

short

ELLAWHITE, MILL VILLAGE.

One mile East of Uniontown the little village of Ellawhite spreads itself over a hundred acres of land on part of which stands The California Cotton Mill. The village was settled in 1900 and was named in honor of Mrs. Ella Sims White, the wife of one of the then heaviest stock-holders.

A cinder road from Uniontown enters the village at the railroad track. The track divides the plant and the cottages from the business section, which consists of a general store and a filling station. The store is a gathering place for the villagers. Here during idle moments they sit around on boxes and benches and discuss neighborhood happenings and the condition of the State and nation.

The road leading from Uniontown is the main road and runs North and South through the entire length of the village. There are also two other roads or streets parallel to the main road.

On each side of these are the cottage homes of the mill workers. More than a hundred of these small houses follow the course of the road and face each other, each having two, three or four rooms according to the size of the family. Most of the doors are closed during the day for all who can get work are busy at the mill. On the right at the entrance of the village is

the main building of the plant around which the small plots of grass are kept green and neatly mowed. On the left, opposite the plant, the cottages begin.

In this section the more prosperous of mill workers live. These include the foremen and those whose skill makes them fortunate enough to get steady work so that they are enabled to rent the best houses. The cottages are painted white and the yards divided by neatly trimmed hedges. Each has a flower garden where cosmos, marigolds, zinnias and other bright-colored flowers bloom in profusion. Trees are planted on the sides of the road and the children playing under their shade are rosy-cheeked and clean. In front of many of the houses the family car is parked.

In this section are the new church and the school, built by the company and operated under the supervision of the County Board of Education. The School building is used for all entertainments and the music is furnished by the Boy Scout Band which was organized several years ago. Here also is a large swimming pool, furnished by the Company.

Although the cottages are built in straight rows the village is divided into sections by the class of people who live there. In the second section the houses are noticeably dingy with a few yellow Fall flowers which have managed to struggle up through the hard ground around door steps. The drab curtains blow back and forth through torn screens of ill-kept windows and



doors hang crookedly on broken hinges. Children, too small to attend school, play in the dusty road with tin cans and broken wheels, dodging each passing car and hardly waiting for the cloud of dust to settle before resuming their play. Nearby a lean spotted pig, staked by the roadside, grunts hungrily as he searches for stray bits of food.

The third section, toward the southern end is not as thickly settled as the rest of the village. Here the less fortunate inhabitants live; those who are not skilled laborers and get only a few days work a week. The houses are scattered and dilapidated, the yards bare except for a clothes line here and there flying a few faded garments. Children playing around the doorsteps with dirty faces and untidy hair, their soiled garments barely covering thin undernourished bodies.

The road too "runs out" here and is full of deep gullies making it hard for even a wagon to pass. The houses are reached by an overgrown path made by the tread of many feet.

About the center of the village the Widow Osmer lives in a two-room cottage. She and her husband were among the first settlers at Ellawhite, moving there from Morris thirty-five years ago when there were only about a dozen cottages at the village. Her husband then made seventy-five cents a day. But, says Mrs. Osmer, "We got along a heap better then on seventy-five cents than we do now on higher wages, 'cause groceries is so high, and

then there wasn't no picture show or nothin' to waste your money on."

Her cottage contains a bedroom and kitchen. Both are spotlessly clean, the bedroom furnished with two beds a dresser, table and radio. The kitchen contains an oil stove, table and kitchen cabinet, the floors are clean and white and show signs of many scrubblings.

Mrs. Osmer is the mother of ten children, all of them married and having families except the twins, Beatrice and Leatrice with whom she lives. Beatrice does not work in the mill. "She is not quite right in her head," but Leatrice is on the first shift and works from six to two, getting three or four days a week. The family exists on her small earnings, but after the rent and the hospital and doctor's fee is taken out there is very little left.

"I have tried to give all my younguns a little education" says Mrs. Osmer. "I ain't never had a days schoolin' in my life. My eyes was bad and I couldn't study so my folks put me to work. Not havin' no schoolin' is like a dog goin' through the world blindfolded and I have been just like that all my life."

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