to these tasks, which fall to her naturally, she has added a very profitable industry: the knitting of stockings, to which she devotes all the rather long hours of leisure her housekeeping leaves her; the knitting machine, which she bought at a price very high for workers, enables her to earn more in less time; her earnings amount on average to 500 francs a year, and contribute in large measure to the comfort of the household.

The children's work. — The little girl helps her mother with the housework, and is also beginning to learn knitting; her mother wishes her to acquire great manual skill in this work, which is, moreover, fairly easy; she will thus have in life a secure means of existence that will constitute her dowry.

Domestic industries. — Like most working-class families settled in the country, this one has kept two domestic industries: laundry and the cultivation of the garden. The husband does the gardening on summer days with the help of his children, and also on his own before going to work, a little in the evening, and sometimes also on Sunday morning before going to Mass; they value it as much for the produce they gather as for the pleasure of growing things.

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THE FAMILY'S WAY OF LIFE.

§ 9.

FOOD AND MEALS.

The family eats very well, without any excess or any refinement. Before going to the mill, the husband takes a piece of bread; on his way to work he takes with him his breakfast, that is to say coffee with bread, or milk; it is the same as his wife and children have at home.

Besides this morning breakfast, the family takes two meals a day. As in all the workers' households of the region, the main one is the midday meal; it consists of a soup, which is often a pot-au-feu, and, when there is none, of another piece of meat with vegetables; quite often the family adds a dessert, for example apples, nuts or cheese. In the evening, the meal is taken at seven o'clock and the menu is plainer; almost always it is a stew of potatoes or vegetables in which a few pieces of meat are drowned, with salad. To drink, the family has beer, wine or cider, which comes from the Ardennes, from the ar-

rondissement of Rethel, and is often of excellent quality; it also takes a little brandy, but it is mainly outside the home that the husband, with great moderation moreover, drinks a small glass; he very rarely has occasion to lunch or dine away from home. He always stays at the workshop; only occasionally is he sent on an errand or goes to Reims, which in that case obliges him to take a meal in a restaurant (§ 11). He also spends a little on drinks at the Circle.

The family buys its provisions at the Cooperative Society, as do most of the workers of the Val; they find a very great advantage in it, notably that of being obliged to pay cash; they thus escape credit, which is one of the most deadly practices of small shopkeeping, as much for the shopkeeper himself as for his customers. However, when very reliable workers are temporarily in hardship, payment in cash is not to be understood in the strict sense. Finally, for meat, the Val mill has organised the system of approved suppliers (§ 18).

§ 10.

DWELLING, FURNITURE AND CLOTHING.

The worker lives in a flat in the Saint-Joseph estate (cité Saint-Joseph), not far from the mill. But let us not picture this estate in the form of those we see in the towns: a great barracks or wretched little houses in which households are crammed one on top of another, where air and light alike are severely rationed. This estate is a long building of a single storey stretching along the road that leads to the mill; in front of its sunny façade lies a garden, and on the other side there is also a small yard giving onto one of the arms of the river that supplies the motive power to the mill. It belongs to the management, which lets it to the workers; the rent is deducted from the wages; it ranges, according to the case, from 110 to 180 francs; that of Alfred J* is 176 francs.

The price of these dwellings is somewhat lower than the cost of those let in the village by various landlords, and the salutary competi-

tion of the Harmel estates has prevented rents from rising, as would certainly have happened had the landlords been on their own. The family is very attached to its flat and, as we have already had occasion to say, it, like the others, shows little interest in acquiring a house of its own. Although he has been at the mill for many years and is sure never to leave it, the worker replies that today there are too many changes for the purchase of real estate to be advantageous.

The dwelling consists of four rooms; on the ground floor, raised a few steps above the ground, there is a large room that serves both as dining room and kitchen; it is somewhat *the hall* of our forefathers. It is there that the family receives visitors, and there that we had with the wife the conversations needed to write this monograph, whereas we saw the worker mostly at the mill; there is in addition a small room used for washing. A narrow staircase leads, on the first floor, to two rooms with fairly high ceilings, which serve for the parents and the children; above that again there is an attic room. Behind the house, as behind all the others in the estate, there is a small yard, reached by a passage; in this yard, a water closet and a shed.

Furniture: in sufficient quantity and fairly well kept.

1.243^f 00

1. *Bedding*. — 1 large bed with spring base, 110.00 fr.; — 2 iron beds with spring bases for the children, 80.00 fr.; — 3 eiderdowns, 40.00 fr.; — 4 wool mattresses, 90.00 fr.; — 1 seaweed mattress, 10.00 fr.; — 3 wool blankets, 50.00 fr.; — 4 pillows, 14.00 fr.; — 3 bolsters, 38.00 fr. — Total, 432.00 fr.

2. *Furniture of the hall* (dining room and kitchen). — 1 table, 45.00 fr., — 1 sideboard that came from the parents, 130.00 fr.; — 1 kitchen range, 65.00 fr., — 1 clock, 75.00 fr., — 1 smaller one given as a present by the brother of Mr Léon Harmel, Mr Ernest Harmel, 10.00

fr.⁵; — 1 bowl, 6.00 fr.; — 4 chairs, 12.00 fr.; — 1 table, 15.00 fr. — Total, 358.00 fr.

3. *Furniture of the other rooms.* — 1 bedside rug, 5.00 fr. — 2 bedside tables, 20.00 fr., — 8 chairs, 24.00 fr.; — 1 wardrobe, 120.00 fr.; — 1 sewing machine, 150.00 fr.; — 1 chest of drawers, 65.00 fr., — 1 false mantelpiece, 14.00 fr.; — 1 fire screen, 4.00 fr. — Total, 402.00 fr.

4. *Books and pictures.* — 4 missals, 13.00 fr.; — photographs (for the record), framed prints reproducing in colour Millet's paintings *The Gleaners* and *The Angelus*, 10.00 fr.; — pictures of the Sacred Heart given at school, 1.00 fr.; — 15 prize books, including the lives of St Vincent de Paul, of Joan of Arc, of the Duchess Anne, Marie and Marguerite, etc., 27.00 fr. — Total, 51.00 fr.

Utensils: in very sufficient number.

133^f 15

1. *Used for preparing and eating food.* — 2 stewpots, 5.00 fr.; — 3 saucepans, 4.50 fr.; — 4 dozen plates, 9.60 fr.; — 1 dozen spoons and forks, 4.00 fr.; — 1 ladle, 0.65 fr.; — 1 enamelled ladle, 0.50 fr.; — 1 skimmer, 0.50 fr.; — 1 dozen coffee spoons, 1.80 fr.; — 1 coffee pot, 5.00 fr.; — 12 knives, 6.00 fr.; — 2 dozen stemmed glasses, 4.20 fr.; — 8 small glasses, 1.20 fr.; — 2 trays, 5.50 fr.; — 6 bowls, 1.20 fr.; — 12 small coffee cups, 9.00 fr.; — 1 sugar bowl, 1.50 fr.; — 2 salad bowls, 3.00 fr.; — 2 soup tureens, 4.00 fr.; — 2 deep dishes, 3.00 fr.; — 2 flat dishes, 2.50 fr.; — 1 coffee mill, 2.25 fr.; — 3 milk jugs, 3.00 fr.; — water pail, 2.50 fr.; — 50 bottles, 7.50 fr. — Total, 87.90 fr.

2. *Various utensils.* — Coal boxes, 4.25 fr.; — cask for holding water, 3.00 fr.; — 2 lamps with shades, 18.00 fr.; — 4 candlesticks, 15.00 fr.; — toilet articles, basin and water jugs, 5.00 fr. — Total, 45.25 fr.

5. Mr Ernest Harmel had left by will a sum to be shared among all the workers with at least 10 years' service at the mill. As each of them would have received only a modest sum, the Internal Council, consulted by the Good Father, asked that a keepsake be bought and given to every family meeting the required conditions. So 120 clocks were bought, like the one owned by our worker.

Household linen: such as can easily meet the needs of a working-class family in relatively comfortable circumstances. 294^f 00

14 pairs of sheets, 210.00 fr.; — 24 napkins, 20.00 fr.; — 48 tea towels, 36.00 fr.; — 24 hand towels, 10.00 fr.; — 12 pillowcases, 18.00 fr. — Total, 294.00 fr.

Clothing: every trace of a costume peculiar to the region has disappeared; the smock in which the worker is traditionally pictured is now worn by him only in the workshop, and even there many have given it up. Not only overcoats, but also the top hat, which seemed the privilege of the gentlemen of the town, are now worn by the workers, whereas, on the contrary, country people, even of considerable means but somewhat peasant in their ways, have remained resistant to it. As for the women, as we noted above, they seek to dress with great elegance on feast days, following the fashions of the day; it is true that they see these fashions created almost at the Val, for many fabrics that have been all the rage were devised and launched by the firm, although it makes no fabrics but only yarns. We observed the same inclinations among the women workers of Guise, but in addition these, husband and wife alike, had a passion for luxury in the interior of their homes, a passion absent among the workers of the Val. The wife is not one of those whose clothes are the most elaborate

The worker's clothes (416.50 fr.)

1 complete formal suit, trousers, waistcoat and coat made to measure, 100.00 fr.; — 2 complete suits for Sundays and outings to the Reims fair, one at 45.00 fr., the second at 50.00 fr.; — 1 winter overcoat, 50.00 fr.; — 3 pairs of linen trousers and jackets for work, 25.00 fr.; — 1 top hat, 10.00 fr.; — 1 bowler hat, 5.00 fr.; — 1 straw hat, 2.50 fr.; — 6 coloured shirts for work, 18.00 fr.; — 6 white shirts, 24.00 fr.; — 6 detachable collars, 3.00 fr.; — 2 dozen handkerchiefs, 8.00 fr.; — 2 pairs of drawers, 6.00 fr.; — 6 pairs of wool socks, 10.50 fr.; — 6 pairs of socks for summer, 6.00 fr.; — 1 pair of shoes, 16.00 fr.; — 1 pair of boots, 22.00 fr.; — 1 pair of clogs, 1.00 fr.; — 1 pair of house shoes, 1.50 fr.; — 1 pair of slippers, 3.00 fr.; — 1 wool jersey, 10.00 fr. —

Total, 416.50 fr.

