

## PREVENTIVE CHARITY

**I**F it were possible by the giving of alms to abolish poverty, there would be no involuntary poverty. Alms giving does not relieve poverty to any considerable extent, as poverty increases faster than charity contributions. Conventional charity has no constructive social plan, and its tendency is to perpetuate poverty and the need for charity.

Mere charity is futile. For example, only five days after the most bountiful Christmas distribution of charity in the history of this country, a family was found with father, mother and three children starving in two dark, rear rooms of a city tenement. The father had been ill with tuberculosis for a year as the result of bad housing, the mother was broken-down, and both were unable to work. Entirely without money and in need of clothing, they were about to be turned into the street. Before the end of Christmas week similar cases were reported in every large city.

Numerous relief agencies are trying to feed and clothe the poor, paying rents and doing all they know how to alleviate human misery. Kindly men and women are tempted to believe that their whole duty has been done when they contribute towards such relief, but the cause of misery must be removed so that its wholesale production will be stopped.

"The poor ye have always with you" does not mean that we *must* always have them, or that we should allow them to become a social menace. Society is vitally interested in equal justice and material well-being. Many now realize that industrial and social evils which menace large groups of the population cannot continue without bringing disaster to society as a whole.

### STRIKE AT THE ROOT

**I**T is useless to talk about improving the condition of the poor unless we strike at the root of their poverty. From the beginning of time mankind endured mosquitoes, supposing them to be a necessary evil, until only a few years ago it occurred to a scientist to eradicate the cause of the pest and, as all know, the number of mosquitoes is being steadily reduced. Likewise, poverty was supposed to be a necessary evil until master minds perceived the cause and pointed out a method of eradication. By this method charity patrons and workers can help establish a just and righteous social order, which will eradicate the cause of poverty.

As long as injustice prevails charity will be necessary to relieve its victims, but charity is bound to give way to more sensible and humane measures of social justice. In fact, society would be better off if conventional charity were at once abandoned, and the sympathies of those who maintain it released to work for the nobler ideals of human progress.

The object of charity ought to be to make independents instead of dependents, thus making itself unnecessary, through recognizing the existence of wrong conditions and then correcting the social and economic environment.

### OLD AGE DEPENDENCY

**A** PHILOSOPHER, seeing an old man begging in the street, remarked: "Except for the grace of God, there goes myself."

Careful official investigation in different States tends to the conclusion that poverty in old age is not essentially a problem of individual thrift or the fault of the victims, but the result

of their misfortunes. Deficient earning ability, accident, prolonged illness, occasional unemployment and other emergencies reduce the income and increase the outgo to an extent that makes accumulation in any form impracticable and well nigh impossible. About 10% of the inmates of poorhouses and infirmaries and about 20% of the residents of old peoples homes once possessed property or savings exceeding \$2,000, but sickness or unemployment or poor investment had wiped this out.

More than one quarter of all adults in both the lower and upper social strata families are not sufficiently alert minded or mentally discerning to succeed against the keener wits of the rest of the people. When such upper class adults meet with financial reverses after middle life, as so often happens, through losses in business, bad investment of inherited funds, or otherwise, they, as well as members of the lower social strata families, sink to the level of minimum earning ability and usually become dependents in old age.

Of all persons past the age of sixty-five 20 in every 100 are classed as paupers, and 33 others in every 100 are dependent on relatives or charity from some source.

Among women the greatest contributing factor to old age dependency is widowhood. Single life and childlessness are also notable factors in sending dependent aged, both men and women, to the poorhouse. Immigration does not appear to be connected with the problem of poverty in old age.

Lack of guidance of boys and young men to their most adaptable vocation, and their taking the most available employment regardless of fitness, produces the proverbial "square pegs in round holes." This often means meagre earning power throughout life with poverty in old age.

Old age dependents are not confined to the progeny of poorer families, but include also those of wealthy and once wealthy families. Often all that stands between a dependent and the almshouse are the slender earnings of some one person. A slight mishap to the earner means the almshouse for the dependent. God grant that you and yours may never be placed in a like position, but, no doubt, others who were once just as comfortably placed as you now may be have become dependent in old age. Self-preservation from such fate, aside from ethics and justice should urge everyone in sheltered lives to help solve fundamentally the pressing problem of old-age maintenance.

The privilege granted by the State of passing swollen fortunes down from one generation to another is far more potent in generating and fostering poverty in others than is generally supposed; (to say nothing of the corruption of morals, family antagonisms, and often the ruination of recipients). This may be partially the reason for the growing public demand for ever increasing inheritance taxes. (For elucidation of this see "Abolition of Inheritance," by Harlan E. Read; New York, Macmillan Company. Price \$2.00.)

