## The Gazette, Montréal, Saturday, April 25, 1902

### A VISIT TO THE SUNLIGHT SOAP WORKS, TORONTO

Few people in Toronto realize that the largest soap factory in Canada, and one of the greatest soap manufacturing plants on the continent, has been erected on the banks of the Don by Lever Brother Limited. The enviable tribute to the excellence of the plant is the voluntary statement of an eminent insurance authority," who described the works as "the finest soap factory on the American continent to-day," Some idea of the immensity of the plant may be gathered from the fact that its capacity is about half a million octagon bars of Sunlight Soap a week.

The fact that so little is known about the making of what is the most popular soap in the world prompted me to visit the factory the other day. The numerous building which comprise the works appear from the outside in striking contrast to the majority of factories. Instead of a single mass, many stories high, there are several buildings, spread over a considerable area, Lever Brothers Limited, owning 23 acres of ground in the vicinity. The buildings themselves were erected not merely with a view to economy of space, but show from an architectural point of view no little degree of beauty. The office building, which is the most northerly one of the group, is built of cream hydraulic pressed brick and stone.

VISITORS WELCOME

I was escorted through the works, and had explained to me the details of the soap-making art. Before the factory proper was visited a pleasant half hour was spent in what is really a very fine office building, The manager's office and the other rooms of the counting-house are large, bright and airy, and are finished with beautifully polished mahogany, while the desks and fittings are in keeping with the general magnificence of the place.

Upstairs there are also several large, apartments, one of which is fitted up as a meeting hall for the employes. Owing to the somewhat isolated position of the

works, many of the employees do not go home for their mid-day meal. Two dining-rooms have been provided by the management, one for the office staff and another for the works. Instead of bringing cold lunches, they form a dinner club and have a hot meal each day, the company supplying the cooking utensils and dishes, and also furnishing the electricity for tho cooking. To the majority of people cooking by electricity seems as remote as the general use of flying machines, but here the system may be seen in full operation. Pots, grills, kettles and other utensils are connected by electric wires, and the results accomplished by the sunlight cook are declared to be more satisfactory than can be secured with assistance of a first-class range. The conveniences given free by the management enable the clerks and other help to secure a good daily meal at the trifling cost of 60 cents a week. The  day I visited the works the bill-of-fare was: Soup, roast beef, two kinds of vegetables, bread and butter, tea and coffee, and mince pie, all for the small sum of 12 cents.

## IN THE FACTORY

The general impression is that the odour of a soap works is about as evil as that from a glue factory, and when we reached the factory proper I was immediately struck with the clean pleasant smell that pervaded the building. When I mentioned what was in my mind my guide , smilingly explained that that was a compliment that all visitors, perhaps unknowingly, paid to Sunlight Soap. Nothing but the purest vegetable oils and edible fats, he explained, were used in the the manufacture of Sunlight. The result is that the raw materials are just as wholesome to the nostrils as the octagon bars of Sunlight Soap, which are used in millions of homes in all parts of the world.

A climb of three flights of stairs brought us to the top floor of the building, which is known as the boiling room. A glass roof admits plenty of light, and everything is as clean as the home of a thrifty housewife. Down the middle of the room was a row of immense pans, with a capacity of 60 tons each. These pans were in active operation at the time of my visit, and as I leaned over the huge crater of boiling, seething soap, I could not detect the slightest offensive odour. The oils and fats are contained in storage tanks located in the basement. These tanks feed the boiling pans by the system of pipes without the raw ingredients having to be

touched by the hand. In fact, the Sunlight plant is so perfect that the raw material is scarcely handled by an employe until tho octagon bars are ready to be wrapped up for shipment.

We now descended to the floor below, where I saw the bottom of the pans which come down several feet below the upper floor. Under each boiling pan is another large tank, into which the residue, after making Sunlight Soap, is allowed to flow and settle, the residue being composed of salt and glycerine. This material is taken from here to the glycerine distillery, where, after a complicated chemical process, it is split up into its component parts of glycerine and salt. The glycerine is eventually purified to stand all the tests of the British pharmacopeia. The salt , which has passed through its course in the manufacture of the soap is taken out again as pure as it originally entered, and sent straight back to the boiling-room, where it is used over and over again in the process of manufacturing.

We next visited the frame-room, which is covered overhead by long, sloping chutes fitted with little trapdoors. Under each of these doors is a steel case, into which the soap is .allowed to flow and cool. One of these cases was opened up, revealing a solid mass of Sunlight. weighing fifteen hundredweight.

A machine fitted with a series of wires is run over to the mass and cuts the soap into slabs weighing about seventy pounds each. Another, dexterous machine cuts these slabs into octagon bars, which are carried by workmen into one of the most interesting departments of the establishment. Here another wonderful machine stamps the octagon bars with the trade mark of Sunlight, and at the same time with the guarantee of purity. A continuous belt carries the soap along between two rows of nimble-fingered girls, who put them in their cardboard cases.

At this point my guide pointed out to me that from the moment the various substances used in making the soap had been poured into the tanks, on the top floor, Sunlight had moved downward and eastward, without having been carried back a single foot.

PRINTING DEPARTMENT

Having followed the course of Sunlight until it was ready for shipment, we retraced our steps, and my guide showed me a number of special departments in connection with the plant. To the left of the framing-room, we entered the printing department. Here a large staff was engaged in preparing cardboard boxes, in which the soap is packed, and in getting out other Sunlight literature, A press of the most modern design was printing Sunlight wrappers in two colours at the one impression, while another press was turning out some Splendid half-tone work, which is to be used In a Sunlight souvenir. These valuable souvenirs will be mailed free to anybody sending their address to the works.

We next visited the wood box factory, where further mechanical wonders were revealed to me, The printing press that printed two colours was surpassed by a heavier machine, which stamped several words in black and red at the rate of 40 to a minute on thick pieces of wood. Another machine dovetailed the ends of these boards, while a third drove four of the pieces together, forming the sides of a box. The last stage was the putting on of the bottom, which was done with a “mechanical nailer,”, which drove in eight nails at a time, The whole operation occupied much less time than it would take a man with an axe to reduce one of these boxes to kindling.

My guide pulled open another door on this floor, showing me a 250 horse power engine, which is used for generating the electricity by which the entire plant is lighted and heated.