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Transcriber's Note

There are two footnotes, which have been moved to the end of the text and are linked for convenient reference.

Please see the transcriber's notes at the end of this text for a more complete account of any other textual issues and their resolution.

As Himself

“Broke”

THE AUTHOR

“BROKE”
THE MAN WITHOUT THE DIME

BY

EDWIN A. BROWN

ILLUSTRATED FROM PHOTOGRAPHS

CHICAGO
BROWNE & HOWELL COMPANY
1913

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TO

THAT VAST ARMY, WHO, WITHOUT
ARMS OF BURNISHED STEEL, FIGHT
WITH BARE HANDS FOR EXISTENCE

THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED

What in me is dark
Illumine, what is low raise and support;.
That to the height of this argument
I may assert eternal Providence
And justify the ways of God to men.

—MILTON

CONTENTS

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

INTRODUCTORY

I was born on the 28th day of April, 1857, in the village of Port Byron, Rock Island County, Illinois. The waves of the grand old Mississippi sang my lullaby through a long and joyful childhood. So near at hand was the stream that I learned to swim and skate almost before I was out of kilts. My father, A. J. Brown, at that time was the leading merchant and banker in the town. We were an exceedingly happy and prosperous family of six.

My father died when I was seven years of age. My mother, a woman of exceptionally brilliant intellect and lovable character, has been with or near me almost all my life. She died in 1909 at the ripe age of eighty-four.

When a boy in my teens I attended school in Boston, where I spent four years. In the early eighties I moved to Colorado and have lived there ever since. In 1897 I was married, and the intense interest and sympathy my wife has shown in my crusade for the homeless has been one of my greatest encouragements. With no children for company, it has meant a great sacrifice on her part, for it broke up our home and voluntarily separated us for nearly two years.

I have often wondered why I should have been the one to make this crusade, for all my life I have loved solitude, and have always been over-sensitive to the criticism and opinions of others. My mission is not based upon any personal virtue of goodness, but I have been inspired with the feeling that I had taken up a just and righteous cause, and the incentive of all my efforts has ever been that of compassion—not to question whether a hungry man has sinned against society, but to ask why he is not supplied with the necessities of existence.[A]

I am trying to solve these questions: Are our efforts to help the unfortunate through the medium of our "Charities," our "Missions," and our churches all failures? Why is crime rampant in our cities? Why are our hospitals, almshouses, our jails, and our prisons crowded to overflowing? And these questions have resolved themselves for me into one mighty problem: Why is there destitution at all,—why is there poverty and suffering amidst abundance and plenty?

I am convinced that poverty is not a part of the great Eternal plan. It is a cancerous growth that human conventions have created and maintained. I believe it was intended that every human being should have food and shelter. Therefore I have not only asked "Why?" but I have tried to find the remedy. My crusade has been constructive and not destructive.

My mission is not to censure but to disclose facts. I am without political or economic bias.

I shall ask my reader to go with me and see for himself the conditions existing in our great cities,—to view the plight of the homeless, penniless wayfarer, who, because of the shortsightedness of our municipalities, is denied his right to decent, wholesome food and to sanitary shelter for a night. And my concern is not only the homeless man, but the homeless woman, for there are many such who walk our streets, and often with helpless babes at their breasts and little children at their sides. And after my reader has comprehended the condition that I shall reveal to him, I shall ask him to enlist himself in the cause of a Twentieth Century Free Municipal Emergency Home in every city, that shall prove our claims to righteousness and enlightenment.

To-day there is everywhere a growing sense of and demand for political, social, and economic justice; there is a more general and definite aim to elevate the condition of the less fortunate of our fellow-citizens; there are united efforts of scientific investigators to discover and create a firm foundation for practical reforms. I am simply trying to show the way to one reform that is practical, feasible, and—since the test of everything is the dollar—good business.

If I can succeed in showing that old things are often old only because they are traditional; that in evolution of new things lies social salvation; that the "submerged tenth" is submerged because of ignorance and low wages; and that the community abounds in latent ability only awaiting the opportunity for development,—then this volume will have accomplished its purpose.