#### POVERTY AND RICHES

THE report of the United States Commission on Industrial Relations shows that one-third of our wage-earning families live in poverty or on the verge of it. After paying for rent, food and clothing they have nothing with which to care for health or provide for old age. Thirty-seven per cent. sleep three or more persons in a room, 15% sleep four or more in a room, 37% of the mothers are at work and unable to give their children more than scant attention. Two per cent. of all the people own 60% of all the

wealth, while 65% of the people own but five per cent. of the wealth.

The Federal income tax returns show thirty-three persons each with an income of more than one million dollars a year of whom four persons each had more than \$5,000,000 a year.

*This is a stage that has been reached in a little over a hundred years of the greatest progress in production and prosperity the world has ever known. The tendency that this statement of facts reveals is so certain, the outcome so fraught with sure disaster, that it would be well, indeed, if we could be aroused and disturbed over it now.*

#### LIFE-LONG SAVING

**T**HERE is a feeling that every person should save throughout their life time and accumulate a fund for old age. Inadequate earning ability throughout life, as already shown, precludes many from saving while many others who might and should save, are born without the saving instinct, or acumen to acquire it, and others without the mental ability to protect their accumulation beyond possibility of loss. With the increasing unearned increment in land-values, on which rent or interest must be paid, becoming constantly more burdensome to the masses, and without their being conscious of what the burden is so that they might rid themselves of it, saving for old age is becoming increasingly more difficult for both the poor and middle classes.

Endowment insurance, even when State aided, has proven an injustice and great hardship and consequently is a failure, when applied to those of deficient earning ability and to those who themselves are striving on meagre earnings to maintain an aged parent or other helpless relative.

#### OLD-AGE PENSIONS

**B**ESIDES, it is becoming recognized that any person who by their

presence and industry has contributed health and strength, vigor and skill, to the creation of the land-value and wealth by which taxation is borne, has already made their contribution to a public fund from which every aged person should draw a pension when no longer fit to work.

The growing economic complexity of life is more and more focusing attention on a dependable solution of the problem of childhood and old age maintenance, and to meet it public thought and legislation are concentrating on old-age pensions and mothers' endowments. These are being established in a constantly increasing number of nations throughout the world. Mothers' pensions are now provided in forty States in this country, but payable only after inquisitorial investigation to prove that the recipient is a pauper. The mothers of the race! *Unless you help change existing economic conditions a turn of the wheel of fortune may easily place your daughter, or at least your granddaughter, in the same category.*

Many classes of government employees are now receiving old-age pensions. Plausible reasons have been stated why only those in government employ—whether national or municipal—should be entitled to pensions. Various such groups which have gained, and other groups which are still striving for, each for themselves, establishment of a dependable pension system through appropriation of public funds are selfishly ignoring that all aged members of society who have worked hard all their lives in the public service, the school, the mill, the mine, or on the farm or otherwise in helping build up the commonwealth should be equally entitled to provision for care in old age without being forced to go to the almshouse, subsist on charity or become dependents on the younger generation, which is a

common practice that is decidedly against the welfare of the State.

All state pensions thus far established anywhere are on only a meager basis because of lack of funds, and legislators have yet to learn that the public revenue may be increased through taxation of the community-made land-value without taxing industry or the products of industry.

#### STIGMA OF PAUPERISM

THE beautiful thought of the care of the aged through the medium of aged pensions should be free of the stigma of charity or pauperism. The public school system is free of that stigma only because it is open to be taken advantage of by rich and poor alike, and only by having old-age pensions similarly open to all citizens as an inherent right upon reaching a certain stipulated age and period of citizenship, and without prying inquisitories as to the aged citizen being a pauper, can it, too, be free of stigma of charity or pauperism. Besides, such course would greatly simplify and minimize the expense of administration.

Of the aged poor now living who gave any thought in early life to old-age maintenance many no doubt felt confident of their own well-being, but the most of them probably merely comforted themselves with the thought that they might never reach old age, but at worst contemplated it with safety and hope. Had they in early life taken an active part in a fundamental movement for better conditions, such might by this time have been established, and they would not now be dependent. Their fate is a warning to all who now feel assured of old-age maintenance for themselves and their posterity and by indifference to the existing injustice are helping to give it a longer lease of life. For any one not to contemplate the uncertain welfare of future genera-

tions which they help create indicates brute rather than developed human instincts.

