

ONLY A FARTHING'S-WORTH.



NEVER knew the value of a farthing till I made the acquaintance of the East End of London, and found myself in the general shops waiting to see and note the class of customers, the majority of whom were farthing ones. A farthing's-worth of tea, of sugar, of soap, of dripping, of milk, of flour, of fish, of cotton, and even a farthing's-worth of boiling water, all these demands I got quite accustomed to; and as I thought of the nine hundred and sixty farthings necessary to make a sovereign, I pitied the shop-keepers almost as much as the customers, for I thought it impossible that they could make even the scantiest living out of a multiplication of farthings; but I was mistaken.

That a farthing is not a trifle, we will take as an example some of the East-end shop-keepers of a better class who, to make up losses, have lately added to their prices per yard or per pound or per pint an extra farthing, and the consequence is a great increase in their "takings," especially on Saturday nights.

If I ever doubted the power of a farthing's-worth, I shall not do so again, nor will anyone, I think, after I have told my experience of a few weeks since when I paid a visit to the Kingdom of Lollipopps.

Imagine if you can that in one huge factory in the North of London two hundred and fifty tons of sugar are used weekly in making sweeties, the majority of which is retailed in farthing's-worths to poor little ones in London and in the country; and still further imagine that in the manufacture of these farthing's-worths of sweeties, a thousand people are constantly employed, eight hundred and fifty of whom are women and girls. The number of customers who buy wholesale and then retail are about two thousand three hundred and thirty-nine in London, and one thousand in the country and abroad.

I think that those who are not able to visit this wonderful factory themselves, may like to hear of all we saw, in order that they may understand all that is set going by the demand of "a farthing's-worth of sweeties, please."

This immense factory of "sweetstuff" in the North of London is a kingdom in itself, reigned over by master-spirits whose hearts and minds are in it, and probably it is this fact which gives to the farthing its significance. An intimate friend of the firm said of them, "They do not eat sweeties, but they make them, and think them," which is as much as to say that they are perfectly engrossed in the business; and indeed this is so, and they consider their sons could not do better than follow in their steps and go into the "profession of lollipopps."

The sweeties are made from pure sugar, of which, as I have said, two hundred and fifty tons a week are used here in Wood Green and at their other house in Shepherdess Walk; and the brilliantly tempting colours of the sweeties are produced by vegetable dyes, and therefore quite harmless. The sugar is boiled down in four-hundred-gallon tanks.

Leaving our wraps in the counting-house before starting on our travels, we remarked that we were not customers; and were met with the reply, "so much the better, as we require no more than we have." Surely this is a rare condition!

Outside in the covered court huge vans were being piled up with goods, one for London,

the other for country work. In the latter they supply wholesale dealers and do no business with shops.

We first noticed a large well-like place, with an immense "shoot" in it, connected with the different floors, down which comes a ceaseless stream of finished boxes of sweeties ready to be stored until wanted. Next to this shoot-well is a store-room with bins up to the roof, each stocked with boxes of which the masters know every detail, so orderly and methodical is the arrangement. Thus farthing goods are packed in gross boxes; halfpenny goods in half gross boxes; goods sold at two ounces a penny in four pound boxes; jubilee mixture in nine pound boxes, and so on. These boxes are all obtained from two or three firms who make wooden boxes and nothing else. When there is a great press of work and they run short, of course they have to set to and make some; but as one of the firm said, pointing to a home-made specimen, "that box cost us a shilling to make, and is only blown together as it were, whereas for the same money we can get one bigger and altogether better made."

The work-people are well cared for, and have plenty of time allowed for their dinner, which they usually bring with them ready cooked, or if they prefer it they can have it cooked at a neighbouring bake-house. They used to leave off work at eight and were allowed half an hour for tea, but it was found that much time was wasted over the meal, therefore it was decided to close an hour earlier, viz., at seven, and knock off the tea.

At first the work-people did not like it at all, but now they prefer it to the old way, to which they would not return if they could. Of course stray cups of tea are winked at, but the members of the firm all go without, for they say they do not expect the workers to do what the principals will not do, and on the other hand, if the principals can give up a thing surely the workers can.

One workman has been here twenty-three years, and several over twenty years, which speaks well for everybody all round.

A peculiarity of this firm is that they never advertise, and have never spent but £5 in their lives in that way, so that they are living contradictions to the statement that no firm can prosper without spending large sums in advertisements.

We have waited on the threshold in order to make acquaintance with the thousand work-people, and will now enter one of the work-rooms.

What a children's paradise! What a delightful smell of "sugar and spice and all that's nice!" What a charming stickiness pervading everything, and what a rich stock of trays full of most tempting goodies, in most fascinating shapes!

One objection to the trade is that nothing makes such black dirt as sugar, in spite of its brilliant whiteness and delicacy. Of course strict cleanliness is preserved in connection with the sweeties themselves, which look as if hands had not touched them, and the girls employed in making them seem a peculiarly good class, being clean, quiet and self-respecting.