The wife's clothes (337.75 fr.).

1 dark-coloured costume for feast days, 45.00 fr.; — 1 other for Sundays, 30.00 fr.; — 3 for every day, 45.00 fr.; — 1 jacket bought in Reims, 35.00 fr.; — 2 petticoats of wool and cotton, 9.00 fr.; — 1 winter hat, 12.00 fr.; — 1 summer hat, 14.00 fr.; — 6 pairs of wool stockings, 13.50 fr.; — 10 pairs of cotton stockings, 12.50 fr.; — 1 pair of boots, 16.00 fr.; — 1 pair of slippers, 3.25 fr.; — 4 aprons, 6.00 fr.; — 3 dozen handkerchiefs, 36.00 fr.; — 18 chemises she made herself, 54.00 fr.; — 2 wool shawls, 6.00 fr. — Total, 337.25 fr.

The daughter's clothes (115.75 fr.).

1 Sunday dress made by a dressmaker, 18.00 fr.; — 1 other dress for dressing up, 10.00 fr.; — 1 everyday dress, 8.00 fr.; — 3 petticoats, 7.50 fr.; — 4 pairs of wool stockings, 8.00 fr.; — 4 pairs of cotton stockings, 6.00 fr.; — 1 pair of boots, 6.50 fr.; — 1 pair of fur-lined slippers, 8.50 fr.; — clogs and house shoes, 5.00 fr.; — 12 handkerchiefs, 3.50 fr.; — 3 aprons, 3.75 fr.; — 8 chemises, 10.00 fr.; — 1 cape, 3.00 fr.; — 2 wool shawls, 5.00 fr.; — 1 summer hat, 7.00 fr.; — 1 winter hat 6.00 fr. — Total, 115.75 fr.

The little boy's clothes (116.35 fr.).

1 suit for Sunday, 28.00 fr.; — 2 for every day, 10.00 fr.; — 1 hooded cloak, 7.50 fr.; — 1 cap, 1.45 fr.; — 2 straw hats, 3.90 fr.; — 13 pairs of wool stockings, 25.00 fr.; — 4 pairs of cotton stockings, 5.00 fr.; — 6 shirts, 12.00 fr.; — 6 handkerchiefs, 1.50 fr.; — 1 pair of boots, 8.00 fr.; — 1 pair of laced ankle boots, 6.50 fr.; — 1 pair of fur-lined slippers, 6.50 fr. — Total, 116.35 fr.

Jewellery (81.00 fr.).

The husband's watch, 25.00 fr.; — his wedding ring, 18.00 fr.; — the wife's earrings 18.00 fr.; — her wedding ring, 20.00 fr. — Total, 81.00 fr.

Total value of furniture and clothing

2.737^f 50

§ 11.

RECREATIONS.

The worker takes great pleasure in going to the Circle opposite the mill, where he plays various card games with his friends, one of which in particular is a Belgian game called the four-card game; billiards is also one of his favourite pastimes. This opportunity given to the workers to amuse themselves at little cost arouses in him a keen feeling of gratitude towards the employers who took the initiative in such an institution; he does not play for money, but simply for "the drinks".

The Reims fair, held in the chief town of the department in Easter week, exerts an irresistible attraction throughout the region; its travelling theatres, as well as its stalls, which are moreover numerous, certainly make it one of the most brilliant in the region. And so all the households of workers and country people never fail to go to it; it is for them a day of festivity, joyful above all others; no doubt they leave there a few crowns, whose use some gloomy partisans of thrift will perhaps blame, but the memories of this happy day remain long engraved in the family's memory; it loves to recall the shows it has seen, to chatter about its purchases, and if man lives by bread, he also lives by memories which very often will make him find the present less bitter and make reality easier to bear.

In summer, when the fine days come, working-class families like to take a few walks along the banks of the river, to rest in the shade of the little woods that shade its banks, or sometimes to venture on more distant excursions.

Another great diversion for the worker is the meetings of the committees he belongs to; the business dealt with there has great importance in his eyes, as for all those who are members of them; the subject comes up often in their conversations. He considers himself somebody in the industrial establishment, since he is called upon to

take decisions on this or that matter. This is one of the happiest results of these associations: they occupy the workers' minds, give them an interest and thus bring about a rapprochement between them and the management.

We also observed in the English worker whose monograph we wrote the interest he took in the administration of the branch of the trade unions to which he belonged. He watched over it with scrupulous attention and regarded its affairs as his own; it was one of his favourite subjects of conversation⁶.

Like all or nearly all his companions, Alfred J* delights in reading the newspapers, or at least one of them; he is perhaps even more interested in the news items than in the political news, and many women too take no less pleasure in reading the account of every romantic or dramatic event.

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HISTORY OF THE FAMILY.

§ 12.

MAIN PHASES OF LIFE.

The worker's life has passed calmly and monotonously around his workshop; no particular incidents have marked it and it has not had to go through difficult hours.

Following the custom of the time, he entered the mill very young, a mere child, at the age of nine, and he has climbed one after another the various rungs of the trade. He was first a bobbin boy, that is to say, he was responsible for filling the machine with bobbins of wool to be spun, for putting on the spindles the tubes or cops to replace those that were full of yarn, for starting a new bobbin, and also for sweep-

6. Monograph of the Nottingham Tanner. (*Ouvriers des Deux Mondes*, 2nd series, vol. III.)

ing. He then earned from 50 to 75 centimes a day. The working day was long; it began at five in the morning and did not end until seven in the evening; there was, it must be said, a break of half an hour in the morning, of an hour at noon and of half an hour at four o'clock. The reduction of the working day also seems to him one of the greatest improvements introduced into the worker's life. While he values it highly, he does not go so far as to wish it reduced to eight hours, although the workers today produce as much as when they were bound to a much longer presence in the workshop⁷.

Alfred J* continued his first kind of work until the age of twelve, and then became a piecer, that is to say that in this capacity he had to join the broken threads, which happens while the machine is running: his task was a little more tiring than in his first years as a worker; he had to follow the machine all the time, oil it and check that there was no bad work; he was bound to the same working hours as when he first entered the workshop. His earnings, at first 1.25 fr. a day, rose to 2 francs; at eighteen he became a hand-mule spinner and remained one until twenty-seven: his wage was much higher, 4 francs to 4.50 fr. a day, and sometimes it even rose to 6 or 7 francs. His working life was not interrupted by military service; the war broke out a short time after he had been called to his new duties; he wanted to enlist, but he was rejected at Reims as unfit for military service, because of

7. Monograph of the Clerk of the Angoulême paper mill, § 12 (*Ouv. des Deux Mondes*, 2nd series, vol. IV). He too had had to bear very long working hours in his youth, and congratulated himself on their reduction; like the worker of Val-des-Bois, he saw in it one of the happiest developments for the working class. These feelings make it easy to understand the success that the demand for the eight-hour day has had in certain circles, although in the two industrial establishments in question it has only a few supporters.

On the subject of output kept up so well despite the reduction in working hours, we recall the fact witnessed by the Guise works during the war of 1870: the works, having lost its outlets, found itself obliged to reduce its production; it resorted to reducing working hours, and only by bringing them below eight hours was it able to achieve the desired result. (See § 8.)

a weakness of constitution far more apparent than real, since his health has remained very good ever since.

From spinner he became a minder of self-acting mules. In this capacity he ran the machines that work automatically and that the workers must follow as they move, in the course of which they sometimes cover a daily distance of 15 to 16 kilometres. The day after the fire that took place in 1874, he was sent to La Neuville, to an industrialist who had lent his machines to Mr Harmel to prevent any stoppage of work. Many workers then slept in a dormitory and were under the supervision of the Sisters of St Vincent de Paul. Then he became machine setter, the post he holds today: but he is also employed from time to time on machines that are to be converted, and he works fairly often with one of the heads of the firm, who has a particular gift for finding new combinations of colour and so ensuring the success of new fabrics.

The main events of his life have been the important part he took in the founding of the works and institutions initiated by the employer, and also his pilgrimages to Rome and to Lourdes, the memory of which remains deeply engraved in his mind, as indeed in that of all the workers who took part in them.

His wife's story takes even fewer words: child, girl, wife, mother; that sums it up. She was only a chambermaid in the house of one of the employers, where she proved a very faithful servant.

The son will enter the same industrial establishment as his father; he will continue there the same simple, monotonous life, but secure and on the whole happy. Its security would certainly be envied by more than one person who, misled by lying generalisations and exaggerated descriptions, pictures all the workers of large-scale industry as wretches bowed under the weight of crushing toil, earning a meagre wage and above all never sure of the morrow.

§ 13.

CUSTOMS AND INSTITUTIONS ENSURING THE PHYSICAL AND MORAL WELL-BEING OF THE FAMILY.

The worker's family finds in its work, in its orderly qualities and in its spirit of thrift the first condition of security; it has little to fear from industrial crises. Although competition is very keen in the textile industry, the Harmel firm has so well established a position, and has secured outlets abroad with such intelligence, that crises are less to be feared for it; and even if, which is not to be expected, the number of workers had one day to be reduced, Alfred J*, being one of the oldest hands, would always be sure of being kept on.