#### HIGH LAND-VALUE A CAUSE OF POVERTY

THE report of the United States Census for 1920 shows that 2,454,746, or more than 38% of all farms in the United States are worked by tenants (a constantly increasing percentage and an increase of nearly five per cent. in ten years). This proves the desperate land-hunger of people who will submit to the exacting terms and utter future hopelessness of farm tenancy in order to get land to use, and it disproves an often repeated expression and erroneous popular impression that "you cannot get men to work on farms." Increasing population increases the value of land. Because of the increasing price of farm land and consequent high rents masses of people born on farms who would like to cultivate land but who never expect to be able to buy the land, either refuse, or are unable, to become farm tenants and are driven to abandon their natural inclination for farming to seek employment in cities where thousands are often unable to find employment, and become poverty-stricken.

Every human being is vitally affected by his relation to the land.

The greater the land-value in a community the more widespread is poverty in that community.

Holders of idle land have their minds so centered on the justification of the unearned increment in increasing land-value inuring to the benefit of the individual land-holder that they give no thought to the relation between high land-value and unemployment, involuntary poverty, congested housing and human distress.

Holding desirable land out of use except on payment of a price for the use of it is the basic cause of poor

housing everywhere, of high rents, congested population, and organized charity in the cities; of sparse population, farm tenancy and poor schools in the country; of the high cost of living and of a large part of the poverty, tuberculosis, crime and human misery.

*Are you doing your part in thinking why in the midst of increasing land-value and wealth there is increasing need of charity contributions?*

#### CONDITIONS MUST BE CHANGED

**O**BVIOUSLY underlying conditions must be changed. *Were men free to use idle land convenient to market, on long fixed tenure, without being obliged to pay a portion of their product in the form of rent or interest for the privilege of using it they could do for themselves much better all the things charity aims to do for them.*

Opening up of idle land on these terms to all, both employed and unemployed who have a natural desire or inclination for land cultivation, *would create more jobs and thus relieve the pressure of unemployment so that all might then occupy themselves, either in industry or land cultivation as they preferred; and thousands would have gardens which they would cultivate when they were not otherwise at work.* This would cause involuntary poverty amongst able-bodied people to disappear and the condition of the poor to be improved beyond recognition.

A large part of the foreign immigrants into this country have been farmers in their native country. Some of them manage to get land here to cultivate but the high land-value, the rent or interest on which would take so great a portion of their produce, precludes the most of them from undertaking land cultivation and they are forced into the populous centers where they often become a social menace.

#### REMOVE THE UNDERLYING CAUSE

**T**HE underlying cause of most involuntary poverty can be removed and natural opportunities to earn a living opened to all when the power of taxation is understood and properly applied. Chief Justice Marshall declared that "the power to tax involves the power to destroy; that the power to destroy may defeat and render useless the power to create."

The existing method of taxation abuses that power by encouraging the holding of land out of use, or inadequately used, and discouraging its use. This increases land value, rents and food prices. Obviously this creates and fosters slums and tuberculosis housing, and at the same time reduces the purchasing power of wages, so that able-bodied men in the prime of life are often unable to buy the necessities, to say nothing of the comforts, of life for their families. *This condition restricts the production of food and manufactured commodities, prevents ownership of homes, arrays labor against capital, forces women and children to toil, and drives millions to the tenements and slums, where poverty, disease and crime are generated more rapidly than the churches, charities and police can cope with these evils.*

Next to withholding land from use, childhood, sickness and old age are the most prolific causes of poverty. Sickness or even reduced vitality which produce poverty too often result from preventable causes, with consequent loss to the individual, to industry and to society.

Land-value is created by increasing population. It is therefore a community-made value and should be treated as a community asset to be drawn upon through taxation to meet community needs. Additional public revenue derived from increased taxa-

tion of the community-made land-value would provide old-age pensions and also make it possible for the community to maintain adequate hospitals, measures of preventive medicine, dental clinics, etc., as it is impossible to do under our present method of raising public revenue, or by depending as now upon irregular, uncertain and inadequate charity contributions. Increased provision for vocational, including domestic science, schools,

children's playgrounds, and more teachers and higher salaries for them to perfect our public school system are imperative needs in every section of our country. These could be provided by increasing the tax rate on land-value. Through all these agencies Preventive Charity would enable our future citizens to attain a higher standard of physical and mental fitness and development and a consequent higher capacity for self-support.

