



## CHAPTER XV

### THE WARDS OF THE CITY

HERE and there are signs of an awakening to these facts. We are beginning to treat the problem of wreckage by anticipation at its source. The Probation Court, with its humane officials, is caring for the juvenile offender. Such courts have already come into existence in many of the Northern cities. Through this agency, thousands of boys and girls are cared for with kindness, and helped into new channels in harmony with the life about them. By such means truancy and petty offences are being corrected and the boy inspired by a belief that some one is interested in his welfare.

The awakening sense of at least one city has carried this movement a step farther on. The city of Cleveland has acquired a large farm, upon which it has erected comfortable cottages for the training and care of juvenile offenders. Helpful teachers have taken the place of prison wardens; attractive homes, in no sense suggestive of prison institutions, have superseded the jail-like barracks of former reformatories. Here are committed

the more difficult youngsters, who cannot be handled through the ordinary agencies of the Probation Court, working in harmony with the home. At this farm-school no brand attaches; it leaves no scar and saves self-respect. A sound body is made ready for a sound mind through healthful sport and healthful labor. Recreation is linked with study and an *esprit de corps* is created and a sense of affection for the institution. This marks the most advanced step yet taken by the public in the treatment of the juvenile offender. Through this agency and the Probation Court, the budding crop of crime of the next decade will be largely diminished, at great saving to life and character, as well as to the purse of the community.

In many of our cities the kindergarten, the small park, the playground, the gymnasium, and the social settlement, with here and there other agencies, are breaking into the blackness of the slum and organizing the work, play, and energy of the neglected masses. Already the results of these agencies may be measured. Order and self-respect have supplanted disorder and neglect. The gang is being superseded by the club, and organized social interests for the irregular life of the street and the saloon. Through these agencies the child, who heretofore knew no touch but that of the policeman's club and felt organized society only

in the cell of the police station, is gaining a sense of self-respect and a hope for better things. We are finding that vice and crime do not propagate themselves so rapidly in competition with these things and that with every opportunity offered there is a greedy desire for a better life.

This salvage process is being undertaken in Chicago on a broad and comprehensive scale. Aside from the general park system, which the city has developed, an attempt is being made to project opportunity for recreation and play into the heart of the slum districts by the opening up of twenty-eight socialized parks, summer and winter playgrounds. These are equipped for the young and the old, the women as well as the men. Two million five hundred thousand dollars in bonds have been sold for this purpose and an annual appropriation of \$12,000 has been set aside for the maintenance of each park. This means an initial outlay for each playground of nearly \$90,000. The city has employed architects and social engineers to carry out the idea and has undertaken the relief of her huddled humanity in the same big, courageous way that she has done many other seemingly impossible things. Chicago intends to let daylight, nature, and happiness into the slums.

In detail these parks are to be depressed some feet below the surrounding streets, so as to be flooded in winter for skating. Swings, recreation

apparatus, sand piles, and wading ponds invite the children, while big swimming pools, attractive lawns, music, and rest attract the boys and the girls, the women as well as the men. Here the saloon will find competition, while in winter the public gymnasium, with opportunity for physical culture, with assembly, reading and game rooms, will offer an opportunity for some rational recreation to the producers of wealth, who have made the city great. A chance will be offered to live a freer, sweeter existence, to work and care for the city, which, aside from Boston, has taken the first big step in the care of its people. For these social parks are but social settlements maintained by the city. They satisfy an imperative need, urgent as the hospital, the church, or the park. They are an enlargement of the school, and form an attempt to care for those classes whose present knowledge of the city is only gained through the policeman, the lodging house, the hospital, and the health department.