I am determined to create a systematic and popular sympathy for the great mass of unfortunate wage-earners, who are compelled by our system of social maladjustment to be without food, clothing, and shelter. I am determined our city governments shall recognize the necessity for relief.

Let me not be misunderstood as handing out a bone, for an oppressive system. "It is more Godly to prevent than to cure."

In these pages I shall undertake to show by many actual cases that the so-called "hobo," "bum," "tramp," "vagrant," "floater," "vagabond," "idler," "shirker," "mendicant,"—all of which terms are applied indiscriminately to the temporarily out-of-work man,—the wandering citizen in general, and even many so-called criminals, are not what they are by choice any more than you or I are what we are socially, politically, and economically, from choice.

I shall call attention to the nature and immensity of the problem of the unemployed and the wandering wage-earner, as such problem confronts and affects every municipality.

We find the migratory wage-earner, the wandering citizen, at certain seasons traveling in large numbers to and from industrial centers in search of work. Most of these wandering wage-earners

have exhausted their resources when they arrive at their destination, and are penniless—"broke." Because of the lack of the price to obtain a night's lodging, or food, or clothing, they are compelled to shift as best they may, and some are forced to beg, and others to steal.

For the protection and good morals of society in general, for the safety of property, it is necessary that every municipality maintain its own Municipal Emergency Home, in which the migratory worker, the wandering citizen, can obtain pure and wholesome food to strengthen his body, enliven his spirit, and imbue him with new energy for the next day's task in his hunt for work. It is necessary that in such Municipal Emergency Home the wanderer shall receive not only food and shelter, but it is of vital importance that he shall be enabled to put himself into presentable condition before leaving.

The purpose of each Municipal Emergency Home, as advocated in this volume, is to remove all excuse for beggary and other petty misdemeanors that follow in the wake of the homeless man.
The Twentieth Century Municipal Emergency Home must afford such food and lodging as to xvi
restore the health and courage and self-respect of every needy applicant, free medical service, advice, moral and legal, and help to employment; clothing, given whenever necessary, loaned when the applicant needs only to have his own washed; and free transportation to destination wherever employment is offered. The public will then be thoroughly protected. The homeless man will be kept clean, healthy, and free from mental and physical suffering. The naturally honest but weak man will not be driven into crime. Suffering and want, crime and poverty will be reduced to a minimum.

In looking over the field of social betterment, we find that America is far behind the rest of the civilized world in recognizing the problems of modern social adjustment. We find that England, Germany, Austria, France, Switzerland, Sweden and Norway, and other nations have progressed wonderfully in their system of protecting their wandering citizens. All these nations have provided their wage earners with old-age pensions, out-of-work funds, labor colonies, insurance against sickness, labor exchanges, and municipal lodging houses.

Because of the manifest tendency to extend the political activities of society and government to the point where every citizen is provided by law with what is actually necessary to maintain
existence, I advocate a divorce between religious, private, and public charities, and sincerely xvii
believe that it is the duty of the community, and of society as a whole, to administer to the needs of its less fortunate fellow-citizens. Experience with the various charitable activities of the city, State, and nation, has proven conclusively to me that every endeavor to ameliorate existing conditions ought to be, and rightly is, a governmental function, just as any other department in government, such as police, health, etc. The individual cannot respect society and its laws, if society does not in return respect and recognize the emergency needs of its less fortunate individuals. Popular opinion, sentiment, prejudice, and even superstitions, are often influential in maintaining the present-day hypocritical custom of indiscriminate alms giving, which makes possible our deplorable system of street mendicancy.

The object of the personal investigation and experiences presented in this volume is to lay down principles and rules for the guidance and conduct of the institution which it advocates.

The reader has a right to ask: How does this array of facts show to us the way to a more economical use of private and public gifts to the needy? Are there any basic rules which will help to solve the problem of mitigating the economic worth of the temporary dependent? I shall give ample answers to these queries.

