

HOW TO TREAT THE TRAMP

His Elimination from Society Discussed by the Civic-Philanthropic Conference at Battle Creek.

TALK OF SOCIAL REVOLUTION

Various Palliative Remedies Suggested, but a More Drastic One Considered Necessary by Dr. Bayard Holmes of Chicago.

BATTLE CREEK, Mich., Oct. 14.—Mayors' Day at the Civic-Philanthropic Conference was a great success, many city executives of Michigan and adjacent States being present or sending representatives. The audience was large, cultured, and appreciative, manifesting great interest in the subjects. Dr. Bayard Holmes of Chicago, Professor of Surgery in the College of Physicians and Surgeons, delivered an address on "How to Eliminate the Tramp from Society." He said:

"The tramp is an unproductive member of society, not necessarily vicious or criminal, who has no settled abode, but wanders more or less aimlessly about within narrower or wider bounds. Much sociological study has been devoted to the tramp, and many laws have been passed, for the most part, for his discomfiture. He is numerous, and, as civilization advances, a factor of growing importance. Indeed, the tramp was the herald of the dissolution of the feudal system, and there is reason to believe that he is also the harbinger of the coming socialistic society.

Three Classes of Tramps.

"In order that we may clearly understand ourselves, let us limit somewhat the definition of the tramp in this discussion:

"1. There is the defective tramp, imbecile, insane, or epileptic, exfoliated from birth from any class of productive society into which he might have been born, and falling naturally upon the roads, the only resource which special privilege and privileged classes have left to simple human beings. But even here his rights and privileges are limited; he must 'pass on.'

"2. There also is the mutilated tramp, maimed, blind, crippled, or otherwise incapacitated for industry by the very industries themselves in which he has done good service. This is no inconsiderable number, as a most cursory examination of the lodging houses and police stations of our towns and cities will show.

"3. There is the able-bodied tramp, tramping for curiosity, ennu, or fashion in Europe, or tramping in his own country to escape the restraints of home or the miseries of a starving family, or to seek a new market for his labor; or tramping because tramping pays better than working.

Treatment of Unfortunates.

"Cannot we all agree that the defective tramp should be treated as gently and humanely, if not as lovingly, as should all other defectives? There are many reasons why he should be separated from society and therapeutically and prophylactically cared for, but it is no part of my purpose to present the reasons or the methods adapted to this small group of tramps.

"The tramp from mutilation or deformity is a much more important factor. He certainly should be suppressed or prevented. For example, in the United States about 900,000 men are employed on the railways; 1 in 30 of them, or 30,000, is injured each year, and 1 in 300, or 3,000, is killed. Thus in a single industry a large group of men who have done good service are more or less handicapped by the mutilations necessary or unnecessary for that service itself. What is true of railroading is true of every other industry to a greater or less degree. These injured men are thrown out of the labor market. They are incapacitated. After having swelled the ranks of the unemployed for a short time they become tramps.

"Is it not right that the risk which these men suffer should be shared by the several industries and by society at large, which demands this service. Is it unreasonable to hold the employer liable? Is it not reasonable to give the productive workman protection and insurance of a living even if he is injured, providing it be in the line of duty? Should not the laborer, railway man, or miner be honored as much by this too rich nation as the soldier or the marine? To eliminate the tramp due to mutilation in the industries, an employer's liability insurance should be instituted on a National basis, and every safeguard should be provided for the workman.

Surplus of Humanity.

"But the defective tramp and the mutilated tramp form only a small part of trampdom. The great army of tramps are for the most part good specimens of humanity, both mentally and physically. They are simply the surplus humanity of civilization. They originate as a natural consequence of competitive production. Some are men thrown out of work by the introduction of labor-saving machinery or by the importation of more thrifty, and therefore cheaper, foreign labor. Some are men discharged and blacklisted because they belong to trades unions or have participated in strikes.

"Some are men formerly engaged in advertising, pushing, or promoting trade in industries that are now monopolized and more economically managed by trusts. Some are men who find that the wages in the industries for which they are fitted furnish a poorer living than tramping furnishes. All of these tramps are tramping the streets of their own town or the country at large because capital does not give the laborer the full products of his labor, and therefore the capitalist or his servant, the exploiter of labor, finds a large surplus on his hands and shuts down his works, discharges his men, and they necessarily become tramps.

"The rich tramp, tramping for curiosity, or seeking snobbery in Europe, is too despicable an American for serious consideration. He should be treated as an enemy of his country, as a traitor, or as an outlaw with no rights or privileges that a productive American should respect.

Remedies for the Tramp Evil.