In New York City a similar policy is being worked out. Along with a number of playgrounds in the crowded districts, five recreation piers upon the North and East Rivers have been constructed. Nine public baths, a score of vacation playgrounds, and a dozen roof playgrounds in connection with the public-school buildings have been opened. Here music, sport, dancing, singing, and recrea-

tion of all kinds are offered to the poor. Along with these, the schoolrooms, gymnasiums, and basements have been opened in the evenings for the use of the neighborhood. Men and women have eagerly availed themselves of these opportunities, which involve but little cost to the city. More than one million people made use of them in 1903. Game-rooms and libraries have been opened. The gymnasium is widely used, while military drills and exercises engage the interest of the youth. In the summer, vacation schools are opened to care for those who would otherwise be upon the street, while nature-study, art work, mechanical occupations, domestic science, and needle-work are being taught as supplementary to the regular school curriculum.<sup>1</sup>

It is difficult to exaggerate the effect of these new opportunities upon the life of the people. Moreover, this development is but in its infancy, for it has all come about in a very few years. Through such agencies as these the budding crop of vice and crime can be checked at its source. By these means healthier bodies will be developed

<sup>1</sup> An examination of the Fifth Annual Report of the city superintendent of schools in New York gives a full account of this work. It is most inspiring reading. The statistics show the average daily use of the vacation playgrounds to be from 150 to 1500, the average of all being about 500; of roof playgrounds to be about 2000; of piers about 200; of evening recreation centres in the public schools about 200.

along with healthier minds, while, for those who do fall under the arm of the law, the Juvenile Court, with its probation officers and farm-schools, will offer a helping hand.

Shall society stop with the boy and the girl? Is our obligation paid when opportunity has been enlarged for the children? Or shall this growing discrimination be carried still further, and the weak, the poor, and the unfortunate be separated from the criminal and given a chance? Can society discriminate and make its punishment fit the crime, or must the vagrant, the drunkard, the prostitute pay the penalty of their misfortune?

Such a change of programme would involve a new attitude of mind and a new spirit in our correctional administration. In connection with every police station there should be a lodging house, where persons apprehended for drunkenness, suspicion, vagrancy, and the like might be taken, to be later released without punishment except in aggravated instances. The great mass of cases which clog the police-court docket involve no criminal aggression and no malicious motive. Such cases should be disposed of without cost to the offender or burden to the community. They should be treated much as the hospital cares for those suffering from disease. The offender should be housed for the night, sent home, given work, if

work is needed, or treatment such as is offered in the public dispensary.

The entire police administration of a city might, with advantage, be altered. At present its motive is the single one of punishment. In this the police but reflect the attitude of the community, for the efficiency of the force is gauged by the number of its arrests. A capable superintendent is measured by military standards. Even the most honest department is inspired by a belief that it should inflict as much hurt as possible. How much better it would be if the police superintendent were a man of humane instincts; animated by a desire to help those in need of assistance. One sees something of this spirit in the London policeman. He is courteous and ever ready to assist those in need of direction. Were the spirit of the Juvenile Court, of the probation or truant officer carried into police administration, the help which could be extended to the struggling classes would be immeasurable in its possibilities. Were we to turn the entire body of police into ministering officials, like those sent out by the Humane Society, more could be done for the aid of the city's unfortunates than is accomplished through their attempted punishment. Such a revolution could only be brought about through a masterful man like Colonel Waring. But with such a change inaugurated, with the police force animated by a sense of kindness,

much could be done towards the suppression of vice and crime by showing means and methods of avoiding it.<sup>1</sup>

But as the problem of the city's wreckage is largely industrial, so it can only be ultimately treated on industrial lines. It can only be solved through a readjustment of our ideas and methods, by which opportunity will be enlarged and the dependence of the wage-earner upon conditions which he cannot control will be diminished. Much can be done by offering some sort of dignified work as a reserve for the helpless. An industrial workshop or farm should be substituted for the poorhouse, and the payment of industrial wages instead of keep. By this means self-respect will be preserved, while physical health is being restored. Some such opportunity is demanded as

