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THE

Housing of the Poor.

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The Housing of the Poor.

IN view of the approaching Winter, one of the burning questions of the hour is undoubtedly that of the housing of the homeless poor. The problem is a perplexing one and worthy of the most thoughtful study on the part of our statesmen, philanthropists, social reformers and religious leaders, to say nothing of the great tax-paying public, on whose shoulders the ultimate weight of the burden must fall. A mistaken policy may involve disaster of the most serious character. A wise policy, consecutively pursued, may relieve us of a needless expenditure of millions of dollars.

THE NEED.

It has been estimated, on apparently good authority, that at the present moment there are in our city 60,000 "willing-to-works," who are forced into the painful position of being "out-of-works." So serious has the situation become, that the appointment of a public labor bureau has been deemed necessary for the purpose of mitigating the evil. Dependent upon these wage-earners, it may be fairly estimated that there are at least 90,000 other persons, who must also somehow be supported. It is fair, further, to assume that the number of these persons will probably increase during the Winter months. Let it be supposed, however, that they will remain stationary, and we have 150,000 to provide for in some way or other. These constitute the submerged tenth of our city.

THE MINIMUM COST OF SUBSISTENCE.

Limiting each individual to two meals a day, and valuing each meal at 5 cents, and each night's lodging at 10 cents, we have a minimum cost of subsistence of 20 cents per capita. In other words, these non-wage-earners will in some form or other cost the wage-earning public at the rate of \$30,000 per day, \$210,000 per week, about \$900 000 per month and some-

thing like \$11,000,000 per year, under existing circumstances.

It appears to me that the problem to be solved is,

1. Can this financial burden be minimized, and if so, how?

2. In what way can it be so adjusted as to press the least heavily upon the wage-earning classes?

3. Is there anything in our present policy which tends to aggravate the evil?

1. It appears to me that the burden can be minimized in no small measure by the provision of cheap shelters. If the average cost of lodging can be reduced from 10 to 5 cents for the workless class, we at once cut off twenty-five per cent. of the expense they constitute to the wage-earning community. How far this is possible in the case of tenements without overcrowding, in view of the high rents prevailing in New York, I hardly feel able to say, though I have little doubt that there is a grand field open for Christian and philanthropic enterprise in this direction. I feel sure, however, that the thin end of the wedge may be driven in with regard to lodgings for single men and women. The lodging of 10,000 such at half the present cost in a moral atmosphere of a healthy character would mean an actual cash saving to the wage-earning and charitable pub-

lic. of at least \$200,000 per year—no mean consideration, surely.

I am aware that it has been sometimes urged that this might serve to attract still larger numbers from the country to the town. But such has not been our experience, especially where, as in our case, it has been connected with a carefully organized plan for pouring out the paupers on to the land. Moreover, the contingency is so remote as not to be within the range of practical politics.

2. And this brings me to my second point, that the best method to adjust the evil is to *help the poor to help themselves*. To drive them into the arms of the police is a *shortsighted policy*, which is at the same time a *most expensive one*. It is a mistake to suppose that by shifting our responsibility on to the shoulders of the police we minimize either the evil or the expense. On the contrary, we *aggravate* it a thousandfold. Not only do we destroy the *character and self-esteem* of the out-of-work, but we cut him off from those sources of assistance which exist in the case of ninety-nine out of every hundred from their relatives and acquaintances, and from the odd jobs which they themselves best know how to pick up.

Moreover, police and State assistance is, as a rule, the most expensive luxury of which we can avail ourselves.

From Mr. George Hale's Police and Prison Cyclopedia I have extracted a few figures, which serve to throw some interesting light upon this question:

Statement Showing Relative Population, Police Force, Cost of Police and Number of Arrests in Five Principal Cities.

City.	Population.	Police Force.	Total Cost of Police.	Average Annual Cost per Officer.	Average Weekly Cost per Officer.	No. Arrests in Year.	Average Cost per Arrest.
New York . .	1,500,000	3,859	\$5,160,000	\$1,300	\$26	98,000	\$52
Chicago	1,100,000	2,335	2,300,000	1,000	20	62,000	38
Philadelphia	1,050,000	1,900	6,142,000	3,200	64	50,000	122
London	5,650,000	16,000	7,000,000	440	9	83,000	84
Paris	2,340,000	7,150	2,623,000	375	7.50	97,000	26

Now, to force the care of, say 60,000 submerged upon the police and upon our State institutions—who are but our servants and are bound to do our bidding, albeit they must in the end present us their little account for carrying out our wishes—means as follows:

1. That they are cut off from the doles of friends and the resources of occasional jobs, *and the taxpayers have to make up the equivalent*

2. That the 20 or 15 cents necessary for his bare subsistence has *still to be found*, only that now it has to pass through the hands of a *costly agency*.

