

FALLS AT DOLGEVILLE.

Something of a Great Industry

FOUNDED BY ALFRED DOLGE.

FOUR years before James Gordon Bennett founded that great metropolitan journal, the *Herald*—in 1831—he spent part of his summer res tin the valley of the Mohawk, around what was then known as Brockett's Bridge, and in one of his many letters from that favored region which appears in his biography he refers glowingly to the "wonderful water power of that locality as compared with Lowell," and predicted its utilization for manufacturing purposes at no distant day.

For years and years this great water power which attracted the attention of that prince of journalists ran its course through the Adirondack wilderness until 1874, when another man with the foresight, the grit and the ambition of a Bennett, strayed on the same spot. He had enterprises in mind which required the great forces of nature for the furtherance of his designs; he conceived the wonderful advantages possible by locating in that little village of Brockett's Bridge, and with the limited capital at his disposal bought the semblance to a factory—an old tannery—and in a modest way laid a foundation of what is to-day an immense manufacturing center with wonderful possibilities of future greatness.

That man was Alfred Dolge—the most advanced thinker among the men of to-day.

What has been accomplished in that village under his benign and energetic influence during the past twenty years can better be estimated by a personal visit than described in cold type. It bears testimony to the forcible individuality of the man who, in a few years, has transformed what may be termed a desert into a city of happy homes, and who has built up on the single foundation of his own will so splendid a monument of industry.

Alfred Dolge's career and achievements since his foot first touched American soil is an object lesson which can always be studied and taken to heart with profit. It

is not alone the material status to which Mr. Dolge has risen that we would particularly refer, for the peculiar characteristics he displays as a philanthropic employer of labor, coupled with unostentatiousness in the exemplification of generous deeds, stamp him as among the most notable men of the present day, and the most prominent German-American of his time.

His trials and experiences in this country as a practical piano maker educated and broadened his mind; and he imbibed those healthy principles of mental and physical living which have made him such a force to-day. At this early day he recognized how dependent the manufacturers of his country were on Europe for their supplies, and he could not see why the piano materials, such as felts, etc., which were imported from Europe, could not be made and sold here if equal in quality to those imported. After he left the bench he set to work, and in the face of discouraging experiments he commenced the manufacture of felt—that was in '71—and at the Vienna Exposition, held in 1873, he had the signal honor of receiving the first prize.

Owing to the increased demand Mr. Dolge moved a year later to Brockett's Bridge—which was renamed Dolgeville in 1881—a little village of about one hundred inhabitants, situated two hundred miles from New York, and here he erected large factories and mills which were substantially built and carefully equipped. Being in the center of a great lumber district he commenced the manufacture of sounding-boards, and later piano cases in addition to felt—branches which have grown in recent years to immense proportions, compelling Mr. Dolge to purchase over fifty thousand acres of the best timber forests in the Adirondacks, and to build three saw mills.

Following the success at Vienna rapidly came new triumphs at the Expositions of Philadelphia and Paris. At the latter Mr. Dolge received first prize both for felts and sounding-boards. The superiority of the

Dolge felt was immediately recognized by European makers, and at that early day he inaugurated radical changes in the manufacture of piano hammer felt, by the use of complicated and ingenious machinery which afforded proof of his skill and enterprise. Patient toil and effort have been expended in the perfection of this specialty, and Mr. Dolge's success, especially in this field, is well deserved.

"Progress" has been his motto, and "perfection" his goal. Undoubtedly the clear, firm, yet elastic and sympathetic tone in the modern piano is due as much to the improved felts manufactured by Alfred Dolge & Son as to any other innovation which have made the piano such an enjoyable and perfect instrument as it is to-day. The strong award which they received at the World's Fair at Chicago for patent hammer felts affirms this.

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Detailed reference to the process of felt making is impossible in this limited space, but the latest specialty of the Dolge house, namely, "Blue Felt," has commanded such notice, and has been so highly praised by the leading piano makers, that a few words will not be amiss.

This patent hammer felt is made of coney hair. The coney is a small rabbit found in Southern France. The hair is blue in tint, delicate in texture, of great resistance and elasticity, and possesses marvelous durability. The "Blue Felt" is subject in its treatment to the same methods applied to other piano felts in the Dolge factory. All that is latest and best is applied toward producing the most permanent results in its manufacture. It is woven on both sides of and into the white felt, in a graduated manner, to the depth of about one-sixteenth of an inch, the two felts being imperceptibly combined.

It is only necessary to examine an instrument wherein the blue hammer felt is used to at once recognize its special virtue. The wiry, hard and metallic tone which has been recognized in connection with the use of poor white felt, is obliterated and impossible when blue felt is used. Its delicacy of texture reduces the use of the needle in tone regulating, for it is so even in surface that it acts properly upon the wire.