Then, a series of institutions shelters the working-class families from the contingencies of life. The Cooperative Society supplies them with goods of good quality and more cheaply. Should they fall ill or be the victims of an accident, the Mutual Aid Society gives them its help; the savings bank established at the mill gives them every facility to insure themselves against the future and to put the spirit of providence into practice. In addition, the institutions of a moral character help to put them on their guard against the temptations of an easy and therefore costly life. It is the employer's patronage in full flower, coming to the help of individuals, yet without claiming to destroy their spirit of initiative, but on the contrary stimulating it, encouraging it and developing administrative qualities in the workers. It is to them, indeed, that the administration of all the institutions is entrusted, under the high direction of the firm; the employer's intervention shows itself there only on rare occasions.

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§ 14. — BUDGET OF RECEIPTS FOR THE YEAR.

Sources of receipts

Approximate valuation of the sources of receipts

*Value of
the
property.*

Section I. — Property owned by the family.

Art. 1. — Real estate.

(The family owns no real estate.) »

Art. 2. — Movable assets.

Money:

Sum kept as working capital 35^f00

Sum deposited in the savings bank 4542 80

Securities:

1 City of Paris bond (1871) 418 00

2 shares in the Cooperative Society, one of them only half paid up 150 00

Domestic animals kept all year round:

4 rabbits 7 00

Special equipment for work and industries:

Equipment used for knitting work 1500 00

Tools used for working the garden 28 75

Utensils used for laundering the linen 30 00

Art. 3. — Right to allowances from mutual insurance societies.

Right to allowances from the various insurance funds »

Total value of the property 6711 55

Section II. — Subsidies received by the family.

Art. 1. — Property received in usufruct.

(The family receives no property in usufruct.)

Art. 2. — Rights of use over neighbouring property.

(The family enjoys no right of this kind.)

Art. 3. — Allowances of goods and services.

Allowances concerning food and clothing

Receipts	Amount of receipts: value of goods received in kind	Amount of receipts: receipts in money
Section I. — Income from property.		
<i>Art. 1. — Income from real estate.</i>		
(The family enjoys no income of this kind.)	»	»
<i>Art. 2. — Income from movable assets.</i>		
(This sum earns no interest.)	»	»
Interest (3.25 per cent) on this sum	»	147 ^f 64
Interest (3 per cent) on the nominal value of this bond	»	12 00
Interest (6 per cent) and dividend (4.50 per cent)	»	15 75
Interest (5 per cent) on this value	0 ^f 35	»
Interest 5 per cent on this value	»	75 00
— — —	1 44	»
— — —	1 50	»
<i>Art. 3. — Allowances from mutual insurance societies.</i>		
Value of these allowances, assumed equal to the annual subscription, and as such omitted from the account of receipts and expenditure (23 ^f 40.)	»	»
Totals of income from property	3 29	250 39
Section II. — Proceeds of subsidies.		
<i>Art. 1. — Proceeds of property received in usufruct.</i>		
(The family enjoys no income of this kind.)	»	»
<i>Art. 2. — Proceeds of rights of use.</i>		
(The family enjoys no proceeds of this kind.)	»	»
<i>Art. 3. — Goods and services allowed.</i>		

Saving resulting from purchases at the Cooperative Society, estimated for the year at 130^f00. (For the record.)

Total of the proceeds of subsidies			»	»
Sources of receipts: description of the work and use of time			Quantity of work done: father	Quantity of work done: mother
			<i>Days.</i>	<i>Days.</i>
Section III. — Work done by the family.				
Principal work:				
Work of the worker at the mill as a combed-wool spinner and machine setter.			300	»
Care of the household and domestic work			»	110
Secondary work:				
Cultivation of the garden			20	»
Knitting of stockings			»	172
Washing of the linen and clothes			»	19
Mending of the linen and clothes			»	13
Upkeep of the furniture			1	6
Totals of the days of all the members of the family			321	320
Section IV. — Industries undertaken by the family (on its own account).				
Cultivation of the garden				
Washing of the linen and clothes				
Rates of daily wages: father	Rates of daily wages: mother	Receipts	Amount of receipts: value of the objects received in kind	Amount of receipts: receipts in money
<i>Fr. c.</i>	<i>Fr. c.</i>			

Section III. — Wages.

6 ^f 72	»	Total wage attributed to this work	»	2.016 ^f 00
»	»	(No wage can be attributed to this work.)	»	»
2 00[?]	»	Total wage attributed to this work	40 ^f 00	»
»	2 ^f 50	— — — (430 ^f 00, from which must be deducted the interest on the machine (75 ^f 00), the only expense occasioned by this work).	»	355 00
»	1 75	Total wage attributed to this work	33 25	»
»	1 50	— — —	19 50	»
2 00[?]	1 50	— — —	11 00	»
Totals of the family's wages			103 75	2.371 00

Section IV. — Profits from the industries.

Profit resulting from this industry (§ 16, A)	38 46	»
— — (§ 16, B)	15 25	»
Totals of the profits resulting from the industries (§ 16, C)	53 71	»

Note. — Besides the receipts entered above in the account, the industries give rise to a receipt of 42^f05 (§ 16, C), which is applied again to these same industries; this receipt and the expenses that balance it (§ 15, Sect. V) have been omitted from both budgets.

Totals of the receipts for the year (balancing the expenditure) (2.782 ^f 14)	160 75	2.621 39
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§ 15. — BUDGET OF EXPENDITURE FOR THE YEAR.

Description of the expenditure	Amount of expenditure: value of the objects consumed in kind		Amount of expenditure: expenditure in money
	<i>Weight and price of foodstuffs: weight consumed.</i>	<i>Weight and price of foodstuffs: price per kilog.</i>	
Section I. — Expenditure on food.			
<i>Art. 1. — Food consumed in the household</i>			
(by the worker, his wife and 2 children for 365 days).			
Cereals:			
Bread	546 ^k 0	0 ^t 300	» 163 ^t 80
Flour	18 0	0 400	» 7 20
Total weight and average price	564 0	0 303	
Fats:			
Butter	13 0	3 300	» 42 90
Lard	26 0	1 800	» 46 80
Poppy-seed oil	12 0	1 500	» 18 00
Total weight and average price	51 0	2 112	
Dairy produce and eggs:			
Milk	730 0	0 150	» 109 50

Marolles and Brie cheese	19 5	2 000	»	39 00
Eggs, 764 at 0 ^f 078	»	»	»	60 06
Total weight and average price	749 5	0 185		
Meat and fish:				
Beef	69 0	1 800	»	124 20
— veal	23 0	2 050	»	47 15
— pork	23 0	1 800	»	41 40
Game: 10 rabbits	12 0	1 800	0 ^f 35	21 25
Poultry: 4 chickens 4 ^k at 1 ^f 20; — 1 goose 2 ^k at 2 ^f 40	6 0	1 600	»	9 60
Fish: chiefly herrings, sometimes freshwater fish	30 0	1 200	»	36 00
Total weight and average price	163 0	1 717		

*Weight
and price
of
foodstuffs:
weight
consumed.*

*Weight
and price
of
foodstuffs:
price per
kilog.*

Section I. — Expenditure on food (continued).

*Art. 1. — Food consumed in the
household (continued).*

Vegetables and fruit:

Tubers: Potatoes, partly bought and partly harvested in the garden (§ 16, A)	600 ^f 0	0 ^f 070	24 ^f 64	17 ^f 36
Starchy vegetables: beans	33 0	0 400	8 80	4 40
Green vegetables for cooking: green peas	25 0	0 750	16 50	2 25
Cabbages	70 0	0 100	4 40	2 60
Carrots, parsley, leeks, turnips	»	»	5 28	0 72

Seasoning vegetables: onions	18 0	0 100	»	1 80
Various salads	130 0	0 150	17 16	2 34
Fruit: Apples, 48 ^k at 0 ^f 30; — pears, 14 ^k at 0 ^f 30; — cherries, 19 ^k at 0 ^f 35; — plums, 13 ^k at 0 ^f 30; — currants, 3 ^k at 0 ^f 25; — strawberries, 8 ^k at 0 ^f 30; — grapes, 8 ^k at 0 ^f 35	113 0	0 310	3 12	31 98
Total weight and average price	989 0	0 139		
Condiments and stimulants:				
Salt	15 0	0 200	»	3 00
Pepper	0 75	5 600	»	4 20
Vinegar	12 0	0 500	»	6 00
Sugar	24 0	1 250	»	30 00
Aromatic drink: coffee	13 0	5 800	»	75 40
Chocolate	3 0	3 400	»	10 20
Total weight and average price	67 75	1 901		
Fermented drinks:				
Beer	600 0	0 200	»	120 00
Wine	100 0	0 550	»	55 00
Cider	200 0	0 150	»	30 00
Brandy	12 0	1 500	»	18 00
Total weight and average price	912 0	0 244		
<i>Art. 2. — Food prepared and consumed outside the household.</i>				
Refreshments taken at the Circle by the worker, and by the family on excursion days			»	70 00
Totals of the expenditure on food			80 25	1252 11
Section II. — Expenditure on housing.				
Lodging:				
Rent of the house			»	176 ^f 00

Furniture:

Purchases and upkeep, 6 days of the wife's work, 1 of the husband's (§ 14, Sect. III).	11 ^f 00	30 00
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Heating:

Coal, 2.000 ^k at 3 ^f 80 per 100 ^k ; — 30 sacks of wood shavings at 0 ^f 50 a sack, 15 ^f 00; — 25 faggots of fir at 0 ^f 14 a faggot, 3 ^f 50	»	94 50
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Lighting:

Paraffin, 38 litres at 0 ^f 30	»	11 40
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Totals of the expenditure on housing	11 00	311 90
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Section III. — Expenditure on clothing.

Clothes:

The worker's clothes	»	70 00
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— the wife's	»	65 00
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— the children's	»	60 00
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Upkeep of the linen and clothes, purchases and 13 days of the wife's work at 1 ^f 50 (§ 14, Sect. III).	19 50	0 50
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Washing:

Washing of the linen and clothes by the wife (§ 16, B).	50 00	31 15
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Totals of the expenditure on clothing	69 50	226 65
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Section IV. — Expenditure on moral needs, recreation and health care.

