

# Master Workshops of America

A Series of Monthly Articles Written from a First Hand Survey of Big Business Enterprises that Have Given the United States the Name of the Foremost Industrial Nation of the World



## The Plant That Made the Pickle Famous

Including an Interview in Which Mr. Heinz Gives His Own Recipe for Success

By Edward Earle Purinton

**E**VERY great institution is but the evolution of a great idea. All fiction pales beside the *real* romance of business.

From a horse-radish root in a Pennsylvania garden has grown the largest food preserving plant in the world. Some person in the audience here proceeds to rise and remark, "How on earth can you get romance out of horse-radish?" You can get romance out of anything, provided you have first put romance into it.

Henry J. Heinz fifty years ago was a young man starting out in business for himself. Looking squarely at the future, he made a resolve: "I will do the common thing uncommonly well."

He did not fool or inflate himself with a proud notion that he was a genius and could therefore dodge toil and trouble. Nor did he vainly sigh for distant worlds to conquer, and grumble that he "never had a chance" in his home town. He merely saw possibilities where other young fellows drowsed along content with limitations.

The commonest, and nearest, thing to do was to dig, prepare and sell horse-radish. Henry's problem therefore was to do this work in a better way.

Discarding the green bottles that other packers used

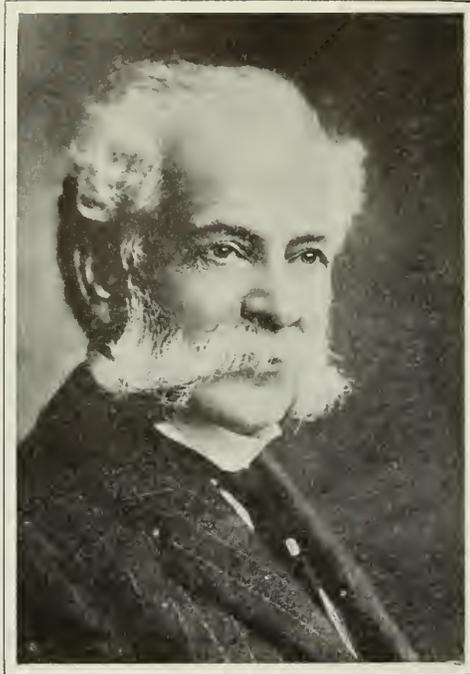
to blind customers to the doubtful character of the ingredients, young Heinz put his brand of horse-radish in bottles crystal clear, to show better the purity of his product. He packed only the select roots; and he mixed no turnips therewith to swell his profits unduly. He would not allow a speck of dirt to lie in a bottle that bore his name.

From the start, demand was greater than supply. As other staple products were added to the output the business of Heinz grew so enormously that the owner could not move to larger quarters fast enough to accommodate the flood of orders! The young man figured there is always a discriminating clientele that will gladly pay for a quality product. He figured right.

All over this country thousands of little shops, factories, offices and stores are just petering along, satisfying and paying nobody, for the simple reason that the owners and workers have not put quality first. I would recommend, to the man who never made his business pay and does not know what is wrong with it, a protracted visit to the House of Heinz and a thorough investigation of the principles and methods which have gained for this enterprize world leadership. Henry J.

Heinz was born with a passion for *doing everything right*. Any man who makes this the ruling passion of his life will reach the top as inevitably as two and two make four.

Let us join a party of visitors and make a tour of the Heinz plant. The amusement columns of the Pittsburgh daily papers carry a bold announcement



Henry J. Heinz, founder of the famous 57 of the fact that the Heinz plant welcomes visitors, and a statement of how to reach it. Every year more than 50,000 people accept this invitation.

Why are these guests wanted? A cynic would remark, "Just to advertise the products of Heinz to themselves and the folks back home." But a cynic is a congenital sufferer with moral astigmatism, he never sees a thing straight. Five good results are accomplished by the regular opening of the plant to visitors.

The employees know they are likely to be watched any minute, so are always on their mettle. The foremen, supervisors and department heads keep the factory looking better and working better, from pride. The natives of Pittsburgh who have gone through the plant are henceforth believers in home products. The foreign visitors return to their communities with a real quality standard by which to judge whatever they purchase in cans or bottles. And the business men, both employers and employees, go back to their jobs with a new conception of the dignity, the art, the science of work.

