

slum. Whenever a death or sickness occurs in one of these families, the charitably disposed find "relief work" to do next door. This is charity at its best. As the village grows into a town, the number of its poor increases, their poverty deepens, and the slum begins to take form as a slum; when the town becomes a city, its poverty area widens until there are literally acres of it; and when the city becomes a metropolis, there are square miles of slum, streaked with "tenderloins" and "red light" districts.

For all this there is a competent cause. The cause is economic pressure, scarce opportunity to earn a decent living. Water never knows why it runs down hill. Neither do slum dwellers know why they are so conditioned. They do not reason it out. They cannot explain it. And if the powers of civil government were thrust into their hands on condition that they remedy these defects of a society of which they are part but not as members, they would be helpless to do it. Social regeneration can not come through its worst victims. Nor can it come from charity. When Bolton Hall said that charity is "an institution for relieving the condition and increasing the number of the poor," he stated a solemn truth. Charity scarcely touches the problem. There is no substitute for justice. Nature defies us to find one.

The only practical remedy for the slum is to reverse the tendency that produces it. Repressive legislation will not do. It fails as often as tried, and it has been tried times without number. Purity propagandas and anti-vice crusades are equally futile. Nothing permanent can be accomplished until those social currents which produce the slum are reversed.

It is a push from the outside, not a pull from the inside, that peoples the poverty stricken area of a big city. There is nothing there to pull. Pull is attraction and poverty is not attractive. The push on the outside is caused by an artificial narrowing of opportunities due to monopoly of land. The relation between the two may not be seen at a glance. Deep seated things never are, and this is socially subterranean. But the relation is there and easily demonstrated. Once relieve land monopoly pressure from the outside, and the same force that has made the slum will destroy it. It will do so by a process of elimination.

Every aspect of the slum is ugly; it does not possess a single virtue; it is all vice. The "struggle" against poverty in the slum is a virtue imported from the outside. You will find this struggle not only in the slum but throughout society, discoloring its life as a drop of ink discolors a

clean blotting pad. When once the tendency is reversed the slum will be destroyed in much less time than it takes to create one. The wonderful wealth-creating, and therefore poverty-abolishing, forces of the industrial world will do it.

But in this as in all other things, men exhaust every avenue for doing things wrong before trying to do them right. Our experiments with the slum have been failures to date. The slum persists—larger, more menacing than ever, and more hideous. To scatter the slum is to spread its contagion; to concentrate it is to parade its atrocity and foulness. To deny its existence is to play the ostrich. To abolish it by legal enactment directed against the thing itself, is folly. Scientific treatment alone will suffice.

When science discovered that the mosquito was responsible for the spread of yellow fever, how silly it made an armed posse look, quarantining a town. Shot guns for mosquitos! Yet it is by just such clumsy methods that society handles the slum question. We deal with the slum as we did with yellow fever—killing its victims instead of killing its cause.

HENRY H. HARDINGE.

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PAY IN PROPORTION TO SERVICE.

If one could see all the private letters that discuss industrial problems, writer to reader and back again, one might better understand the ebb and flow of public opinion on industrial subjects, which is often surprising in its unexpectedness. Perhaps public sentiment is moved more in this way than by means of printed page or platform speech. Here is an example. We should like to give names, but that might not be safe. Our assurance goes with its publication, however, that the letter is from a railway official of good standing and high responsibilities, to a bank teller who had applied for a railway position, where he supposed that salaries were "advanced in proportion to services rendered." Omitting personal parts and names, the railway official's letter follows:

"If your salary as a bank-teller has not been 'advanced in proportion to services rendered,' your case is not exceptional, nor confined to employes in banks. It is true also of those who work for railroads, merchants, manufacturers and other employers.

"Not long ago the clerical force employed in the general offices of railroad companies was reduced about six per cent, office hours being lengthened six per cent, to make up for the shortage. The same was done by all other employers of labor. Thousands of men and women, able, willing and

anxious to work, were thus thrown out of employment, and wages were reduced 'in proportion to services rendered' in all classes of business and all occupations—except where labor unions were powerful enough to maintain a fixed scale of wages for the few that retained their employment.

"But while the unions have been able, arbitrarily, to prevent a direct reduction in wages, and sometimes to force wages to a higher point, they have never discovered how to arrange it that all who want work at any time or place may find it. We have heard of the necessity for 'emergency currency' for the benefit of banks, but we have never heard of 'emergency work' for people out of employment, even though they are starving.

"The man out of a job must work, borrow, beg or steal—if he continues to live. And as the desire to live, *somehow*, is natural and strong, the man out of a job must finally choose between borrowing, stealing, begging, or working—for just enough to barely live. This is true of all times and places and of all men and races. The condition is only accentuated in times of industrial paralysis. If there are nine jobs and ten men who have no other means of sustaining life, the wages of the nine will finally shrink to the necessities of the one who can not find work.

"This is what reduces wages to lower and lower levels, without regard to the value of services, as population and wealth increase; for as a general rule, unless compelled as I have said by the strength and activity of labor unions, no person, firm or corporation will continue to pay an employe any higher wages or salary than they would have to pay some other person who is out of work and able and anxious to render the same service for just enough to maintain a mere animal existence.

"In Belgium and other portions of densely populated Europe there are 500 or 600 people to the square mile. In the United States there are not over 25 or 30—less than one-twentieth. Both countries have a high protective tariff to make work plentiful and wages high. But the man out of a job is generally present in both places and reduces wages for unskilled labor to the lowest level. The trouble with the common people in both countries is that the most valuable land in and around the cities and other desirable localities, whether agricultural or mineral, is held out of productive use. It does not matter whom the law protects or encourages in holding land which the owners neither occupy nor use themselves, nor allow any one else to use. Other men, women and children are crowded off as the population and

wealth of the community increase and the value of the land consequently rises further and further beyond their reach. Thus driven into the streets, they are compelled to move on and on in search of work, thereby perpetuating that constant oversupply of labor which reduces wages to a minimum, fills the land with tramps and mendicants and thieves, and crowds the asylums, hospitals, poor-houses, jails, penitentiaries and brothels with victims 'more sinned against than sinning'.

"We all resent indignantly the appropriation in a street car or railway train of several seats by one person which he neither uses himself nor permits any one else to use, while others are crowded into the aisles. But that is a mere temporary hardship. Insignificant and unimportant as such actions may appear, however, we universally regard them as indefensible and intolerable. But the Lord has made us dependent upon land for life, liberty and happiness—not for a few moments or an hour, but for life. We have no choice in the matter. We are here and must stay, whether we like the arrangements or not. Yet we tolerate the holding of land out of use, although it deprives the great majority of their inalienable birth-right, robs them of life itself, and reduces the mass of the people everywhere to a condition which grows more and more appalling and alarming as the years go by.

"If the people of your State would secure the adoption of a tax on land values irrespective of use and improvement, so that the vacant but valuable land would pay as much tax as adjoining land of equal value which is in use, and abolish one after another all other taxes for revenue, they would set going a process that would break up land monopoly in that State. They would compel land owners and land speculators to put your natural resources to use or permit some one else to do so, and thereby increase enormously the opportunities for work and the demand for labor, thus raising wages to higher and higher points. This would make yours the best State in the Union in which to live, to earn a living, to own a home or to operate business. None of your people would have to go away from home to secure employment or to find opportunity for a business career.

"Instead of looking for employment outside of your State, suppose you speak to others about this, and try to force the opening up of your own natural resources. Thereby you would produce a multiplication of demands for labor under conditions that would naturally cause wages and salaries to 'advance in proportion to services rendered.'"