Worship:

(The practice of worship occasions no expense.)	»	
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Education of the children:

School supplies		4 50
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Section IV. — Expenditure on moral needs, recreation, and health care (*continued*).

Relief and alms:

Alms given to beggars and collections at the chapel	»	7 ^f 00
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Recreation and celebrations:

Expenses at the tavern and at the Circle (entered in the present budget, Sect. I, art. 2); — various expenses on feast days, 15 ^f 00; — presents given to the children by the parents, 6 ^f 00; — tobacco, 10 ^f 00; — newspapers; 18 ^f 50	»	49 50
Health care:		
Subscription paid by the worker to the Mutual Aid Society: these expenses are assumed to be repaid by equal allowances and are left out of the budgets on both the receipts and the expenditure side (§ 14, Sect. I).	»	»
Petty expenses	»	3 00
Totals of the expenditure on moral needs, recreation and health care	»	64 00
Section V. — Expenditure on industries, debts, taxes and insurance.		
Expenditure on industries:		
Note. — The expenditure on the industries undertaken by the family amounts to (§ 16, C). 118 ^f 24		
It is repaid by the receipts from these same industries, namely:		
Products used for the household's consumption and entered, as such, in the present budget 76 ^f 19		
Money applied again to the industries (§ 14, Sect. IV), as a temporary use of the working capital, and which consequently cannot appear among the household's expenses 42 ^f 05 } 118 24		
Interest on debts:		
(The family has no debts.)		
Taxes:		
Personal and property tax	»	16 00
Insurance helping to guarantee the physical and moral well-being of the family:		
Subscription to the union (25 cent. a month)	»	3 00
Total of the expenditure on industries, debts, taxes and insurance	»	19 00
Savings for the year:		

Used to increase the sum already deposited in the savings bank » 747 73

Totals of the expenditure for the year (balancing the receipts) (2.782^f14). 160^f75 2.621 39

§ 16.

ACCOUNTS ANNEXED TO THE BUDGETS.

Section I.

Accounts of the profits resulting from the industries undertaken by the family (on its own account).

	Values: in kind	Values: in money
A. — Cultivation of the garden.		
Receipts.		
Potatoes consumed by the family, 400 ^k at 7 ^f 00 per 100 ^k	24 ^f 64	3 ^f 36
Salads, lettuces, endives, chicories, 130 ^k at 0 ^f 15	17 16	2 34
Cabbages, 50 ^k at 0 ^f 10	4 40	0 60
Leeks, parsley, carrots, etc.	5 28	0 72
Green peas, 25 ^k at 0 ^f 75	16 50	2 25
White beans, 25 ^k at 0 ^f 40	8 80	1 20
Currants, 3 ^k at 0 ^f 25	0 66	0 09
Grapes, 8 ^k at 0 ^f 35	2 46	0 34
Totals of the receipts	79 90	10 90
Expenditure.		
Manure	»	3 40
Seeds	»	7 50
The worker's labour: 20 days at 2 ^f 00	40 00	»
Interest (5 per cent) on the value of the equipment	1 44	»
Profit resulting from the industry	38 46	»
Totals as above	79 90	10 90

B. — Washing of the family's linen and clothes.

Receipts.		
Price that would be paid for the washing of the same articles done outside	50 00	31 15
Expenditure.		
Soap, 16 ^k at 0 ^f 40	»	6 ^f 40
Starch, 1 ^k at 0 ^f 60; — blueing, 1 ^f 20; — Javel water, 6 ^k at 0 ^f 40; — soda carbonate, 24 ^k at 0 ^f 20	»	9 00
Wage paid to a woman during the winter months	»	15 75
The wife's labour: 19 days at 1 ^f 75	33 25	»
Interest (5 per cent) on the value of the equipment	1 50	»
Profit resulting from the industry	15 25	»
Totals as opposite	50 00	31 15

C. — Summary of the accounts of the profits resulting from the industries (A and B).

Receipts.		
Products used for the family's food (§ 15, Sect. I)	79 90	»
— for clothing (§ 15, Sect. III)	50 00	
Receipts in money to be used again for the industries themselves	»	42 05
Totals of the receipts	129 90	42 05
Expenditure.		
Interest on the property owned by the family and used by it for the industries	2 94	»
Wages for the work done by the family for the industries	73 25	»
Expenditure in money, which must be repaid by receipts from the industries	»	42 05
Totals of the expenditure (118 ^f 24)	76 19	42 05
Total profits resulting from the industries	53 71	»
Totals as above	129 90	42 05

Section II.

Accounts relating to subsidies.

These accounts, involving very simple operations, have been drawn up in the budget itself.

Section III.

Miscellaneous accounts.

These accounts are drawn up directly in the budget itself.

VARIOUS ELEMENTS OF THE SOCIAL CONSTITUTION
IMPORTANT FACTS OF SOCIAL ORGANISATION;
REMARKABLE FEATURES; GENERAL ASSESSMENTS;
CONCLUSIONS.

§ 17.

PATRONAGE AND THE MORAL AND RELIGIOUS ASSOCIATIONS.

Many industrialists have founded employers' institutions; almost all of them aim at improving the worker's material existence, easing the difficulties of life, and providing relief in sickness or for accidents occurring in the course of his work, but very few can be regarded as moral institutions properly so called, and still fewer as religious institutions. The multiplicity of these latter institutions is, on the contrary, the great originality of Val-des-Bois; the employer has concerned himself not only with the bodies of his workers but also with their souls; he has had in view not only the well-being of the family, but has sought to make it advance along the ways of Christian perfection, not by a minute intervention at every moment, but by taking the initiative in a movement whose direction he then left to those concerned themselves.

Mr Léon Harmel has himself related⁸ the generous efforts that his father had undertaken on behalf of his staff, at a time when most employers saw nothing beyond the payment of the wage, in all good conscience moreover, for social economy was then dominated by the false idea of labour as a commodity. The efforts of Mr Harmel, who later received the touching name of Good Father, were certainly not fruitless. Yet beneath a fairly favourable appearance there lay hidden, as his son has related with noble frankness, “the miseries all too common among the floating populations, the only ones employed in the mills of our regions”: improvidence and dissipation, widespread drunkenness, quarrels or disorder in families, an utter lack of respect on the part of many children, profound religious ignorance; such were the traits that a scrupulous observer, as the employer was, could not fail to meet in most of his workers. He had to struggle above all against the tyranny of human respect, which forbade all religious practice, and against the authority of a few bold spirits who made the young men as well as the girls blush for their good conduct.

In the face of his powerless efforts, Mr Harmel then had the idea of calling religion to his aid. Three Sisters of St Vincent de Paul were installed on 2 February 1861 in a former inn, a kind of house of ill repute; two Jesuit Fathers came for a month to preach a mission which deeply stirred the population; but little by little the old habits of indifference gained the upper hand again, and the freethinkers and fine talkers recovered their influence. In the task they had undertaken, the Sisters had to struggle not only against the girls but also against the mothers, who found it quite natural that their daughters should go to the dance on Sundays, saying that young people must have their fun; these dances were the scene of real scandals, for on leaving, the girls never failed to be accompanied by a partner; such was the attraction of these pleasures that in the first year in which

8. *Manuel de la Corporation chrétienne*, by Mr Léon Harmel, Tours, Mame, 1879, in-18, p. 23

the Sisters had gathered girls around them, barely one or two of them remained faithful and did not let themselves be led astray by the magic pleasure of dancing on Sunday evening.

Anyone other than Mr Harmel would certainly have lost heart in the face of these sad results; but his Christian conscience made it a duty for him to persevere. He resolved to change his method; association seemed to him the best means of transforming this population; he thought that by forming among the workers a few more resolute Christian men and women, they could reach the workers' families better than the employer could, and exert an influence that would doubtless arouse less prejudice. In a word, to use the expression that Mr Léon Harmel employed later, it was to the apostolate of the worker by the worker that he appealed in order to regenerate a population that was Christian in name and pagan in fact.

It was on 15 August 1863 that the association of the Children of Mary was formed, with a few girls resolved to remain virtuous; the others followed little by little, and today we see these associations in full flower.

1. *The chapel.* — Mr Harmel's first thought was to build a chapel intended exclusively for the workers of the mill; he thus withdrew them from the tyranny of custom, which forbade the men the practice of their religious duties. It was not without difficulty that this chapel was built; the parish priest saw in it a kind of second parish, and was distressed to think that the most religious element of the commune was going to escape him; but Mr Harmel held firm, realising that the workers would become all the more religious for feeling supported by one another. He overcame the very keen opposition raised against him by the parish clergy, and today all the religious acts in which the workers of Val-des-Bois and their families take part are performed in the mill chapel.

2. *The men's associations.* — Here are the associations that the rules of the house call fundamental associations.

First, the Men's Association, founded on 28 April 1867 and placed under the patronage of St Joseph; its meetings are held on weekday evenings and all day on Sunday; the members have games such as billiards at their disposal, and thus keep away from the taverns, those places of moral perdition and even of physical degradation through the abuse of adulterated drinks. Exercises proper to the Association of St Joseph are held in the chapel, as indeed for the other associations. Next comes the Little Circle, which brings together the young men from their First Communion up to the age of seventeen; then the Association of St Aloysius Gonzaga, founded in 1872, which takes in boys from the age of seven up to their First Communion. Three Brothers direct these three associations, which appoint councils charged with administering them and settling their various interests.

3. *The women's associations.* — Four associations have been created for the female workforce.