#### IDEAL OF JUSTICE

**M**ANY people believe that our present system of charity is not only necessary and permanent, but even to a certain degree that the principle involved is sacred and inviolable. It is for the purpose of showing that leading minds of all ages and nations have questioned the efficacy of charity and have had a more or less clear conception of its injustice, that the following quotations, selected from a great many, are presented. It is striking to find how persistently an ideal of justice in the distribution of the use of land and its fruits among the inhabitants of the earth has haunted the master minds. Surely, with such an array of names, no one would lay himself open to the charge of rashness in deciding to rise above prejudice and examine the natural relation of human beings to the land.

**DR. FRANK CRANE**—Conventional charity plays Lady Bountiful; carries bread to the starving; distributes clothing to the naked. Real charity sets about removing the conditions that make beggary, starvation and nakedness. Charity piously accepts things as they are, and helps the unfortunate; justice tries to establish such laws as shall give employment to all, so that they need no bounty. The best part of the human race does not want charity; it wants a fair chance and a square deal. Charity works among slum wrecks; justice dreams and plans that there be no more slums—goes to the legislature and changes things.

**ANDREW CARNEGIE** — *Gospel of Wealth*—There is something far more injurious to the race than poverty; it is misplaced charity, so given as to encourage the growth of those evils from which spring most of the misery of human life.

**ABRAHAM LINCOLN**—The real issue in this country is between the common right of humanity and the spirit that says, "You toil and earn bread and I'll eat it."

**MAURICE PARMELEE**, *Poverty and Social Progress*—In dealing with poverty the emphasis should be laid upon the prevention of the original and fundamental causes of poverty. \* \* \* Many of the poor would not be in poverty if they had the opportunity to produce what they are capable of producing, or could retain possession of what they do produce.

**J. A. HOBSON**, *Work and Wealth*—It is more socially injurious for the millionaire to spend his surplus wealth in charity than in luxury. \* \* \* For every act of charity, applied to heal suffering arising from defective arrangements of society, serves to weaken the personal springs of social reform.

**FREDERICK C. HOWE**—Private organized Charity is an obstacle in the way of justice. If we had no such organizations men would think of ways and means to abolish the causes of poverty.

**SIR WALTER SCOTT**—To such a point have we been brought by an artificial system of society that we must either deny altogether the right of the poor to their just proportion of the fruits of the earth, or afford them some means of subsistence.

ROBERT SOUTHEY—  
Nature gives enough  
For all, but man, with arrogant self-  
ishness,  
Proud of his heaps, hoards up super-  
fluous stores  
Robbed from his weaker fellows,  
starves the poor  
Or gives to pity what he owes to jus-  
tice!

CHARLES DICKENS—How hard it is  
for the very poor to have engendered  
in their hearts that love of home from  
which all domestic virtues spring,  
when they live in dense and squalid  
masses, where social decency is lost,  
or rather never found.

CARDINAL MANNING—The state of the  
houses—families living in single  
rooms, sometimes many families in one  
room—a corner apiece. No common-  
wealth can rest on such foundations.

DISRAELI—Public health is the founda-  
tion on which reposes the happiness  
of the people and the power of a coun-  
try. The care of the public health is  
the first duty of a statesman.

FREDERIC HARRISON, *Remedies for  
Social Distress*—To me, at least, it  
would be enough to condemn modern  
society as hardly an advance on  
slavery or serfdom, if the permanent  
condition of industry were to be that  
which we behold, that 90 per cent. of  
the producers of wealth have no home  
that they can call their own beyond  
the end of the week.

CARDINAL VAUGHAN—Without ties to  
bind the people to the land, they have  
been driven in ever increasing multi-  
tudes to the towns \* \* \*. They  
are not owners either of the scraps of  
land on which they live or of the tene-  
ments which cover them.

JERRARD WINSTANLEY—And is not  
this slavery, say the people, that  
though there be land enough \* \* \*  
to maintain ten times as many people  
as are in it, yet some must beg of their  
brethren, or work in hard drudgery  
for day wages for them or starve, or  
steal?

Lest I be poor and steal.—Proverbs  
30:9.

RICHARD JEFFERIES—That any hu-  
man being should dare to apply to an-  
other the epithet "pauper" is, to me,  
the greatest, the vilest, the most un-  
pardonable crime that could be com-

mitted. Each human being by mere  
birth has a birthright in this earth and  
all its productions.

CARDINAL MANNING, to Earl Grey—  
Hunger, thirst, nakedness, notice to  
quit, labor spent in vain, the toil of  
years seized upon, the breaking up of  
homes, the miseries, sicknesses, deaths  
of parents, children and wives; the  
despair and wildness which spring  
up in the hearts of the poor, when  
legal force, like a sharp harrow, goes  
over the most sensitive and vital rights  
of mankind. All this is contained in  
the land question.