"The treatment of this disease of society—to fall into the expression of my calling—may be either palliative or curative. Among palliative remedies that ought to be mentioned, if not recommended, are the following:

"1. The abolition of the contract system in all public work, and the substitution of direct employment of labor, the eight-hour day, and a living wage. This means, of course, municipal workshops for the manufacture of all articles needed by the city—for example, workshops for the manufacture of uniforms for policemen, firemen, and other municipal officers; binderies for making books of record, and printing offices for public printing; shops for electric, telegraphic, and hydraulic appliances, and for every material used in sewer building, paving, or other municipal work. And in the case of the State or the General Government, the same provisions, according to the need and functions of these organizations.

"2. When it is inexpedient or untimely for the public body to undertake the manufacture of any article, then the purchase, not of the lowest bidder, but of the best employer. In all matters of this kind the people should demand that its machines or other purchased commodities be made by men working under the most favorable conditions, and it should give its work only to manufacturers who maintain the eight-hour day and give workmen a living wage.

"3. The acquisition of all franchises and special privileges let out or sold or given away to private corporations, and the management of all these for the use of the public, and not for revenue or profit. And until public ownership is realized, the corporations that do public work should be required to pay a living wage and furnish their men the most favorable conditions of labor.

"4. The institution of public baths, public lodging houses, and, in crowded cities, public tenements for the very poor and for the destitute.

"5. The relief of all active industries from taxation, by placing all the burdens of revenue on land and other monopolies granted by warrant or by legislative act.

"6. The reinvestment of the world of industry with the wealth produced by its combined labor, through the institution of the graduated income tax and the capital stock tax.

"7. The establishment of workshops in all sorts of industries for the employment of the unemployed in every necessary productive occupation, the total product of which industries shall be consumed by the unemployed alone, none of it to be in any legal sense private property, or allowed to be sold on the open market in competition with the commodities produced by independent labor.

Social Revolution Demanded.

"So much, then, for palliative treatment. These things would do much to diminish the army of tramps and the miseries of the unemployed. Those who believe in the

present competitive system ought to labor earnestly and faithfully for some of these or for some better palliatives. As for myself, while I will help in any such good work, I know they will only prolong the agony. Society must be born again.

"All industry must be organized for production for the use of the producer and not for the profit of the master or exploiter. Rent, interest, and profit must be outlawed, as nobility, piracy, and gambling have been. The united body of workers must own all the means of production and distribution, and must be allowed to enjoy all the commodities they produce. No man unless he work should be allowed to have any part in them or enjoy any of them.

"The life of one man is as valuable as that of another, and his needs should determine his share in the efforts of society. No heredity title or charter of possession should be allowed to stand in the way of the common good. To eliminate the tramp the landlord, the banker, the money lender, the boss, and the contractor must first be eliminated. The whole competitive system must go before the tramp does.

"But you will say that all that is Socialistic, Utopian, and impracticable. So it is, but so are all the palliative measures I have proposed. Let them be undertaken by any American city or State, and it would be enjoined, or the act under which it was contemplated would be declared unconstitutional. The Constitution has only once been amended, and then by a civil war. Must it be so amended again to eliminate the tramp? Our last civil war, undertaken to perpetuate a special privilege and a domestic institution, abolished unexpectedly in the end bond slavery. God grant that another revolution may not be required to wipe out the miseries of wage slavery, in which the tramp suffers not the least."

Religion and Labor.

The Rev. Dr. David D. Thompson of Chicago, associate editor of the Northwestern Christian Advocate, read a paper entitled "Religious Aspects of the Labor Movement," which was in part as follows:

"There have been four stages of the labor movement from the beginning of human history to the present time—anarchy, slavery, serfdom, and the competitive or wage system. There are indications that society is entering upon a fifth stage, that of co-operation. In the changes that have taken place in the condition of labor, religion has borne an important part, sometimes against the workingman, but for the most part in his behalf, and religion will have its part in the future of labor.

"There are two sides to the question of the seeming antagonism of many working people in the Church. From one point of view this antagonism is justified; from another it is not. Religion judged by some of its representatives has not been in the past and is not now the friend of labor; judged by other representatives and by its influence in the main, it has been in the past and is now the best friend of labor.

"The pagan religions looked upon the ancient workingman, not as a man, but as a thing, too low to be so honored by the gods as to be given a soul. During the centuries that slavery and serfdom existed, Christians were numbered among the most oppressive masters; and when the serfs rose in rebellion and endeavored to secure their freedom, among those who resorted to the most fiendish cruelties to frighten them into submission were representatives of the Church. When in later years large-hearted men in England, like the Earl of Shaftesbury, were striving to release the child toilers in the factories, they were assisted in their efforts by only a few churchmen, but were strongly opposed by eminent men of the Church, such as Mr. Gladstone and John Bright, who declared that the enactment of such laws would interfere with the freedom of trade, though that freedom enslaved children and brought them to early graves. In this day there are many church members who oppose every effort designed to promote the welfare of workingmen, workingwomen, and even working children, if such effort in any way seems to threaten or diminish their profits.