The first is the Association of St Anne, which brings together the mothers of families; in the field of charity it is especially concerned with young mothers and widows; about 231 married women or widows belong to it today; the general meeting of the association is held on the first Wednesday of the month at the Sisters' house, and besides the instruction given by the Father Chaplain, they hear some explanations about the economic institutions already established or planned, so as to keep the workers' wives informed of the economic life of the mill, to show them the advantages of this or that institution, and thus to win the workers' assent; for experience has shown that many economic works, and in particular cooperative societies, had come up above all against the prejudices of the women. Within this Association of St Anne there is a section called the Third Order, to which the most devout persons are affiliated; the tertiaries currently number 52.

The girls are divided among three associations: first, the Children of Mary, admitted from the age of fifteen and remaining in it until they marry; they go to the Sisters' house on Sunday at 4 o'clock for the meeting of the sodality, and in the evening for walks or games according to the season; from time to time special amusements are provided for them. To help in the building up of dowries, Mr Léon Harmel has undertaken to pay the young bride as much as she herself has paid into the savings bank, up to a maximum sum of 100 francs, on condition that at the time of her marriage she still belongs to the association. With a touching concern, Mr Léon Harmel gives the wedding meal of an orphan girl in his own house; he considers that he alone can take the place of the absent father.

The members of this association attend the housekeeping school at the Sisters' house. It includes knitting, sewing, mending and cutting out clothes, a laundry for practising washing with lye and laundering, general guidance on food and on keeping house, and elementary notions of hygiene and of nursing in case of illness. Among other things, in the cookery lessons given to them, the pupils are taught the nutritive value of the most common foods.

Workshop councillors, appointed by the association, have the task of seeing that during work the dignity and Christian honour of the women workers are respected, both in their own conduct and in their dealings with others. Finally, the association also includes other sections, in particular a choral section, a games section and a confraternity of the Blessed Sacrament.

After the Children of Mary, numbering 132, come two more associations intended for girls: the first, called the Association of the Holy Angels, receives them from their First Communion up to fifteen or sixteen; it has 63 members; the second, called the Association of St Philomena, is for girls who have not yet made their First Communion and are seven years old; this children's association was created to make the children understand from the first years of their life the be-

nefits of association. Each association has a ribbon and a medal: the members wear them not only at religious ceremonies but in the workshop, in the family and in the streets, on weekdays as on Sundays.

4. *Various associations.* — Other associations are also linked to the moral and religious institutions. First there is the youth society, bringing together about a hundred young men. It is the nursery of all the recreational societies; several evenings of the week and the whole of Sunday are given over to games; the management of the mill considers that they should have an important place in the life of young people: they unite the young men and give them spirit and cheerfulness. Then there is the Good Reading section, which looks after the library of 400 volumes, all conceived in a very sound spirit and suited to correcting in the workers' minds the historical errors with which the French of our time are poisoned; this section also admits newspapers, namely the *Croix* of Paris and the *Avenir de Reims*, a former local *Croix* transformed, *le Petit Moniteur* and the *Courrier des Ardennes*; as illustrated papers it admits *l'Ouvrier* and the *Veillées des Chaumières*.

5. *Works of piety.* — The effectiveness of the associations we have just listed shows itself, from the religious point of view, in the creation of works of piety, the natural consequence of the growth of the Christian spirit. These works devoted solely to piety are the Conference of St Vincent de Paul, the Confraternity of the Blessed Sacrament, the Third Order of St Francis, the Association of the Rosary, the Confraternity of Our Lady of the Factory, the Confraternity of St Joseph and the Apostleship of Prayer. As has rightly been pointed out, each of them has a particular social mission which truly makes it part of the corporative organisation.

The Conference of St Vincent de Paul, with 21 active members and 10 honorary members, assists families without sufficient resources, and especially those with many children; it has created a

special fund, called the family fund, whose purpose is to make up for the insufficiency of the wage (§ 19).

The Confraternity of the Most Blessed Sacrament aims to provide adorers of the Blessed Sacrament; it numbers eighty associates among the men, and a hundred and thirty among the women and girls.

The Third Order of St Francis has a twofold aim: the sanctification of its members and the improvement of the working-class surroundings in which it acts; it directs its action especially at habits of simplicity and domestic order, which tend to disappear, above all the former; at the same time it takes an interest in young men who seem to have a religious vocation. The men belonging to this pious association number 19; we have given the number of women and girls above.

The Confraternity of St Joseph has in view a twofold action, religious and social: the first consists in developing the cult of its patron in the workrooms and meeting rooms as well as in families; the second aims at the sanctification of the home and of work.

The Confraternity of Our Lady of the Factory, established in 1874 after the fire, is purely religious; the members of the confraternity are concerned above all with preserving the young from the many temptations that come to assail them; it even follows the young men to their garrison towns to help them make useful acquaintances, and also strives to facilitate Christian marriages among its members.

Lastly come two associations that are perhaps more exclusively religious than the others. The Association of the Rosary has set out to answer the requests of Leo XIII for prayers for the Church and for France. It also strives to stimulate the vigilance of parents regarding the teaching of the catechism, and also to find means of encouraging pilgrimages to Our Lady of Lourdes and especially to Rome. Half the cost of the journey is paid by a subscription, while the other half must have been saved by the pilgrim. Thanks to this help, the mill

supplied from 17 to 19 pilgrims to the Rome pilgrimages of 1887 and 1889. The Apostleship of Prayer, whose creation dates back to 1864, is chiefly concerned with spreading devotion to the Sacred Heart.

Each of these associations governs itself through a council recruited from among its members, of which the Reverend Father Chaplain is director by right. This is the principle that prevails at Val-des-Bois for all religious or economic institutions: not to present them to the workers as an exclusively employer's creation, whose benefits they must accept without a word, but on the contrary to interest them in their administration, and to make them their own work.

From the religious point of view, this inner development of Catholic life has brought about a certain number of vocations; fourteen students for the priesthood had come from the working population, according to the latest information; the girls' associations had also supplied their share. From the moral point of view, the standard of the population is markedly higher than in other industrial centres; likewise its bearing is perfect.

It took, people say, an apostle's heart to create works of this kind, but also special circumstances, a population easier to handle. The apostle's heart Mr Harmel senior, like Mr Léon Harmel, the present Good Father, truly had; their faith was daunted by no obstacle wherever they saw the means of improving the lot of the working class, for which they burned with ardent love. No doubt they did not have to struggle against the temptations of the big cities, against the dispersal of workers who are hard to reach. But the surroundings were completely disorganised, faith had gradually weakened until it had almost disappeared among the men (§ 3) after the war of 1870. The taste for pleasure was very keen there, and Mr Harmel's workers had many points of contact with those of the other mill, whose management was not inspired by the same ideas, as well as with those of

Reims and of the other establishments of the valley. Yet observation has shown Mr Harmel that these religious works aroused less distrust in the worker than economic institutions have many times provoked. He does not suspect in them any wish on the employer's part to grow rich at his expense; he does not see in them the manifestation of the spirit of gain.

§ 18.

PATRONAGE AND THE CORPORATIVE AND ECONOMIC INSTITUTIONS.

The second part of the works of Val-des-Bois reveals no less than the first the penetrating and generous thought of the employer, his enlightened concern for the lot of the worker, and his deep understanding of the needs of the family, regarded as the social unit. Thus the distinctive character of the works of Val-des-Bois is that they are family works. At the same time they call on the worker to share in their administration and arouse in him a keen interest in their working, which he knows depends to some extent on his efforts, just as they develop in him the spirit of association and provide his economic education, so backward among French workers.

The economic and corporative institutions cover the whole life of the working-class family, both in its normal course and in the difficult hours that unforeseen circumstances oblige it to go through.

1. *Housing*. — The letting of dwellings by the management first gives it, at low cost, a healthy and independent home, while the moderate rent keeps the local landlords within fair limits, since not all the workers can be housed in the houses built and owned by the employer.

2. *The Cooperative Society*. — A Cooperative Society then lowers the cost of living; it protects the working-class family from the exactions of the small shopkeeper, who meets no greater enemy than himself. Not moderating his desire for gain, he raises his prices by a margin all too often excessive, has few scruples, apart from honour-

able exceptions, about cheating on weight, and shows himself no more conscientious about the quality of the goods sold, which are many times adulterated in an odious way.

The Val-des-Bois Cooperative Joint-Stock Company was constituted on 6 October 1879; it is a company with variable capital, in accordance with the provisions of the law of 1867; a board of directors manages it; the capital is 20,000 francs, divided into 200 shares of 100 francs, of which 10,650 francs have been paid up. This Society is divided into several branches: a bakery, and a shop for clothing, footwear, linen, hosiery, etc. A butcher's shop was added to it in 1888, but the experiment was not a happy one, as indeed in many other places, and the board of directors, seeing that it produced nothing but losses, gave it up; nevertheless it did not want to give up the advantages the consumers had found in it, and it has recourse to the so-called system of approved suppliers, that is to say, an agreement has been made with a butcher who, in view of the large custom the mill brings him, grants a substantial discount in its favour. One section of the Cooperative Society is intended to make direct purchases; thus, in recent months, it bought wine at 0.27 1/2 fr. a litre, delivered carriage paid.

The Val-des-Bois Society is founded, like all societies of this kind, on payment in cash; but families, even of very good conduct, may find themselves in temporary difficulty and unable to pay at once for the goods they would take; they would therefore be deprived of the benefits of the Cooperative at the very moment when they would need them most. And so an advances fund has been created; a committee decides what advance should be made to the worker, and within what time it must be repaid: it is a true loan on trust, which is granted only to families of irreproachable morality.

The Cooperative Society does about 80,000 francs of business a year, and makes 6,000 francs of profit, of which only 1/8 goes to the shareholders and 7/8 to the cooperators, that is to say, to the pur-

chasers; the Society's reserve amounts to 7,011.20 fr., or about 2/3 of the paid-up capital.