Its elasticity and life, as well as strength and durability, enable it to endure the greatest wear and tear.

Mr. Dolge is entitled to the greatest credit for his successful efforts toward the improvement of felts. In fact, he has revolutionized the entire process of felt making and thereby contributed immeasurably toward the perfection in tone of the American piano as we know it to-day.

In addition to felts for hammer covering, Mr. Dolge manufactures other felts suitable for rubbing and polishing as well as felts used in the manufacture of shoes, which is one of the great industries of Dolgeville now managed by Daniel Green & Co.

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The different factories controlled by Mr. Dolge form a community that is thorough-

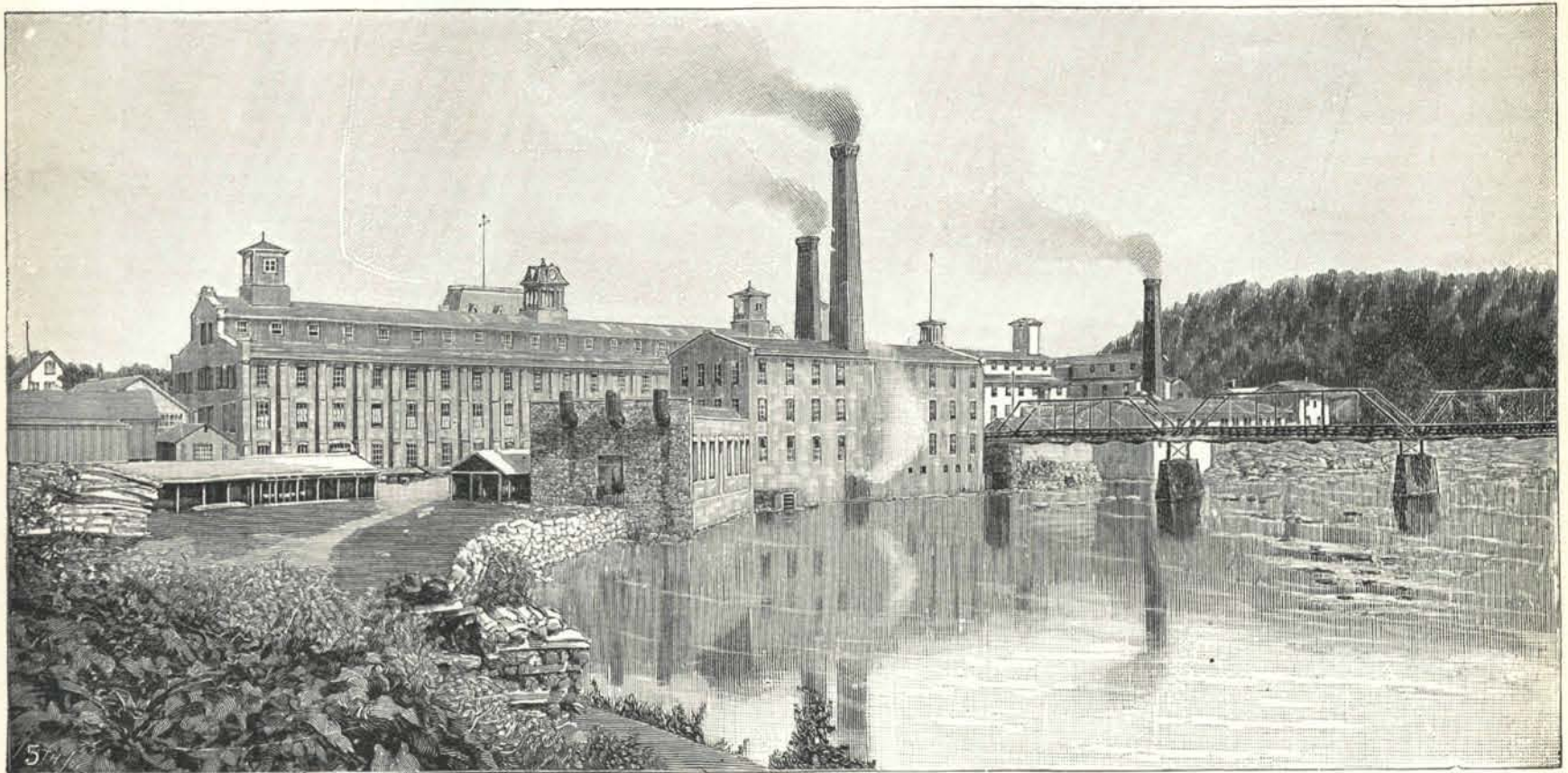
around him created by his own native energy and resource. He has inculcated a high standard of living, of education, of broad-mindedness and healthy ambition both by example and precept that is undoubtedly bearing fruit. He has never overlooked the fact that he is "one of the common people," as Lincoln so happily termed it, and he has always believed that there were higher standards than those of the business mart.