Here are trays full of what are known as monster nuggets, which are sold at eight a penny or two for a farthing; remarkably good value for these huge lumps of nougat which are packed in neat rows in boxes. Next comes a large tray full of "Father Christmas" without his war-paint and fir-tree which, further along, are being carefully stuck in by another set of workers. Other girls in this large room are supplying little

round birds' nests with small white sugar birds, which they do very deftly. Having a clean cloth in the hand they take up a handful of soft warm sugar, then they twist the cloth so as to leave a small opening at one end through which the sugar flows and which they control by pressure on the cloth; long practice enables them to stop it altogether at precisely the right moment.

Near to these is a girl putting strips of india-rubber on to dancing figures, while another is sticking gilt paper handles on to sugar baskets, and a man close by is painting stags.

Delightfully realistic little pigs and camels are there in large numbers, and further on we come to some fine specimens of rosy-cheeked apples and pears, which are moved high above the farthing value, the cost of each being two-pence.

Here is a girl rapidly supplying whole families of pink mice with eyes, and at a little distance from her one is embedding little spoons in pink and white slabs of sweetstuff known in the child world as "Sloper's lunch," and which can be bought for a farthing, and beside the sweetstuff the spoon and little box are thrown in, so no one need go without lunch.

Here too we find Father Christmas fully equipped, having passed through at least a dozen hands before he arrives at this state, and is sold retail at two a penny, little fir-tree and all.

The sugar, of which such quantities are used, comes from Amsterdam in Holland, from Germany, and from Paris; but gaining knowledge as we went from room to room, we learned that the sugar is not used for the sweeties just as it is but mixed with another material, because in its pure state it would be too brittle and not sufficiently pliable to make into shapes. Formerly it used to be mixed with cream of tartar, but now they mix "glucose," that is sugar made in America from maize, and this is found to answer well and is not at all injurious. A hundred vats of glucose are used every week, each vat equal to eight hundredweight, which brings the quantity of sugar and glucose up to two hundred and ninety tons a week, or fifteen thousand and eighty tons a year.

The moulds for the various animals are made here of plaster of Paris. Of course the figures and animals are all hollow, as they are made inside the moulds and the centre poured out.

Cigars are sold four a penny, but those we saw had not yet got the fire put on and so did not look so realistic.

In the corner of the room a girl was weighing the parcels as they passed out at the door with great care and precision.

The next room we entered reminded us forcibly of Grasse, for here the sweeties are drained on perforated trays exactly as at that place, and passing out of this we came to the crystallising room full of steam, where the lovely shiny gloss is acquired that renders them so attractive. The hot sweet smell was very tempting, and the trays of draining sweeties looked so very good.

In the adjoining room bacon and eggs were being made ridiculously like the real articles, except for the sprinkling of sugar over them, and as these are sold at a farthing each the unemployed can scarcely complain of dear prices. Crystallised cocoa-nut chips are in great favour also.

Passing on to another room we were amazed to see a large square pillar in the centre with two big nails, one on each side; and suspended from these were huge ropes of sweetstuff being manipulated by a man and a boy. The

amount of muscular strength required for this work is very great, as the immense, thick, yielding mass of warm sugar has to be dragged out thin and hurled back in a coil over the nail, this process being repeated again and again.

Caramels were being made here to be sold two for a farthing; they are packed in neat rows with a strip of paper between each row. Formerly they cut the caramels into squares and then cut the paper into strips; but one of the workmen discovered that by placing the caramels and papers in a special position they could both be cut at once, thus saving time and trouble.

It can be estimated pretty correctly how much each special sweet should cost by reckoning up the prices of the various materials used. The boilers at work here are of 120, 50, and 80 horse-power.

The next thing which interested us was a long cornucopia of sugar filled with vanilla, which was being manipulated by two men, one of whom was rolling the thick end gently backwards and forwards while the other carefully drew out the thin end, every now and then cutting off a length and tossing it across the room to a boy in charge of a machine, who cleverly caught it, and put it in the machine, which secretly converted it into round balls.

If the cornucopia had been drawn out its full length it would have reached half a mile.

Very few accidents happen here, and when they do occur they are generally the result of carelessness. For remedy on the spot oil and flour mixed, or carron oil* is used for burns.

But we have not seen all yet, and the

children would not like us to forget the chocolate ices at a halfpenny each, nor the farthing sensational dip, consisting of a pink paper bag, a collection of sweets, a thimble, a puzzle and some such small article as well.

Farther on girls were cutting slices of "coker nut delight" and putting them on trays covered with shredded coker-nut. It is much the same as Turkish delight; the coker-nut comes from Colombo already prepared, and is cheaper to the firm than buying the nuts and preparing them themselves.

For all sticky or moist goods tin boxes are used, and for dry goods wooden boxes. For boxes alone they spend £500 a month.

We noticed the stickiness of everything, and were told that it was much more noticeable on wet days, the trade being very much affected by atmospheric changes.