3. *Mutual Aid Society.* — The idea of associating in order to obtain resources in days of sickness is one of those that come most naturally to workers. And so, of all the institutions they think of founding, the first is always a mutual aid society. That of Val-des-Bois goes back nearly half a century, since it was founded on 21 January 1846; it now has 711 paying members. Besides the subscriptions of the workers, which amount on average to 1.50 fr. to 1.75 fr. per 100 francs of wages, it is supported by the subsidies of the employers, who pay a regular sum every year and, according to need, an extraordinary contribution. The members, as well as the members of their families, are entitled to the care of the doctor and to medicines, to a cash allowance during their illness when they work at the mill, and to Christian burial. If a worker is the victim of an accident, a supplementary allowance is added to the first one granted on account of sickness. The injured, very rare moreover, who are unable to resume their work receive a pension varying, according to their wage, from 300 francs to 700 francs a year. The question of industrial accidents, so much debated in industry in recent years, has thus found a happy solution at Val-des-Bois.

4. *Fire Brigade.* — This brigade has already been in existence for more than thirty years; now composed of 45 members, it is recruited especially from among former soldiers. A drill is held on the second Sunday of each month; it has a flag on which are written the words: God, Family, Fatherland. This brigade has rendered the greatest services, not only to the mill but also in the neighbouring villages, where it hastens with the greatest devotedness as soon as a fire is reported. As with all the other institutions of the Val, a council comprising all ranks administers it; the brigade's funds are supplied from two sources: an annual subsidy of 180 francs from the employers, and a monthly subscription of 45 centimes paid by each of the members.

5. *Savings bank.* — With their admirable foresight of all the needs of a working-class family, the employers of Val-des-Bois have considered that one of the greatest services to render to the working class is to stimulate in it the spirit of saving and habits of thrift, and to accustom it to exercise self-control; and so saving is encouraged by various institutions at the Val.

First, the management has organised family pay slips, giving for each family the detailed accounts of its members; the statement of the totalled sums is handed to the father or to whoever wishes, and the family can in this way more easily take stock of the resources at its disposal. Payment in cash is a further indirect means of practising saving, by preventing the worker from spending his pay at once and relying on credit to live for the rest of the month.

Next, a more direct stimulus is given to saving by the option granted to every worker of leaving deposits at the mill; interest of 5 % is granted on the smallest sums. The accounts committee charged with auditing the accounts of all the associations also gives its advice on investing savings that have reached a higher figure.

These measures, already so useful, have been completed by the creation of a school savings bank, charged with collecting at the infant school, at the schools and in the associations of young men and girls the modest savings that children can make. Habits acquired in childhood generally continue for the rest of life, and it is very likely that children who have learned to save will not later become spend-thrift fathers of families or workers.

Here are the statistics of the savings bank over a period of ten years:

Years

	Banks: general	Banks: school	Corporative bonus	Total	Average of the wages paid	Depositors: G. B.	Depositors: S. B.	Depositors: C. B	Total
1883	42.911 15	3.641 65	3.053 95	49.606 75	10.88 %	103	182	164	449
1884	42.260 30	3.539 05	3.171 55	48.970 90	10.54 %	111	201	177	489
1885	55.446 05	4.954 40	3.564 35	63.964 80	12.56 %	106	206	160	472
1886	65.479 70	3.020 80	3.474 35	71.975 35	15.66 %	110	202	154	466
1887	59.049 75	2.091 40	3.945 50	65.086 65	13.40 %	120	190	159	469
1888	66.063 25	1.770 70	3.080 »	70.913 95	15.29 %	109	175	165	449
1889	53.102 75	1.365 15	2.591 75	57.059 65	12.57 %	104	154	166	424
1890	50.716 35	2.247 »	2.522 15	55.485 50	12.04 %	116	195	158	469
1891	58.888 90	2.366 15	3.845 55	65.100 60	13.43 %	117	225	170	512
1892	73.883 25	3.425 70	4.303 85	81.612 80	17.46 %	132	238	178	548
Total	567.801 45	28.422 »	33.553 00	629.776 95	13.38 %	113	196	165	474

6. *Provident fund.* — These institutions already seem very complete. Yet they have not satisfied the employers of the Val in their insatiable and generous desire to give their staff security of existence. A provident fund exists, supplied entirely by the employers; it provides an income devoted to giving a pension to workers who have more than thirty years of service and can no longer work. The management does not mean to stop its efforts there; it is studying ways of completing these institutions with individual pensions from the State fund.

7. *People's Secretariat.* — The purpose of the People's Secretariat is to serve as a guide to the worker when he is faced with formalities to complete, legal claims to put forward, or disputes with officials of the administration or of companies, who are often very arrogant when dealing with humble folk. For instance, at the time of a marriage, the necessary documents are obtained with the help of the St Francis Regis Society; if a family has an interest in an estate where the forced sale of an inheritance, always so disastrous, is imposed, the People's Secretariat strives to make the terms of the sale less burdensome; it also offers to obtain fire and life insurance on the best possible terms; in the event of a death, if a family council is required, it prepares its meeting, and it also makes the declarations of succession.

This institution has since been established in several other working-class centres and in various large towns; the credit for it must go to Mr Harmel: it was he who first showed it at work at Val-des-Bois, and he who, by his zeal in spreading it, convinced the men devoted to working-class families of its necessity.

8. *The Union Council or the corporation of the Val.* — Mr Harmel designated the whole of the institutions of Val-des-Bois by the term Christian corporation, meaning by this name the union of the existing associations and of the professional and economic institutions. Until 1884 this was hardly more than a word; the law of 21 March 1884

made it a reality and gave it a legal existence. The statutes of the professional union of the employers and workers of the Christian Corporation of Val-des-Bois were adopted in a general meeting and lodged at the town hall.

The Union Council is divided into two equal groups: the employers' group, chosen from among the members of the Committee, and the workers' group, chosen from among the members of the Internal Council and appointed for an unlimited term by the worker members of the union. This council sets itself to follow the moral and economic life of the corporation in the many existing associations; it watches over each of them and seeks to improve them if it notices any gap; it also studies plans for new institutions that would meet new needs among the working-class families. It is also the council that decides on the expenditure or apportionment of the budgets providing resources of every kind, as proposed by the general accounts committee. It appoints a general secretary of the economic institutions, whose special and sole task is to look after the works.

The distinctive feature of a corporation is that it has a corporative patrimony, a common, inalienable property, which serves to ensure the perpetuity and independence of the corporation and which may be touched only in quite extraordinary circumstances. This corporative patrimony, if it were more favoured by French law than it is today, would become one of the foundations of union life; and the working class has suffered since the Revolution from the absence of this collective property, which was once found in all the guilds and, in the countryside, in the form of common lands. Unfortunately, dominated by old prejudices of lawyers, the law of 1884 has restricted too far the right of workers' associations to own property.

The corporative patrimony of Val-des-Bois is fed: 1. by a gift from the cooperative society and the consumer society at each stocktaking; 2. by the rebate of 5 % granted by the approved suppliers on the deductions made for families not belonging to the corporation; 3. by the

rebate of 5 % asked of creditors on the deductions made on their behalf from families who wish to pay their debts; 4. by any gifts and legacies that may be made.

The rebate made by the approved suppliers and the Cooperative Society is called the corporative bonus. “By a decision of 12 May 1878, taken in a general meeting, this rebate is placed in the savings bank until the holder has reached his fiftieth year; every half-year it is increased by its interest, calculated at 5 % a year. It may be repaid before the age of fifty only on the advice of the Union Council, in case of departure, death or permanent infirmity. However, most of those who have reached the age required to draw the pension prefer to leave it as a reserve for their old age. This reserve has been declared exempt from seizure; a single exception has been made in case of departure from the mill, and only to repay the Cooperative Society.”

9. *The Professional Council.* — A Professional Council or Factory Council has been created at Val-des-Bois; it is composed of a representative of the management, who chairs it, and a representative of each workroom appointed by the Internal Council; its role is purely advisory.

The following questions are submitted to it: internal discipline of the workshops, permanence of engagements, vocational training and apprenticeship, accidents. As regards discipline, the authority of the head of the mill remains absolutely intact; but the council can act as the spokesman of the workers' wishes in everything that concerns the work, and the employer examines them together with them. As regards the permanence of engagements, it is called upon to give its opinion on rewarding the old workers, whether by medals for those who have more than thirty years of service, or by a jubilee celebration in honour of those who have worked fifty years, or finally on the use of the income provided by the provident fund, which is managed by the general accounts committee.

The council also concerns itself with the question of apprenticeship, much neglected in the workshops; it sees to it that practical instruction is given to the young people and, as far as possible, that fathers are put in charge of the apprenticeship of their own children, and elder brothers of that of their younger brothers. Finally, it is to the council that the representatives of each workroom report the accidents, even trivial ones, that have occurred, point out the means of preventing them, and also propose all the measures needed to keep the workrooms healthy.

In short, the Professional Council contributes powerfully to maintaining an affectionate understanding between the employers and the workers. Of all the institutions, it is perhaps the most appreciated, for the workers know that they have the means of making their legitimate complaints heard and that these are always considered with as much fairness as kindness. Its role is purely advisory, it will be said; — yes, no doubt, but the workers ask for no more.

10. *The share of Our Lady of the Factory.* — Moved by a lofty and generous thought, and wishing to secure the life of the many works and associations created under their inspiration, the partners of the Harmel family resolved to assign them a fixed share in the annual stocktakings: this is what they call the share of Our Lady of the Factory. The deed of partnership explains in the noblest and most elevated terms, inspired by a very lively Christian faith, why they give this name to the account that covers all the charges of the works and associations. They wished in some sort to make Our Lady of the Factory a partner in their enterprise, to have her receive each year, in the very words of the deed, as much as each of the other general partners; and, carrying generosity to its utmost, the deed even stipulates that, should a loss be shared among the partners, Our Lady of the Factory would be exempt from it.