The antagonism between employer and employee has been to him a tireless study, and his entire aim since he first paid a dollar in wages has been to bring "master and man" into juster and more harmonious relations. He recognized that there is a certain duty existing between man and man, and his solution of that duty places him above the mentality of the common-place and conventional theorist.

years, will be credited at the end of each year according as the manufacturing record shows that he has earned more than has been paid to him in the form of wages.

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Mr. Dolge's solution of the labor and capital problem has attracted the attention and support of earnest thinking men, and his advocacy of the nationalization of the insurance and pension plan, at the last reunion at Dolgeville—so that workmen all over the country might enjoy blessings similar to those which have made the wage earners of Dolgeville so happy and contented—has created somewhat of a sensation. At the meeting of the Republican State League held recently at Binghamton, N. Y., resolutions were passed endorsing a "national labor insurance and pension plan" as at present in adoption in Dolge-



FACTORIES AT DOLGEVILLE.

ly industrial in the modern acceptance of the word. Ingenuity in the discovery and adaptation of labor saving devices receives every encouragement, and the motto throughout is—evolution. New ideas and new improvements receive every support, and that has been the key-note of the development of this busy little city of Dolgeville.

The history of this town is virtually the history of Alfred Dolge. Without any desire to pose as a philanthropist or paternalist, he has exercised a quiet but potent influence in the social well-being and advancement of the people of that town, which is evident in the pleasant air of prosperity, contentment, thrift and health which abound there. He has tried to impress by example what he has demonstrated in his own life; that the best opportunities are those which a man makes for himself, and that a man can so mould his life, will and character that opportunities will spring up

His plan for a "just distribution of earnings" has been such a marked success, and has been rife with such valuable results, that it has earned for Mr. Dolge an international reputation.

He started out with the idea that each employee had an individuality, and instead of basing his plan upon benevolence or depriving individuals in the smallest degree of their personal liberty and independence, he has worked on opposite lines.

Mr. Dolge's plan of earning sharing is a premium on ability, sobriety and strict attention to business, and the reward is a substantial one. It means they shall receive a share of the net earnings of the Dolge business, such share to be applied (1) as pension, increasing with the term of service; (2) as life insurance, and (3) in the form of an endowment account, upon which every male employee over twenty-one years of age, and who has been in the employ of the house for five consecutive

ville, and there is every reason to think it will be considered by the National Committee as a plank they might profitably embody in their platform. It will prove a sure safe-guard against strikes and labor troubles, and a forcible check upon the growth of socialism and discontent.

The *modus operandi* is simple. If manufacturers will lay aside the fraction of one per cent. of the wages they are paying, just as they set aside a much larger percentage for their profit and loss account, a fund can be created, which, if paid to the Federal Government, would insure workers a guarantee that in the later days of their lives they would not become a public charge upon the state or die of starvation.

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One delightful phase of Mr. Dolge's character has been most noticeable during recent years. With characteristic modesty he disclaims ability as an orator, but who

can say that such addresses as he has made at the annual reunions of his employees, at the Piano Makers' Dinner in this city and Chicago, and on two or three occasions at Dolgeville recently, are not oratorical gems, both in choice of words, construction, cogent reasoning and delivery?

His orations are typical of the man. They are earnest; they are couched in words simple, but forcible; they are supported by arguments that are clear, philosophic and display wide reading, and his conclusions are legitimate and logical. In fact, they are simply the manifestation of an intelligence and mentality that is not hampered by an over-abundance of self-esteem or the tricks of a professional. They are eloquent with reason and conviction.

Mr. Dolge's views on labor and political matters have been noticed and commented on by the leading magazines in this country and abroad, and his opinions are given due weight because they are the utterances of a practical man and not of a visionary theorist. Indeed to Alfred Dolge might we ascribe the words of a noted writer who says of an equally great man: "When such a man consecrates his rare gifts to good and useful ends, when he gives himself to the work of contributing to the elevation, refinement and happiness of his fellows, and through a course of years reaches them with fresh and stimulating thoughts, making them halt forget their cares and sorrows, and moving them to love what is



purest and to aspire to what is highest and most worthy, he deserves to be regarded as a benefactor of the world. His influence reaches far beyond the limits within which it is distinctly recognized; end, like fragrant odors that fill all the air, it refreshes thousands and makes their lives richer and better than they could have otherwise been."

An event in the history of this house was the admission into the business of Rudolf Dolge some years ago, when the firm name became Alfred Dolge & Son. Mr. Dolge has already shown by his marked ability, application to business and originality of ideas that he is virtually "a chip of the old block" and a valuable aid to his father in looking after the best interests of this concern.

