

## STORIES of New Jersey

The socially minded thinkers of the period believed that most unhappiness arose from competition in an economic order that made it necessary for each individual to work for as much profit as possible, regardless of the rights of others. This resulted in the setting up of two classes--the rich, with leisure for recreation and study, and the poor, with time for little except work.

Most of the proposed plans fell into two categories, based on the ideas of Robert Owen of England or of Charles Fourier of France. Owen had put his socialistic ideas into practice at his textile mill in New Lanark, Scotland. Visitors reported that the workers appeared remarkably happy, especially when compared with those in other towns where the industrial revolution had brought only exploitation and misery. Owen came to America and lectured to huge crowds. He tried to establish a socialistic community at New Harmony, Indiana, in 1825, but failed.

Fourier differed from Owen in one important way. Owen believed that mankind would never be happy so long as the rich and the poor remained as separate classes, and that the only solution was to give every man the means of enjoying an abundant life. On the other hand, Fourier argued that the rich man should be allowed to keep his wealth and bequeath it to his children, even though it was more than was needed for a comfortable existence. He felt that the rich and poor could reach an understanding through living together in an experimental community.

Under Fourier's plan, every member of the communal enterprise would get income from three sources: interest on his investment, a share of the profits, and wages for his labor. Fourier believed that a man would have to work only 10 years, from three to five hours a day, to be assured of an income for the rest of his life. His followers established many communities in France, but his plan failed to work.

Although the theories of Fourier and Owen had borne no practical results, many people maintained that they had planted the seeds of a new and happier society which needed only careful planning to bring it to flower. It was during this period that Ralph Waldo Emerson wrote to Thomas Carlyle: "Any one you meet on the street may at any time produce a new community project from his waistcoat pocket." Among the many who became infected was Albert Brisbane, father of the late newspaper editor, Arthur Brisbane. In 1840, on his return from France, the elder Brisbane published a book, Social Destiny of Man, inspired by the ideas of Fourier. Three years later he published a paper, The Phalanx, in which he detailed the Fourier plan of social reorganization.

This plan designated that people should live in groups of from 800 to 4,000, away from the big cities. These groups, known as Phalanxes (taken from the Greek military formation), would be self-supporting, growing their own food and making their own clothes, furniture and other articles. People were to be housed in huge, hotel-like structures called phalansteries, eliminating the duplication of work. Three or four phalanxes would form a union and three or four unions would become a district. Several districts, in turn, would become a province. Between the phalanxes scattered over the land there would be an exchange of surplus goods. There would be no drones, no parasites, no extremes of poverty and wealth. Rich and poor would work together and learn to understand each other through equal education and opportunity for all. By successive combina-