They use gas throughout the factory, and not electric light; they tried the latter but it was not found good to work by.

Three tons of chocolate are made use of every week for coverings.

We went through the sausage shop where ropes of absurdly realistic-looking sausages were hanging from the ceiling in real skins. They were perfectly correct even to the way they were twisted, which, we were told, was learnt by accident. They used to tie them with string, which, however, did not look correct, but a girl from a sausage shop came into their employ, and in two minutes showed them how to twist the sausages properly. Another room was devoted to caoutchous of all kinds, with a very hot room at the side for drying them. Girls were going in and out with trays of them on their heads; they do not remain long in the great heat, although from practice they scarcely notice it.

Girls were rolling out the sheets of pink and white stuff, while others were superintending machines which were solemnly punching them out while in a soft and pliable condition. Some of the white ones are stamped in red with the Queen's head, the price and the manufacturer's name and places of business.

Job lots of pictures are bought up by the firm for about £12 per ton; these are given away, one within every halfpennyworth of sweets.

One thing I had almost forgotten and that is what they call the pantomime line, and which is entrusted to one of their cleverest men. It consists of long thick rolls of sweet-stuff so arranged in colours, red, white, blue, etc., that on cutting thin slices off the ends, complete figures are obtained of harlequin, columbine, clown and pantaloon.

It is a wonderful place in more ways than one. There is a large carpenter's shop in full work; they shoe their own horses and are their own engineers, and lastly, they have just completed a large van to hold one ton of sweets.

To satisfy the demand, "A farthing's-worth of sweets, please," is no slight matter. In this Wood Green factory alone 13,000 tons of sugar are used in a year, 2,080 tons of glucose, 156 tons of chocolate for coverings; £6,000 paid for boxes in a year; 1,000 people always employed; 1000 people's wages to be paid, and not a penny paid for advertisements. The children's demands are sufficient to keep the whole thing going.

In conclusion I may say I have visited the kingdom of the sick, the kingdom of poverty, the kingdom of toys, and now the kingdom of lollipops, and I am not sure that this last is not the most wonderful.

AURIOL'S CORONET.

By EVELYN UPTON, Author of "Christmas-Eve in a Crypt," etc.

CHAPTER II.

"If to speak nobly, comprehends
To feel profoundly, if the ends
Of power and suffering, nature blends."



THE luncheon-bell found the young author still in the thick of her work, but sufficiently sure of her ground to be able to lay down the pen. Having changed her habit she descended to the dining-room. Luncheon was always a very informal

meal, the members of the family straggling in as they pleased. To-day an elderly lady was the only occupant of the room.

"You alone, aunt? Where are Gus and Car?"

"Oh, didn't they tell you? Captain Bra-bourne took them off in his drag this morning to Richmond, where they are to spend the day."

"But surely they did not go alone with that man!"

Her aunt smiled at her horrified expression. "They were to call for Mrs. Dearsley on the way. At least so they said."

"But that is nearly as bad. She is considered very fast, you know, and I am sure she is only doing the girls harm. Aunt, I wonder you can allow the acquaintance."

"My dear Auriol, you must see by this time how little the girls care for anything I say. You, being the eldest sister, ought to have some influence over them. I have none whatever."

Auriol was silenced. What her aunt said was perfectly true. She could not deny it.

Mr. Walgrave's time was wholly given up to accumulating wealth, that of his two sons to spending it. And Gus and Car, the two youngest girls, ran riot. Deprived of a mother's controlling influence when they were just coming out, they had quickly taken the reins into their own hands. They would brook no interference from Auriol, in fact, she and they had long since drifted apart. They went their separate ways, Gus and Car being deaf to her remonstrances and expostulations. With Auriol it was a case of the prophet without honour in his own country. In her

own home she stood literally alone. No one either understood or sympathised with her pursuits. She was the duck in the hen's brood. How she came by her literary genius and intellectual proclivities was a puzzle to most. Certainly not from her father, who despised literary people and viewed all authorship as so much waste of brain power. He had a certain subtle sense of satisfaction, it is true, in hearing his daughter's praises sung, and seeing the stir her writings had created in the civilised world. He was even in a measure proud of shining in her reflected light. But he considered her a fool for devoting the best years of her youth to amassing money she did not want, when she ought to have made a brilliant match and been settled in an establishment of her own. What had women to do with books and brains, he argued. They were leaving their province altogether. Blue-stockings were a detestation to him. He hated them like the plague.

His sons shared his opinions. Indeed it may be doubted whether there was one in the whole family who had read Auriol's books completely through. All heights are lonely, and the first experience we gain on reaching one of the summits of fame is a consciousness of its intense solitude. Auriol had quickly found this out.

During the season by Mr. Walgrave's express desire his widowed sister came to preside over his household. It gave a savour of propriety, as he thought. But society knew very well that beyond taking the head of the table at dinner-parties, and driving out in the well-appointed equipage every afternoon in the Row, occasionally with the girls but more often