"But there is another side. While some churchmen have thus opposed, scarcely a step in advance has been made that has not been due directly or indirectly to religious teaching or effort. The greatest social reformer of the present century in England, the Earl of Shaftesbury was led into his reform work from a sense of religious duty, and his zealous associate in his efforts to protect children in the factories, Richard Castler, was also a religious man. The three men who more than any others have educated the American people as to the rights and just demands of labor are Prof. R. T. Ely, Lyman Abbott, and Washington Gladden—all religious leaders.

"What the labor movement of to-day most needs is the power that comes from religious faith. Without that workingmen will have no permanent faith in the righteousness of their cause or in their leaders. With it, and the inspiration that comes from the belief that their cause is divine, they will be more careful in what they say and do and avoid that which is contrary to the laws of God. The same is true of capitalists in their relations with employes."

A Municipal Reform.

The Rev. C. L. Arnold of Detroit delivered an address on "Municipal Reform," saying, in part: "Religion is the prime mover, and will bring all classes together. On that basis the solution will soonest be reached. Capital and labor should work together. We must eliminate all party politics. In the present struggle in New York the people should vote for the ability of the man, rather than the candidate of political ward heeled."

In the discussions the Rev. Mr. Johnstone of Toronto, Mayor Maybury of Detroit, the Rev. W. L. Barth of Battle Creek, Mrs. S. M. I. Henry of Battle Creek, and Messrs. J. L. Anderson of Battle Creek, McCarthy of Muskegon, and Evans of Coldwater figured prominently.

The Afternoon Session.

In the afternoon the attendance was increased. The Rev. Dr. C. E. Wilcox of Indiana, in a paper on "Lawlessness vs. Law Enforcement," said in part: "Our county jails are largely schools of crime. Government exists for the benefit of the governed. Under our Government it is supposed that the poor, weak citizen is as fully protected as the wealthy and the strong. It is not so. Government reaches its end through medium of the law. Every man's liberty ends where the rights of fellow-men begin. If one man violate the law, another will do it; this will come to anarchy. Lawyers and witnesses are bought; so are juries. The spirit of Christ is not so prevalent that we can live without the law. We must teach our people to defend its defenders."

In a paper on "The Unemployed and Our Duty Toward Them," Louis Selling, President of the Hebrew Charities of Detroit, said that the way to help the poor was by giving them work instead of financial help. Fred A. Maynard, Attorney General of Michigan, said in his address on "The New Man; the New Era," that the Government should control monopolies.

In the evening Samuel M. Jones, Mayor of Toledo, Ohio, delivered an address, which was followed by a paper on "Political Leaders and Misleaders; or, the Bad Citizenship of Our So-Called Good Citizens," by the Rev. Dr. Morgan Wood of Toronto.

The Migration of Paupers.

The Rev. Dr. C. R. Henderson, Professor of Sociology in the University of Chicago, read the final paper of the day, on the migration of paupers from foreign countries to the United States and from one State to another. After showing that the evil in the latter respect is encouraged by the authorities of the various States in order to escape the expense of supporting dependent persons, he spoke of proposed remedial measures as follows:

"To avoid the inconvenience and inefficiency of conflicting State laws it is strongly urged by competent students of practical experience that the Federal Government should provide an Interstate Commission, armed with law, to regulate the movement of this class between the States. It would be necessary to impose penalties for sending paupers from one State to another. Exceptions might be made for those who could show that they had friends to care for them at the end of the journey. A uniform definition of settlement would reduce conflict and confusion.

"While we are waiting the slow formation of public opinion which will compel Federal action, it seems desirable to move forward to the same end by concurrent action and common understanding in the several States. Mr. Hart proposes a scheme of State law including these elements: Continued residence without relief for one year as condition of settlement; permission to State Board of Charities for admission to State institutions; non-residents to be investigated and properly located; commissions appointed to decide responsibility; and common carriers prohibited to send a pauper forward without a certificate from authority.

"A complete State system is required to discriminate between dependents and able-bodied persons; to classify and grade the unfit; to provide training for those capable of being made self-supporting; the elimination of the semi-criminal tramp class by progressive sentences to work-houses and the final segregation of the chronic vagabond. In every community there should be a cordial co-operation between private and public agencies of relief. When they work at cross purposes or without regard to each other the tramp takes advantage of the chaos, as he does of fires and mobs, and while he is rendered more degraded the community is bled."