3. That say 1,000 additional police must be found for dealing with the 60,000 additional paupers, at an annual cost of, say *one million dollars a year* to the State, or, in other words to the public, to say nothing of increased accommodation, which involves expensive buildings.

From the above figures it appears to me self-evident that any policy which compels the police to undertake the care of the submerged is bound to be of the most expensive character, and that every motive of economy and wisdom points to the imperative duty of helping these unfortunate fellow creatures—and may I not add *fellow citizens*—to help themselves.

It is with a view to this that we are desirous

of assisting these classes by the provision of cheap, warm shelters, where at a minimum cost the homeless poor shall be provided with warm, clean, fairly comfortable and moral surroundings.

OUR EXPERIENCE IN HANDLING THE PROBLEM.

Ever since the publication of General Booth's "In Darkest England," the entire Salvation Army may be said to have devoted the last six years to the practical working out of the scheme therein embodied. In almost every country, under almost every conceivable variety of circumstances, in the face of difficulties of an almost superhuman character, our 12,000 officers have been engaged in patiently handling the problem set before us. The almost unanimous verdict of thoughtful men who have examined our work has been that our economic principles have been sound and that the success achieved has been of a vast and far-reaching character. On a recent occasion representatives of the French Government who were sent to Holland to study the Dutch methods for dealing with the poor, pronounced our institutions to be among the best they had investigated. Deputations from France, Belgium, Germany and indeed from nearly every continental country have frequently been sent to examine our Social institutions in and

around London, and have reported upon them in the most flattering manner. As a result we have been enabled to establish similar institutions in many of the principal European cities with the hearty co-operation of the authorities and the generous support of the public, and everywhere with the same measure of success, because everywhere the work has been founded upon the same sound economic basis.

It has been my privilege to spend the last five years in constant personal contact with General Booth, and nothing has struck me with greater admiration than the patience with which he has sought to discover and lay down the sound economic principles upon which the problems of sociology must be based and the persistence with which he has followed each one of them to its logical conclusion.

The simplicity, the self-evidence and the worldreachingness, if I may coin the expression, of these principles have often surprised me. A few of them I may, perhaps, be allowed to here refer to:

1. To deal with the problem efficiently it must be dealt with *on a large scale*. The "tin-pot policy" of the old lady, who proceeded to bale out the ocean with a quart pot, is to mock at the evil and not to deal with it.

2. To deal with it on a large scale, it must be dealt with on the principle of *self-support*.

The poor must be taught to help themselves, and each institution must be placed on such a financial basis as will cover its own expenses, and leave a small margin of profit which will be devoted to establish similar efforts elsewhere.

3. There must be no pauperizing of the poor by indiscriminate charity.

4. On the other hand, the poor must not be branded and brutalized, nor their sense of self-respect destroyed by the imposition of degrading forms of labor, such as oakum-picking and stone-breaking.

5. The poor must be helped, irrespective of the fact that their poverty may be the result of their own mistakes, vices or crimes. There must be no inquisitorial examination into their past character or career. They must be grouped not into the "deserving" and "undeserving," but into the "willing to work out their own regeneration" and the "unwilling." In at least ninety cases out of one hundred they will be found to belong to the former category, if kindly yet firmly dealt with.

6. The ultimate remedy for social misery in the cities is to turn back the tide of immigration from the cities to the land. The moral dung heaps of society may be converted into the country's richest fertilizers, if spread out upon the land, where they can at least produce their

own food without coming into cut-throat competition with other toilers.

7. Poverty is not a crime and must not be treated as such. Honest poverty must not be nailed to a cross of shame. To treat a poor man with contempt, ignominy and suspicion is as unwise as it is unkind. To hunt him down like a wild beast is the surest way of manufacturing him into one. To treat him as a criminal is to make him one, it is to indoctrinate him with the Gospel of Despair.

8. To deal radically with the evil you must not only change the man's circumstances, but *the man himself*. A drunkard in a palace will be a drunkard still, unless moral influences are brought to bear upon him, which will induce him to forsake his evil habits. The ignoring of the moral and religious element has led to the failure of many a well-planned effort. For instance, it is a notorious fact that many of the model lodging-houses of Europe are worse dens of iniquity than the rookeries of which they have taken the place. It is not safe to dissolve partnership with God in the amelioration and restoration of His chief handiwork, MAN. To change the man himself is the most economical and rapid and certain way of changing his circumstances; hence the fact is worthy of special note that our ordinary spiritual operations and public meetings result in 250,000 per-

sons yearly making an open profession of religion, upwards of 25,000 of these being previously drunkards or persons of a vicious criminal character.