If I owned a restaurant, a boarding house, a bakery, a candy shop, a dairy, a packing house, or any other food dispensary, I would first make everything so clean, wholesome and attractive that visitors would be charmed; then I would open the entire place to crowds of sightseers, and by modern publicity methods keep them always coming. For better business? No, primarily for better character. You can trust the man who wants to be watched.

Riding out from the heart of Pittsburgh to the Heinz plant, we suppose we are on the way to a food factory. But the first employee who greets us proves we were misinformed—the whole place is a laboratory of experimental psychology, where folks have learned how to think as well as how to work. Everybody wears a smile, active or passive. And it wasn't manufactured for the occasion. A good rule is never to trade with a business concern whose employees look sad, mad, surly, saucy, fatigued, or otherwise ill-tempered. Such people cannot do their best work.

However, the young lady who looked so pleasant got herself into trouble—she had to tell me the reason for the smile. Asked if she really liked her work, her job and her employer, she answered with a will, "I should

say I do! We are just a big family here, with as much freedom as we have at home. Our president is like a father to us all, interested in our success, eager to promote our welfare, and always ready to listen to our problems or suggestions. There is no strain or pressure on employees. There is no boss in the place. Good fellowship, enjoyment of work, and reliance on personal honor and resourcefulness are habits with us all. Those of us who have worked elsewhere know how much better the conditions, surroundings and associates are in the Heinz Company, and of course we are glad to be here!"

If the head of a business wants a testimonial, the person to get it from is an employee. Why? Because the customer is going to value a product as the employee values the man who made it. Mutual respect and consideration is the keynote of the Heinz establishment. Heinz products taste right partly because the packers of them feel right.

More mental science we observed in the choice and training of the guides who took us through the plant. They were of pleasing personality and ready wit, courteous, gracious, well dressed, well mannered. The majority of Heinz visitors are women and girls. Now a man hears what you say but a woman hears how you say it. Men don't care much about the personality of the clerk who shows them goods, but if he sells to women he must be a gentleman. A first impression is often the final argument with a woman patron. All business men whose customers include women should



The original Heinz plant was in the basement of this little house remember this, and scrutinize first impressions that are made by employees, products and surroundings.

The imposing structure called the Administration Building, of the early Renaissance type of architecture, looks like a modern city bank edifice. The first room you enter is a noble court that would grace the palace of a king. Marble columns rise to a cream-and-gold ceiling. A fountain brought from Rome plays in the center of the room. A flood of light from a glass roof pours down steadily upon each floor by means of a broad rotunda. Fine statuary gleams in every corner. The very atmosphere conveys a new sense of the utility of beauty and the beauty of utility.

Perhaps the most remarkable feature of the inner court is a magnificent stretch of mural paintings done by an artist of national repute. These twelve panels represent notable scenes in the growing, gathering and preserving of Heinz products. One of these panels shows the little two-story building where, fifty years ago, in the basement, the Heinz industries were started, with no capital or equipment but the hands, head and heart of Henry J. Heinz. The first year's output was so small that it was delivered in a wheelbarrow; whereas, this year, the number of packages will run into the millions. The whole garden space then available was three-fourths of an acre. Now there are twenty-six factories, with forty-five acres of floor space at the main



Tomatoes—a small part of one day's supply—to be cooked and canned the same day they are picked

plant, fifty-five branch offices and warehouses, seventy-one foreign agencies, 172 raw product receiving stations. Six thousand and six hundred regular employees are in the pay of the company; and the produce from 100,000 acres of land, with 100,000 people to harvest and prepare crops in season, is required in the preparation of the "57 Varieties."

But size means nothing compared with quality. Whoever knows values will be impressed not so much by the international scope of organization as by the international proof of demonstration. When you observe thirty-nine diplomas and certificates, and 147 medals, awarded the Heinz products by various world's fairs and expositions, you begin to have the real respect for this concern that is based on character alone.