THOMAS JEFFERSON—Wherever there  
is in any country, uncultivated land and  
unemployed poor, it is clear that the  
laws of property have been so far ex-  
tended as to violate natural rights.

RICHARD WAGNER—What Nature  
made, what men have tilled and  
turned into a fruitful garden, belongs  
to men, and none shall come and say,  
"To me alone belongs all this."

HENRY GEORGE—Political liberty,  
when the equal right to land is denied,  
becomes, as population increases and  
invention goes on, merely the liberty  
to compete for employment at starva-  
tion wages.

WILLIAM DEAN HOWELLS—The man  
who is in want, or even in dread of  
want, is not a free man, and the coun-  
try which does not guard him against  
this danger and this dread, or does not  
assure him the means of livelihood, is  
not a free country, though it may be  
the freest.

JOHN A. HOBSON, *Problems of Pov-  
erty*—The part played by rent in the  
problems of poverty can scarcely be  
overestimated.

HERBERT SPENCER—It may be per-  
ceived that equity utters dictates to  
which we have not yet listened, and  
that to deprive others of their rights  
to the use of the earth is to commit a  
crime inferior only in wickedness to  
the crime of taking away their lives  
or personal liberties.

HORACE GREELEY—Those who have  
been divested of an important, and  
vital natural right are also entitled to  
compensation. The right to labor, se-  
cured to them in the creation of the  
earth, taken away in the granting of  
the soil to a few, must be restored.  
Labor is the inexorable condition of  
the honest, independent subsistence of

the poor. It must be fully guaranteed to all, so that each may know that he can never starve or be forced to beg while able and willing to work. Our public provision for pauperism is but a halting and wretched substitute for this.

EMERSON — *The Conservative* — "Touch any wood or field or house-lot on your peril," cry all the gentlemen of this world; "but you may come and work in ours for us, and we will give you a piece of bread."

PROFESSOR THOROLD ROGERS—I have not the slightest doubt that the miserable condition of the poorer classes in our large towns is greatly due to the accumulation of land in few hands in such towns. The great proprietor \* \* \* laments the condition of the poor, but secretly and steadily adds to their burdens.

TOLSTOY—The way for the rich to help the poor is to get off their backs.

FROUDE—I suppose at the smallest average for the making of a single rich man, we make a thousand whose life long is one floodtide of misery.

ROUSSEAU—*Essay on the Origin of Inequality Among Men*—Are you ignorant that numbers of your fellow-creatures are starving for want of what you possess in superfluity?

RUSKIN—The mistake of the best men through generation after genera-

tion has been thinking to help the poor by almsgiving, and by every other means except the one thing which God orders for them—Justice.

STEWART E. BRUCE—*The World in 1931*—Sensible people would rather entrust the future of their children in the keeping of a Society that guarantees a good living to all who work, and \* \* \* provides an old age pension, than to trust them to a Society that is wolfish in its nature—in which a fortune might be stolen or dissipated, leaving the beneficiary helpless and in want.

CORA PARSONS KESSLER—Are there no higher goals than the mere warehousing of money? Does life furnish no higher ideals? Do we not possess the instincts of a common humanity, the love of man, the sympathy that makes us all akin? Have we no thought of the aims and aspirations of a higher, juster and nobler mankind?

BOLTON HALL, before the Conference of Charities and Correction—You get a man a job—whose job do you get for him? Somebody else's job; and you then have the displaced one—a little less efficient, or a little higher-waged—for whom in turn you have to get or make another job. Why cannot you make a job? Because all jobs consist in labor applied to land or to the products of land, and none of your plans tend to open the land to the people.

#### THE TAPROOT OF POVERTY

WHILE everyone desires to relieve the sufferings which come to his notice, Preventive Charity represents all thoughtful persons who see that injustice is the taproot of poverty and are unable to rest content without making some effort through preventive measures to eradicate it.

With the wisdom of master minds showing a way, we must eliminate the burdens of useless charity so that we need not waste our means in futile attempts to relieve involuntary poverty, which is clearly preventable.

Nobody has any right to find life within the sphere of his own activity a wrong he can help to remedy, or within himself an evil he can hope to overcome.—Charles W. Eliot, President-emeritus Harvard University.

Now that the way is pointed out, the responsibility rests on each of us to help repeal the unjust laws which foster human misery, or else assume the burden and the blame of sustaining charity.

This pamphlet is sent you because you should be interested. After reading please send to some one whom you think might be interested. In that way it will be kept circulating. If you will send to the Secretary names of persons whom you think should be interested literature will be sent them.