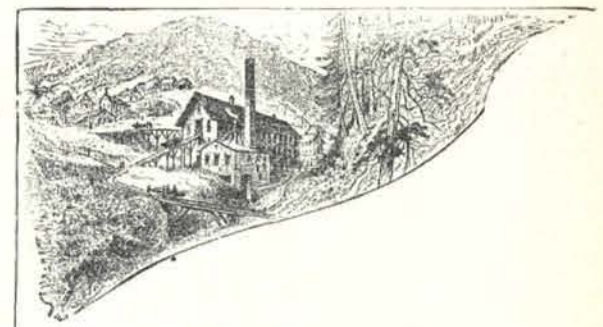
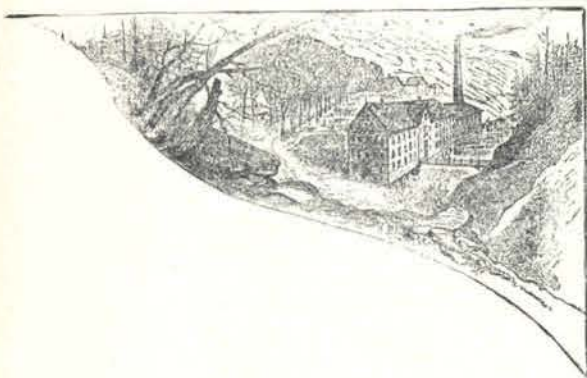
Rudolf Dolge did not step into his present position without a thorough knowledge of its requirements and its responsibilities. With characteristic foresight his father saw to it that he had a thorough education—in a business way with the house of Lyon & Healy, of Chicago, and also a practical knowledge at the factories at Dolgeville. At the present time Rudolf Dolge devotes his attention very largely to promoting the interests of the Autoharp, which has become such a phenomenal favorite within a recent date.

Unassuming and courteous, widely read, a knowledge of this country and Europe gleaned through personal travel, and a close observer of the trend of affairs in and outside the music trade, Rudolf Dolge is well fitted to hold aloft with honor and credit the flag which was flung to the

breeze by his father over a quarter of a century ago.

The same order and completeness noticeable in all departments of Alfred Dolge & Son's works in Dolgeville, is observable in their large and handsomely equipped ware-rooms, 110-112 East Thirteenth street, this city. As can be seen in another part of this paper, it is an imposing building exteriorly, yet this photo-cut gives but a poor idea of the size, the completeness, the beauty of the interior. The motto, "a time and place for everything," seems to be the order of the day in this establishment, and from Alfred Dolge down to the office boy a degree of courtesy and gentlemanly conduct of business prevail.

The several departments of this vast business are managed by some of the ablest men to be found in the trade, for Mr. Dolge is a firm believer in the doctrine that the greater the combination of brains and capital and labor, the greater the results for all concerned. In this establishment can be found every requisite for organ and piano makers. It is without doubt the largest and most complete establishment of its kind in the world. The reliability and excellence of the goods handled by Alfred Dolge & Son have never been questioned, and the reputation which he achieved years ago for keeping "only the best," has been lived up to, and is today one of the cardinal principles underlying the great success of this house.



Hazelton Bros.

A "New York Number" would be incomplete without reference to the distinguished place which the firm of Hazelton Bros. occupy in the annals of trade history in the metropolis of the Empire State. For forty-five years this house has been known as among the most progressive of the many who have contributed to the development of the American piano. It is conceded that they were among the first to adopt the full iron frame, and other improvements of the Boston school past 1850, and have been right along among the keenest students and advocates of those advanced principles which tend to the enlargement and improvement of tone. They have won an unimpeachable record for the absolute merit of their instruments, and this record continues up to to-day.

Samuel Hazelton, the head of this firm, is a thoroughly practical man, and the magnificent creations in grands and up-rights, which are at present winning en-



SAMUEL HAZELTON.

comiums from dealers and musicians, can be attributed to his intelligent grasp of the requirements of the day, and his earnest desire to keep the old flag in the front by embodying improvements of merit, not "catch-pennies," which will enable the Hazelton piano to continue to hold an exalted position among the leading instruments of metropolitan manufacture.

There is an unostentatiousness about the business methods of the Hazelton house, and a quiet dignity and finish about their handsome pianos, that impress all who have examined these instruments or have had dealings with this distinguished concern. The latest styles of Hazelton instruments are gems of musical architecture. They display the work of expert and practised craftsmen, both as to tone, finish and case design. There has been a steady demand for these instruments all through the dullest period, and this is eloquent testimony to their merits. At the present time they are in the midst of an unusually busy spell in order to fill the demands for fall stock.