THE BENEFICIAL RESULTS

of the proclamation of this Gospel of Hope to the wreckage of society have been of a character deserving the careful study of every thoughtful person interested in the welfare of his country and of the poor

1. It was confidently predicted that the class in question could not be persuaded to work, that they were *bone idle*, and that to them vagrancy was far preferable to hard work. We have proven that this is a libel on the poor. On our Farm Colony last year more than \$100,000 worth of produce was the result of the labor of these wastrels of society, the majority of whom hardly knew a spade from a rake before they came. The services of a solitary village policeman are never required, and our only bugbear consists of three saloons, which have established themselves on our borderland.

2. It was stated with equal assurance that no such institutions could be established on a self-supporting basis, and that this class neither could nor *would* contribute to their own support. But what has been the fact? The daily sheltering and feeding of from 5,000 to 6,000

paupers, which would have cost the taxpayers at least \$600,000, cost us \$493,000, of which they themselves contributed \$470,000, thus leaving only \$23,000 to be found by the charitable public, and this in face of having to pay heavy sums for rents, rates and taxes.

3. Again, it had been feared that the provision of cheap shelters would prove an extra inducement to the village population to migrate to the cities. But so far from this being the case, we have been enabled to turn the eyes of the public to the land with the most extraordinary success. Not only has our industrial farm of 1,500 acres proved an astonishing success, the value of land in the vicinity rising from \$100 an acre, at which we bought it, to \$1,000, but similar farms have been commenced by others, and our axiom, "put them on the land," has been almost universally accepted as the natural solution to the pauper labor problem.

At the present moment we have in New York City a Women's Shelter with accommodation for about fifty, as well as a Rescue Home for thirty girls, and we have two Men's Shelters, licensed for 250. Several other suitable buildings are also under consideration.

We do not propose to reduce these to the same dead level. Our experience has shown that shelters on the ladder principle, with a variety

of charges, ranging, say from 5 to 15 cents, helps a man to gradually win back his lost footing in society.

Connected with these shelters we propose to have labor bureaux and cheap food depots, arrangements being in some cases made with neighboring restaurants, where such might be in convenient proximity, for sending our lodgers to them at reduced rates. We should also cultivate cordial relationships with neighboring lodging-houses of a respectable character, for sending to them either our overflow or the more respectable classes of lodgers, who might be in a position to pay higher rates.

I may add that these shelters will be placed on a strictly self-supporting basis, the charges being so arranged as to cover the entire cost of rent, service and equipment, besides leaving a fair margin of profit, which will be devoted towards inaugurating other shelters in crowded localities.

In the course of a few months I hope that General Booth may be able to lay before the public, in person, a scheme of a most important character, embracing the establishment on an extensive scale, of potato patches (on Governor Pingree's plan) and farm colonies in the neighborhood of our principal cities. But in the meanwhile the Winter is upon us, and the dire necessities of the suffering poor compel me to

urge upon the public the necessity for dealing with the question of the housing of the homeless poor in a largehearted, liberalhanded and generous manner, for while the shelters, once started, will be run on purely self-supporting lines, it will be readily understood that the preliminary outlay will be very considerable. To provide suitable shelter for say not less than 1,000 poor—and I cannot feel it in my heart to aim at any lower figure—will require an original outlay of \$10,000; which is no more than was voted by the city for providing a free shelter on a barge for 180 men, with the additional advantage that the whole of this sum could be repaid. Nothing, perhaps, would better serve to illustrate the economical and self-supporting lines on which we propose to work, than a comparison between the cost to the city of this free shelter and that of our own proposed institutions for this purpose.

To shelter on an average of about 150 men from March 11 to May 31, 1896, cost the city, I understand, some \$8,000, for I believe that a balance is still on hand of the \$10,000 voted for this purpose. (The barge is now dismantled, and it has been necessary to hire and fit up a building for the purpose). To run the shelter for eighty days cost an average of say \$100 a day, or 66 cents a head per pauper, although wharfage was free. Now,

with the same outlay, we should be in a position to start in suitable localities, ten shelters for 100 men each, and place each of them upon a strictly self-supporting basis, surrounding the men with a wholesome moral atmosphere and protecting them from the terribly contaminating influences to which they are ordinarily exposed. I believe the work to be one which will appeal alike to the sense and sympathy of those who are interested in the welfare of the poor, and I would cordially invite the co-operation of ladies and gentlemen interested in the subject, to whom I shall be happy to explain the details of our plans, and from whom I shall be glad to receive any advice or assistance that they may be able to offer.

**OUR SOCIAL SCHEME IN AMERICA
COMPRISES:**

8 Rescue Homes, with accommodation for ...	200
12 Shelters for Men, with accommodation for...	1,400
2 Shelters for Women, with accommodation for	100
3 Prison Gate Homes and Farms, with accom- modation for.....	70
2 Children's Homes, with accommodation for	60
1 Children's Creche, with accommodation for	20
1 Farm Colony, with accommodation for.....	20
&c., &c.	

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