The buildings are grouped cozily and conveniently around a hollow square, that gives light and air to every department. Even the factory houses, of Romanesque architecture, please the eye of the visitor. Beautiful window boxes graced with flowering plants ornament the buildings that face the open court. A roof garden, where the women and girl employees may rest, read or exercise, makes the summer time a happy time. Under the courtyard a reservoir holding about 100,000 gallons of water is kept for use in case of fire. Thus every bit of space, from below the cellar to above the roof, is occupied to advantage.

We enter now the time office, where factory workers register their comings and goings. A time clock is

generally supposed to be a herald of oppression, forcing men to be machines against their will. But the Heinz workers don't get "fired" for being late or absent—they get rewarded for being prompt and regular! This fact changes the time clock from an instrument of torture to an agency of hope.

When a clean world success had crowned his efforts, Mr. Heinz had the little house where he began his work moved on barges down the Allegheny River from its location at Sharpsburg, five miles distant. Then he gave it the place of honor next the regal Administration Building, where all could see the humble start of a globe-encircling industry.

A visitor, chatting with me as we stood looking at the little house, remarked, "If all the kickers against big employers of labor could see a factory like this, they would have to go home and criticize their own offices and kitchens. The fellows who are down on capital don't know what capital is doing for the working man." This was after we had observed the hygienic, social, recreational and other modern features maintained for the benefit of employees.

How can preserved foods be made and kept scientifically pure—and unscientifically palatable? Does the vastness of a business preclude fine attention to detail? What lessons of one kind or another may be learned to advantage by employers and employees from a study of an organization of the magnitude of Heinz's? To what extent have the leaders [*Continued on page 116*



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## Master Workshops of America

(Continued from page 95)

in their own line found better, safer, quicker, cheaper, kinder ways of doing things? How was competition largely overcome and leadership attained?

Wanting answers to dozens of questions like these, I read the literature of the company; talked with the president and nine other officials, made a regular tour of the plant with a party of visitors, then a supplementary tour with a special guide and a stenographer to take notes; and finally made a study of the history of the organization by conferring with old-time helpers of the founder. Some of the main points of interest are condensed in the following paragraphs:

The company states, clearly and openly, the objects and ideals for which it stands. Among them: "To demand in all things purchased the best on the market; to supervise and raise personally as much as possible of the goods packed under the Heinz name; to discard everything in which the most rigid inspection detects the slightest flaw; to provide every known facility and equipment which can raise or maintain quality standards; to secure for every department and detail of the work the most capable and efficient men and women; to insure so far as possible the comfort, welfare and happiness of all employees; to consider at all times every thought and suggestion looking to the improvement of Heinz products, and their adaptability to the requirements of the public."

The first aid to purity and quality of production is cleanliness. Each bit of fruit or vegetable is washed clean by automatic sprinklers. The bottling tables are of white tile, scoured and polished every day. The kitchens are sanitary to the point of snowy freshness. The girls who fill cans or bottles wear white caps and uniforms; nurses and physicians retained by the company see to the health of the women workers. All cans are sterilized before being filled. The floors, of hard maple, do not catch dirt. Even the outside of the buildings, made of a washable kind of brick, must be regularly scrubbed. And the casual dust of the atmosphere is forbidden to intrude when the workers aren't around, for "the sun never sets upon an uncorked bottle or unsealed can."

The next notable feature is care, plus chemical science. Cherries and berries are picked and hulled by hand. Before the peanuts can go into peanut butter, the small "heart seed," bitter and indigestible, must be removed, also any burnt or discolored nuts. Baked beans are really baked, by old-fashioned dry oven heat—not boiled or steamed. Preserving kettles and sauce tubes are made of refined silver, to safeguard the food against possible corrosion of acid on tin. Fruit cans are lined with a golden enamel, baked on, which is said to form the best container ever devised, air-proof, light-proof, dust-proof, germ-proof. Each of the millions of tin cans turned out every year has the improved style of crimped ends, to keep

the solder from touching the contents. And each of the millions of glass bottles used every year is annealed by a special method to insure against breakage. An original pneumatic device tests the filled cans by atmospheric pressure, and automatically rejects the imperfect ones.