The account opened under this title receives interest at 5 % a year on its credit balance, and pays none on its debit balance, if there is

one. It bears the following charges: 1. alms, that is to say the Conference of St Vincent de Paul, the charity meetings, the subsidies to the chaplain and to the Brothers, the gifts to the young men of the Val serving with the colours, the gifts of crucifixes to newly married couples; 2. the subsidies given to the associations, together with all the expenses connected with them, and the charges of the family fund; 3. everything concerning the press, and under this heading are included: the raffles, the expenses of the good reading section, subscriptions, losses on propaganda; 4. the other works of the Val in which the workers have no part, such as seminary fees and dowries for entering religion for the children of working-class families; 5. all the expenses required by the buildings for the works: upkeep, purchase, construction; 6. assistance to the family, Masses for the dead, etc. Then comes a second section, which includes: *a*) journeys, printed matter and everything concerning the circles of the union; *b*) Catholic alms, that is to say Peter's Pence, the Propagation of the Faith, the Holy Childhood, diocesan works; *c*) subscriptions for convents, schools, printing works, newspapers and any other work undertaken outside the Val for the Catholic faith; *d*) pictures and medals of Our Lady of the Factory, her annals and her feasts; *e*) various gifts, for example to poor churches, to independent schools, to Dom Bosco, to the Reims Circle, etc.

A council appointed each year by the general partners manages the expenditure of this account; as far as possible, it is composed of an accountant, a lady, a partner and two other persons, partners or not.

The works of the Val are thus sheltered from the fluctuations of industry, and this last provision is not one of the least remarkable, nor one of the least touching, parts of an organisation all of whose provisions display on the part of the employers a truly Christian love for the working class.

THE FAMILY WAGE.

Long and heated discussions have been held on the family wage, and the question has been considered from the theoretical as well as from the theological point of view, without the principles put forward on either side succeeding in shedding light on it. It is in fact by observation that the question can be settled. In *les Ouvriers Européens*, Le Play defined the wage thus: "Remuneration granted to the worker in exchange for his labour. In model societies it comprises two parts: one, the wage properly so called, is proportionate to the worker's efforts; the other, the subsidies, is proportionate to the needs of his family." He showed by repeated observations that in periods of social peace the wage had been given in proportion to the needs of the working-class family, taken as the social unit, and not to those of the worker, who as an individual is met with only as an exception. For this reason he took as the subject of his monographs working-class families, and not the worker considered in himself and separated from his own.

This truth, long ignored, is beginning to be perceived, and the disturbance cast into the world of labour by the new economics, which overturned all the old traditions, has convinced a great many heads of mills and factories that they may no longer set aside all concern for the families of the workers, and that they must give the man they employ the means of feeding himself and his own.

At Guise, this concern has shown itself in the guarantee of the necessities of subsistence; as we reported in our monograph, a table included in the regulations indicates, according to the value of the basic foodstuffs, the minimum price indispensable for the daily subsistence of old people, adults and children, according to age. When a family does not receive a total of wages equal to the total of this sum, the association pays the difference⁹. The railway companies have also

9. Fitter and overseer at the Guise works (Oise), *Ouv. des D. M.*, 2nd ser., vol. IV, p. 41.

entered on this path, for instance the Nord, Paris-Lyon-Méditerranée and Ouest companies. To help employees with family responsibilities living in places where life is expensive, — and it considers as such the agents with a salary of at most 1,600 francs and at least three persons dependent on them, — this last Company grants them an annual allowance varying, according to the town of residence, from 120 francs for Paris to 60 francs. The allowance is increased, for every place of residence, by 24 francs for each child under sixteen beyond three, up to six; that is, by 24 francs for four children under sixteen, by 48 francs for five children, by 72 francs for six or more. For salaries above 1,600 francs, the difference is granted between the amount of the actual salary and the amount that would be received on a salary of 1,600 francs. Agents paid by the day and employed for at least five years benefit from this measure. This allowance is non-transferable and exempt from seizure. Moreover, infirm parents are counted as a child. At Tourcoing, industrialists have entered on the same path through supplements for large families.

These are the methods used at the Val to establish the family wage. A family fund has been set up, intended to supplement an insufficient wage; with cheap rents, gardens, a low cost of living, the Cooperative Society and the advantages inherent in the countryside, the minimum indispensable for life has been fixed at 0.60 fr. per head per day, with no deduction for holidays or days without work. If a family has seven children, for example, together with the father and mother, and only the father works, earning 4 francs per working day, that is 24 francs for the week, it will be entitled, according to the calculation of the minimum fixed above, to a supplement of 13.80 fr. a week. Very wisely, the employer, in agreement with the workers' councils, thought it preferable to give this sum in kind. Mr Léon Harmel, in describing this happy arrangement, pointed out that the situation of widows was particularly deserving of solicitude; it is perhaps to them that the institution of the family wage renders the

greatest services, above all when the poor women are burdened with children.

A workers' committee distributes this supplementary payment every fortnight; its members examine the wages that do not reach the minimum, visit those concerned and determine, according to the needs of the family, what articles are to be supplied. This supplement no doubt keeps the character of a liberality, but the intervention of the workers' committee, to which all complaints are brought, gives it the merit of fixity; it is therefore neither a reward for good conduct nor an arbitrary gift of charity.

As Mr Harmel has pointed out, it is the employers who bear the cost of this fund; it has set their conscience at rest: "Of course, before this was created, needy families were helped, but sometimes according to their requests rather than according to their needs. It seems to us that since this organisation we have been more at peace, trusting that in none of our homes is the despairing cry of hunger heard."

Let people argue endlessly, if they will, about the family wage considered from the theoretical point of view; it is nonetheless an absolute necessity and must be regarded as one of the best practices tending to make social peace prevail.

§ 20.

A CHRISTIAN WORKERS' CONGRESS.

The Christian workers' congresses came out of Val-des-Bois; it was Mr Léon Harmel who first conceived them, through the creation of Christian social study circles. He wished in this way to check the spread of socialist theories in the working class, or more accurately of socialist aspirations, for French workers generally show themselves very resistant to the theories that have so much influence over the Germans. They see in socialism only a means of improving their lot by raising wages, most often accompanied by a reduction in working hours, while the tirades against the employers satisfy the feeling of

envy that slumbers in the hearts of many of them. These Christian social study circles have been created in many towns, and the foundations of the Association of Circles have been the nucleus of most of them. Thus there are some in Paris, and first among them comes the Sainte-Geneviève circle; at Roannes, Reims, Iles-sur-Suippe, Charleville, Gespunsart (Ardennes), Houplines (Nord), Hénin-Liétard, Arras, Courbevoie, Lunéville, Angers, Blois, Tours, Annonay, Mohon (Ardennes), Eurville (Haute-Marne), Dijon, Laval, le Mans, Poitiers, Niort, Cons-la-Grandville, Châlons-sur-Marne, Trith-Saint Léger (Nord), etc. Under the warm impulse of Mr Harmel, these circles began to study all the social questions; the idea of a congress bringing together their delegates was favourably received by them, and last year the congress was held at Reims on Whit Sunday and Whit Monday.

The questions to be discussed were divided into four sections. The first, under the heading General Interests of the Workers, included Sunday, the family and the press; the second, entitled Factory, included wages, Factory Councils, councils of conciliation and arbitration, and hygiene; in the third section, called Associations, figured the Christian social study circles, the mixed union, the workers' union, the representation of interests, and Our Lady of the Factory; to the fourth section, finally, belonged the Economic Institutions, and under this name were grouped the mutual aid societies, the consumer co-operatives, the pension funds and the people's secretariats. We cannot give here the list of all the resolutions that were adopted, some of them after a very lively and most interesting discussion, which showed in the workers a practical sense far removed from any excessive theory. We shall quote only a few of them, indicating the direction in which the members of the congress steered their deliberations.

With regard to mutual aid, they called for the extension of the scope and freedoms of mutual aid societies: for instance, the right for

the societies to keep free employment offices for their members; the right for unions of societies to create and manage pharmacies; the right for women to direct and administer women's societies and to take part in the administration of mixed societies of men and women; the right for honorary members to be admitted as participating members, whatever their age and state of health, in the event of a reversal of fortune. They also called for freedom for these societies to take out insurance, either in case of death or in case of accident, with the National Fund, by means of the funds deposited at the Caisse des dépôts et consignations; freedom likewise to decide the use of gifts and legacies when this use has not been fixed by the donor, to receive gifts and legacies of real property, to invest funds in mortgage loans, and to acquire, own, sell and exchange real property. They also called for safeguards against dissolution, which can at present be pronounced by the Council of State and the administrative authority; this right of dissolution should belong to the courts alone.

Sunday rest was unanimously affirmed as the most sacred right of the worker, and the majority of the congress also declared itself, invoking the experience of England and the United States, in favour of the Saturday afternoon stoppage.

The question of wages was naturally discussed at Reims. The majority of the committee charged with examining it called for economic institutions suited to make up for the insufficiency of the wage, in cases where economic necessities impose it on the employer; it recommended to employers the study of the working of the Family Fund as it exists at Val-des-Bois, and the creation of a similar institution, either in each mill separately or in the unions. The restriction of the industrial employment of women and, where their work is equivalent to that of men, equal pay for them; the direct payment by the employer's cash office to the family of the wages of apprentices and assistants if they are minors; the payment of the whole wage to the mother of the family; and, to avoid purchases on Sunday, the choice

of Friday morning for pay; the impossibility of seizing more than a tenth of the worker's wage; the establishment of a minimum wage for public contracts; the creation of Factory Councils: such are the resolutions put forward by the second section on the question of labour properly so called.

The committee in charge of associations declared itself vigorously in favour of the multiplication of cooperative consumer societies; it sees in them, for the worker, a reduction in the cost of living, the possibility of rebuilding a collective property, and at the same time the means of giving a kind of economic education. Mixed or separate unions gave rise to long and heated debates; while recognising the difficulty of forming them in present circumstances, the congress expressed the wish that genuine mixed unions be organised in all trades, and that those of the same trade form regional federations.