<sup>1</sup> "Many of those who knew Toledo's 'Golden Rule' Mayor, Samuel M. Jones, will remember how he sought to make of Toledo's police force a power not only for the prevention of crime, but devoted earnestly to helping the community in positive ways, assisting the people in efforts to make their neighborhood a safer and better one to live in, cleaner, more sanitary, more neighborly and mutually helpful. The mayor had a high ideal of the police officer's relation to the rest of the people, and during his administration succeeded in imbuing the force with much of his spirit. A recent consular report gives an interesting account of how the city of Birmingham, England, trains its police officers to render more than perfunctory service in cases of accident. We look for the day when our cities shall not only require their policemen, but give them the privilege—in which we believe they would find no small measure of satisfaction—to make themselves more useful to the people in ways that are at once humanitarian and conducive to general welfare."—*The Commons* (Chicago), July, 1905, p. 425.



compensation to those who stand ready to carry on the industry of the city. They should not bear the whole burden of industrial disturbance, of hard times, and irregular employment. Moreover, human life is too sacred a thing to be permitted to perish with only the alternative of charity. There is such a thing as a right to labor, a right to employ God-given energy upon the boundless resources of the country. He who will work but cannot find it should not be forced to the alternative of vagrancy or outdoor relief. And as the great bulk of those who are ultimately engulfed in poverty and crime are drawn thither by industrial causes, we should not be deterred in the search for relief by the hostile cry of socialism, raised by those who find even the kindergarten, playground, or public bath-house a basis for such a complaint.

A like opportunity should be offered the outcast woman, a chance to reclaim herself. To-day there is none. Her offence, too, is largely industrial. It is traceable to lack of work or underpaid work; to hard times or unfair burdens. Her wage is admittedly adjusted below the cost of living, and when accident renders her dependent upon her own toil the alternative offered is not pleasant to think about. She is the saddest sacrifice of our industrial system; the most cruel cost of town disease. And nowhere is the heartlessness of our

city civilization so manifest as it is towards her. She is the prey of the police and the police courts. No one has made her cause his own. In many cities periodical assessments, either as private graft or public revenue, are imposed upon her. In other cities she is subjected to raids and public arraignment in the police court. Her punishment is fine or imprisonment. After working out her imprisonment she is confronted with the alternative of sixty days more in the workhouse, or returning to the offence for which she was convicted in order to earn enough to pay the fine. The city offers no other alternative. Twentieth-century Christianity, which halts at no expenditure for war, expends not a farthing for the help of this class. The evil stands alone, and is unrelieved by public or private action. For those who enter such a life there is no retreat. They leave hope behind. The police court, the workhouse or fine, but increases the mortgage on her soul. If we are consistent in our theory, then the vicarious sacrifice exacted of womankind should be relieved as much as possible and every avenue opened for retreat. This can only be done by the establishment of some sort of home and workshop, a place dependent upon no private charity and inspired by humane considerations and intelligent adaptation to woman's industry. In such a home the door should be open to all. Here work should be

offered and with it a chance for a respectable life.

Probably the most difficult burden upon the city is that of salvage, of how to shift the sacrifice of those who have not been able to catch on, of those who are weak, of those who have failed, so that they will not bear the whole cost of it. For modern society has its *culls*. Their number is reducible to actuary's tables. As a matter of justice, this residuum should be relieved from the consequences of the industrial and social maladjustment which tends to cast it into the scrap heap. Nor is this a proposal that can be reduced to a cash equation. Few public questions can. There are too many social considerations involved. But reduced to such a material basis, it should be adopted. For a self-respecting, self-supporting artisan is no more expense to the state than the same person within the workhouse or almshouse, while the saving to the future, to self-respect and probable preservation from an extended life of crime cannot be computed.

The problem of the city's wreckage can only be adequately approached as an industrial one. For vagrancy, vice, and drunkenness are largely the results of poverty or industrial movements. Crime itself tends to disappear where work is plenty and opportunity is open. It is greatly diminished in the small town and rural community. Poverty is

both cause and effect, and the cure will not come from the closing of the saloon or the revival of the whipping post.

Ultimate relief can only be brought about through a reversal of our system and a change in the methods of criminal administration. It can only be really relieved by industrial opportunity. There must be an abandonment of the retributive ideas of the Old Testament and a substitution of the kindlier philosophy of the New.