The system of chutes, conveyors and machines is a marvel of ingenuity and speed. You observe the raw tin going toward a machine—five minutes later you discover it completely transformed into a can of beans, filled, sealed, ready for shipment. The result of this kind of action means huge production. Thirty million bottles of ketchup have been put up in two months of preserving season; and in one day 45,000 quarts of strawberries have been received fresh from the garden, hulled, washed, preserved, sealed and packed. However, speed never destroys accuracy; the label on a bottle must be in the correct place to one-sixteenth of an inch.

This blended rule of science and conscience goes clear back to the kitchen. To prevent the chance of adulteration of spices, workers in charge of spice mills grind on the premises all seasonings like ginger, pepper and cloves, which are imported clean and whole, direct from the fields. No pure food inspector has yet been able to arrest a Heinz product.

Workers at the Heinz plant are never subjected to autocratic punishment—a wrong deed carries with it an automatic penalty. A girl who packs a bottle of pickles wrong has to do the same job right over; being paid by the piece for this work, she loses time and money from her carelessness; and she falls to disgrace in the opinion of her associates—a worse casualty here than the loss of money. A guide who misrepresents a fact, method or policy to any visitor thereby makes himself liable to immediate discharge. The rule, however, is to surround official firmness with such evidences of personal kindness that the firmness can hardly be felt. This explains in large measure the devotion, the constancy, of the Heinz workers, 494 of whom have enjoyed between five and ten years of continuous service, 204 others between ten and fifteen years, 105 others between fifteen and twenty years, and 122 over twenty years.

But, finally, the key to a great business lies in the wisdom of the presiding genius of the organization. A personal talk with Mr. Howard Heinz, eldest son of the founder, and now president, of the H. J. Heinz Company, revealed some of the principles and policies determining the conduct of the institution.

"First," he said, "there must be an impelling force in life, a dominant purpose and vital energy pushing the man forever on and up, over obstacles and thru barriers, till he attains the goal of his powers and his dreams. The impelling force may be the result of

want, poverty, hardship—or of a huge ambition—or of a deep affection for the loved ones who depend on a man's work for happiness—or of a limitation that spurs a fellow to show the stuff he is made of in spite of the handicap—or of a competition that keeps him on his mettle and up to his quality standard. We aim to rouse the energies and enthusiasms of our workers, then to guide these forces of achievement into proper channels.

"The round man must not be stationed in the square hole, nor the square man in the round hole. Our method is to try out each man in both places. If the man is neither square nor round, but oblong, we make an oblong position to fit the man. We study how to adapt the work to the worker. Few employees know that they are misfits, until their employer finds it out—and gives them a chance to make good in the work they like because they can do it well.

"Mutual confidence and pride are fundamental. We are as proud of our workers as they are proud of their work. The ancient idea that only a professional man could be a real artist has been exploded. Whoever holds a job in a business can be, should be, a great industrial artist, eager to make each bit of work as fine, as perfect in its own way, as the masterpiece of a painter, sculptor or musician.

"There must be no driving of employees. They want leading—not driving. We never say to one of our people, 'You must do this or that.' We tell them why a certain thing should be done, how it can be done; then we leave the matter to the conscience and intelligence of the employee.

"A merchant or manufacturer must be able to plan, work, and if necessary fight for the public he serves. Our company started the national fight for Pure Food laws. We spent fifteen years and hundreds of thousands of dollars in the battle to protect the public—even before the public wanted to be protected, or knew the peril in food adulteration.

"We carried the whole matter to President Roosevelt. He said the weakness of our position was that we were alone; the public was indifferent. We managed to find thirty food companies whose ideals were similar. They joined us—tho our natural competitors. Chiefly by their help, we won the fight. Now the public demands clean, pure, wholesome food in closed containers; and the unprecedented growth of our business may be traced to the fight we undertook for a principle.

"I should say that almost any man will make good if you turn over to him a hard enough task, a big enough responsibility, after you have trained him to handle it, and have supplied a real incentive. One of the great joys of our work is to see our workers measure up to our expectations. When you expect more of a man, you make more of him.

"The secret of a great success? An idea great enough and a principle good enough are bound to bring world leadership."

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