Among the resolutions that deserve mention, let us also note: the passing of a law to facilitate the founding of housing societies, as in England and Belgium¹⁰; the reduction of death duties on small inheritances; and the exemption from seizure of the worker's house, furniture and small field.

The congress kept itself entirely clear of that baneful tendency which drives the French to turn constantly towards the State, as towards a universal providence charged with ensuring the happiness of all citizens and giving them retirement pensions for their old age. It is in connection with the setting up of retirement pensions that this tendency is showing itself at present with the greatest improvidence and thoughtlessness, and if the bills before the Chamber that call for the financial support of the State were passed, the annual budget would be burdened with a charge such that within a few years it would rapidly rise to more than a thousand million. The congress recognised that this universal and necessarily uniform interference of

10. The law of 30 November 1894 has satisfied this wish.

the State in matters of this kind had serious drawbacks; it therefore declared itself in favour of founding pension funds, as far as possible by the unions and as a corollary of the mutual aid societies, and it restricted the role of the State to a clearly defined right of supervision. The people's secretariats also drew the attention of the congress, which declared itself unanimously and without discussion in favour of spreading these useful institutions.

Such are the principal resolutions adopted at the Reims congress that have seemed to us worthy of attention.

This attempt, although crowned with success, has given rise to many controversies. Some have seen in it a real danger; others, on the contrary, have applauded it as meeting the dispositions of the present working classes and as able to give the workers qualities they lack today.

Congresses of this kind, say their opponents, have the drawback of flattering the worker; they accustom him to consider industry apart from the employer, to exalt his own importance, and in this way, far from working for social peace, they on the contrary aggravate the antagonism that is one of the most acute evils of our time.

The supporters of these congresses do not lack answers: they point to the socialist ringleaders seeking to take hold of the workers, above all those of large-scale industry, and often all the better able to reach their goal because they are addressing people without economic education, completely defenceless before the most extraordinary proposals and those most contrary to reality. It is this economic education that meetings of this kind aim to provide little by little. The results are already showing in the wisdom and the practical and truly social sense of the resolutions that won a majority at the Reims congress. Thus in England the workers hold their assizes every year in the meeting of the delegates of the Trade Unions, and if the majority of them have not let themselves be seduced by the socialist proposals that find such easy access among many workers on the Continent,

this is due precisely to the education that the serious study of all the questions bearing on labour has gradually given them. There is no doubt that workers' congresses will lead to the same result in France, if they are organised in the same spirit as that which presided over the one at Reims.

§ 21.

THE FAMILY PACT AT VAL-DES-BOIS.

Perhaps the most original feature of Val-des-Bois, the very real and very powerful strength on which it has relied since the first years of its foundation, is the association of a family that has always produced the man capable of directing so large an industrial undertaking.

The origin of the firm goes back to the end of the last century. Mr Jacques Harmel, born on 2 June 1763, began spinning on commission for the Reims market in 1797; he set up a first mill in 1800 and remained at the head of the firm until 1837. At that time he handed over his establishments to his three sons, Jacques-Joseph, Hubert and Joseph-Félix Harmel, who formed a partnership among themselves; it was dissolved in 1853, and Mr Jacques Harmel remained the sole owner of the Val-des-Bois mill. As we have related above, to him belongs the honour of having laid the foundations of this great work, which has now come to its full flowering. Endowed with the qualities that suited his time and his station, he secured for his firm, from the industrial point of view, a reputation for integrity that it has always been able to keep; he was able to gather the whole family around the common work while ensuring it great material prosperity, thanks to the spirit of enterprise that opportunely created many outlets abroad for its products. His will, imbued with a family and Christian spirit, recalls those of old France that Mr Charles de Ribbe brought to light in his studies of the old society and the family record books.

On his death in 1884, the direction of the mill passed to his son, Mr Léon Harmel. He is an original figure, full of character, of a kind our age of faded and spineless characters produces but rarely. Animated by a truly apostolic spirit of faith, devoted body and soul to all the causes dear to him, he has never relied on anything but himself and the free and vigorous efforts of private initiative; to make them succeed, he has never expected anything from the government. Full of practical sense at the same time, if he has been a model employer, he has also known how to be an experienced industrialist, and he has brought to the direction of his firm the same spirit of enterprise as to his social campaign. If customs tariffs closed to the establishment markets on which he had counted, at once, relying on the reserves that the firm had had the wisdom to build up, he would move looms, clerks and even workers abroad and build mills, as for example in Spain and in America. If he perceived that the profits were much lower than might have been expected, he did not hesitate to give up the experiment, as with the American mill, now closed. This is how English industrialists act, who lack neither initiative nor boldness; they move their industries and set up new firms in foreign countries whose customs tariffs bar the way to their products, as, for example, in Russia.

In the social movement of our time, Mr Léon Harmel holds a considerable place. The abuses and scandals of which the mills and factories were too often the scene, even when they belonged to Christian employers, led him to undertake a vigorous campaign for the Christian and moral regeneration of labour; he has carried his convinced word to every part of France, and the warm appeals he has addressed to employers have not remained fruitless. It was under his auspices that the *industrial committee of the Association of Circles* was created. In the North as in the South, in all the industrial centres, Christian employers have worked to make the workshop morally wholesome; they have had recourse to the methods whose effect-

iveness experience had shown, that is to say that, instead of imposing by their will alone works whose administration they would have kept exclusively to themselves, they have appealed to the worker's initiative and given him a share in all the institutions created for his benefit.

Remembering the great part the Catholic Church had played from the social point of view, which the errors of the end of the last century had brought to nothing, Mr Léon Harmel wished to bring the world of labour back to her, and by that very fact to restore to her an influence almost lost in that quarter. So he took the initiative of the first industrial pilgrimage to Rome, in February 1885. It brought together more than a hundred employers representing the most varied industries and belonging to all the industrial regions of our country. This pilgrimage drew the attention of the Holy Father to the labour question, and led him to deliver an address in which he showed the advantage of corporative associations for bringing back social peace. Then followed the great workers' pilgrimages of 1887, 1889 and 1891; they had an undeniable influence on the drafting of the Encyclical *Rerum novarum*, which sets out the general conditions of peace between employers and workers. The work to which Mr Léon Harmel is now devoting himself is the organisation of the Christian working class, united strongly enough to stand up to the schemes of the socialists. It is with this aim that, under his inspiration, many social study circles have been created (§ 20), that the Reims congress took place, and that this year another was held in Paris, which brought together a larger number of members.

The concerns, the labour and the journeys required by these social campaigns have necessarily drawn Mr Léon Harmel away from the daily running of Val-des-Bois; he has remained its soul, but its direction has been entrusted to one of his sons, Mr Félix Harmel, who has as partners only members of his family.

When we look for the causes of the strength of the greatest Jewish banking houses, we find one of the first in the close union of

the family, which joins together as a whole to support the house. This pact not only preserves it from ruin, but also increases its prosperity by giving it, at the death of each head, a successor able to replace him and to maintain the fortune of the establishment. Our individualistic habits and the obstacles that the Civil Code places in the way of the undivided transmission of the patrimony within the family have made this union short-lived. Where families have managed to maintain it, they have created, as at Val-des-Bois, lasting establishments which already have behind them almost a century of uninterrupted prosperity and which secure for the workers, as we see today, a happier and more stable existence than in many other mills. That, once again, is the originality and the strength of Val-des-Bois.

§ 22.

THE FUTURE OF PATRONAGE.

Patronage has always been regarded as one of the essential elements of a social constitution. But today its role has become somewhat weaker. The employer of olden times was a father of a family living on familiar terms among his workers, who were few in number, looking after them when he judged it necessary, but not creating institutions properly so called which would have given his wholly fatherly intervention an obligatory or administrative character.

But large-scale industry brought about the concentration of the workers, at the same time as it gave rise to immense fortunes which dug an impassable gulf between the master and the manual workers. The growth of the mills and factories and the considerable cost of equipment, too often beyond the means of one employer or one family, also made it necessary to create joint-stock companies; and finally our age saw a great political transformation take place. Universal suffrage gave the workers the same rights as their employer; they could crush him by their numbers. The press and the agitators addressed themselves to them, for they were an easy prey to win, or at least a

clientele that candidates could not neglect, and among whom appeals for social transformation, cries of hatred raised against the employers and promises of a better lot were bound to find a warm echo.

Many joint-stock companies, at first forgetful of their duty towards their staff, later created works for which they generously took on heavy expenses. However, the effectiveness of these works for social peace has not been as great as their promoters had perhaps believed. The employers and the workers have remained separate; there are no longer close relations there, but only administrative ones; the rigours of the rules, whose application is too often entrusted exclusively to foremen, have not been softened: the joint-stock company does not inspire as much respect as an employer working in the midst of his own people; and finally many companies have not admitted the worker to the management of the institutions from which the workers benefit. Today the workers no longer wish to be treated as minors; kindness is not enough for them; they want rights to be recognised for them.

What role, then, can the employer play amid these new conditions, faced with the dispositions of the working class? He must still play a considerable one, but different in practice from that of the past. First of all, his principal duties have not changed: he will apply himself to making the most scrupulous morality prevail in his workshops, to safeguarding family life above all, and to ensuring as far as possible the permanence of engagements. Next, he will set himself to prevent the accidents and illnesses of which the workers may be victims in the course of their work; and if he creates institutions for the benefit of his staff, he will make it his first task to use them for the economic education of the worker, so as to accustom him to the handling of affairs and to increase his individual worth. In this way he will be able to shelter his workers from absurd theories and crude snares; he will develop in them the habits of self-government, and, by teaching them

to govern themselves, he will make them capable of taking an intelligent part in the affairs of the country.