

THE MONEY VALUE OF CLEANLINESS

(THE INSIDE HISTORY OF A COMMERCIAL CLUB DEAL.)

"Oh, wad some power the giftie gie us
To see oursels as ithers see us."



MR. HARPER B. ANDERSON, a prominent citizen of Muncie, owner and manager of an important metal coffin factory, employing about eight hundred hands, was in the city a week ago to consider a proposition made by the Commercial Club, to move his flourishing business from the vanishing gas belt to the town on the Wabash whose coal supply is unrivaled.

Mr. Anderson is a progressive man, who wishes, while he is trying to make a comfortable fortune for his later days, to enjoy living as he goes; to give his children reasonable advantages both in education and recreation. Being a good citizen, he has an eye to the interests of the workmen he employs that they and their children shall have the advantages incident to a progressive town.

Our esteemed townsman, and valued member of the Commercial Club, Mr. Peter V. Brown, was deputed by the club to receive Mr. Anderson, and show the location of the land for his factory (to be partly donated by the club) and the advantages of the town.

The train was on time, and after a cordial greeting between the two men, Mr. Anderson expressed his admiration of the architecture of the Union Station, and his pleasure in the small park before it which is kept beautifully clean by the station officials. This led Mr. Brown to speak of the new park the city has recently bought as

being a first effort to provide such breathing spaces throughout the city.

As they proceeded by trolley to the hotel, Mr. Brown, seeing the stranger's close observation of the street, apologized for the condition of the pavement, (which was invisible), by speaking of the paralyzing effect of the recent unusually severe snow storms upon the energies of the city officials.

Mr. Brown, rendered callous to this condition by familiarity, now looked observingly at his home city in considering its impression on a stranger. "The Board of Public Works certainly needs a little stirring up," said he, rather sharply, as he saw the scraps of paper and sweepings from the shops littering the streets.

"Well," said Mr. Anderson, "I am surprised not only at the carelessness, but at the waste. Do you know that the waste paper might be an absolute source of revenue to the city? Baskets on the street corners and alleys would receive all the trash, which could then be sold."

Mr. Brown, for the first time really annoyed by the disorder of the streets, made a note of the basket idea for his friends in the Council.

At the hotel they met several business men, and as they talked Mr. Anderson rested his hand on the window sill and was greatly annoyed to find both hand and cuff black with soot.

"It is annoying," said Mr. Brown sympathetically, with, however, a note of satisfaction in his voice, "we have so much doing here that there is coal smoke over everything."

"It is probably unavoidable to some extent in the heart of the town, but I suppose the residence portions are clean."

"Well, I don't know"—this with great cheerfulness from Mr. Brown—"we are pretty well surrounded by big businesses. There are the distilleries on the river, south—the waterworks west, and most of the new industries north and northeast, and railroads everywhere."

"I am sorry," said Mr. Anderson, thoughtfully, "as I don't care to have Mrs. Anderson devote all her time to housekeeping. Some of it belongs to me. However, I expect we can get out of the smoke if we choose."

As they sat down to dinner, Mr. Brown, with cheerfulness that was almost pride, wiped his plate and blew the flecks of soot from the cloth utterly oblivious of the fact that Mr. Anderson was watching him with amazed amusement.

The dinner over, they took the car to look at the situations for manufactures in the various quarters of the city. Mr. Anderson's keen eyes made Mr. Brown conscious for the first time of many things in his native town. The post office was pointed to with pride, but there he became aware of the fact that although spittoons were provided they were not always used, and that the floors were littered with torn papers and envelopes which found their way to the outer steps, and finally to the street. On a prominent corner a vacant lot, which is to be the site of a beautiful office building, was covered with heaps of scrap iron and abandoned tin cans. The interior of the Court House presented much the same view as the Post Office—and the river front was passed over hurriedly. To

this, Mr. Brown gave little thought, as he belongs to the generation that regards slums as necessary evils, and, like the smoke, as indications of the size and enterprise of the town. The factory lands on the outskirts were in the raw state of extreme newness that might be expected to correct itself in time.

Mr. Anderson put pointed questions as to the regulations demanded of the new companies by the town, but found (it should have been to his satisfaction), that apparently the theory was, "if only you will come here we shall do all we can for you, you may do as you please." As a business proposition the offer of the club was an exceptionally good one, but business is not the whole of life.

Mr. Brown took him to see Collett Park Place, which he admired as well as the residence portion in the extreme south end. He then asked to visit the grade schools, and was taken to one in the thinly settled north end whose principal is a progressive man with a liking for cleanliness and a love for flowers. This place, even in the dull March weather, looked neat and well kept. With better spirits they visited three or four other schools where the buildings are modern and sanitary, but sadly deficient in playgrounds. Where the mud or cinders extends from the sidewalk (when there happens to be one) to the walls of the buildings, and where the children are turned into the streets at recess; where no care has been given to decorating the interiors, and the original white plaster of the walls is stained and defaced beyond belief. The exteriors dreary and bare, with never a bush, or flower, or blade of grass to cheer the eye, but with iron screens to