In the hope that the facts here presented may bring to my reader a sense of the great work xviii
waiting to be done, and may move him to become an individual influence in the movement for building and conducting Twentieth Century Municipal Emergency Homes throughout our land, I offer this volume in a spirit of good-will and civic fellowship.

E. A. B.

Denver, September, 1913.

A Half-frozen Young Outcast Sleeping in a Wagon Bed. He Was

Beaten Senseless by the Police a Few Minutes after the Picture Was Taken

CHAPTER I

My Itinerary and Working Plan

"The heart discovers and reveals a social wrong, and then demands that reason step in and solve the problem."

It was in the Winter of 1908–9 that a voice in the night prompted me to take the initiative for the relief of a great social wrong—to start on what to me was a great constructive social reform.

As mysterious as life itself was the following of that voice for three years. I realized fully the importance of actually putting myself in the place of the penniless man to gain the knowledge and fully grasp all that life meant to him. It came clearly to me that the shaking of hands through prison bars, and the regulation charity inquisition and investigation was idle and useless. Overcoming a sensitive dread of being looked upon as an eccentric poseur, I purchased a workingman's suit of blue jeans, coarse shoes, and slouch hat, costing about four dollars, and 4 became a voluntary wandering student in the haunts of the homeless and penniless.

I did not intend at first to investigate further than my own home city, Denver, but the demand reaching out, I felt compelled in the months of February and March, 1909, to visit Chicago, New York, and Washington. My visit to those cities being made exceedingly prominent by the Associated Press I received on my return home over one thousand letters from all parts of the country, and not a few from the Old World. I awakened to the fact that my plea for a Municipal Emergency Home for the city of Denver had become a national—yes, a world wide—issue. Many of these letters,—from the North, the East, the South and the West,—bore invitations to come and investigate the condition of the homeless among them. With such appeals I could not throw off the responsibilities which I had assumed, in trying to make the world a little better for having lived in it.

As the importance of my project grew upon me, my first thought was to obtain aid from influential institutions or individuals as a speedy way of realizing my dreams; but on second thought I realized fully that that was not in accord with my plan, for my institution was to be a governmental institution, and was to be created and maintained through that paternal medium. However, as an investigator I determined to test the heads of the great foundations, and the 5 mighty masters of finance, to feel their attitude toward unemployment and governmental ownership and agencies for the betterment of social conditions. There were many champions of the crusade against tuberculosis and the white slave traffic, educational promoters, but the homeless, exposed, suffering, and penniless man or woman, boy or girl, standing ready to be employed, found no recognition nor were considered in their well-intentioned schemes. They could not see, or would not see, beyond their own useless, wasted efforts in meeting our problem of destitution.

My plan was brought to the notice of the Interstate Commerce Commission, which recognized my work as coming within the bounds of the law to the extent of granting me free railroad transportation, but left it optional with the railroads to give it or not. In my demands the New York Central absolutely ignored my request. The Pennsylvania—with smooth abuse—slapped me on the back and wished me good luck and God-speed, but could not think of carrying me for nothing. The Gould and Harriman lines were always generous, and a number of other roads occasionally.

It was a one-man, shoulder-to-shoulder battle. I carried no credentials. My plan of procedure was to go first to the leading hotel of each city I visited, because, after my investigations, I wanted to meet the leading people of that city. Arriving at my hotel I would don my emblems of honest toil— 6 the blue jeans—and would make my study of the status of the homeless workingman of that particular city,—a study which held a message, and a message which usually startled the city. If an extended study, I usually lived at a workingman's neat boarding or lodging house, where one in workingman's clothes could walk in and out without comment. Armed with the array of facts I had collected, carrying my appeal for the Emergency Home, I would meet the various progressive civic societies of the city, and as far as possible leave something tangible in the minds of the members of "emergency home committees." This plan I always carried out to the letter except, as described in my narrative, in my Hudson River study and in Cleveland, as well as my study from Cleveland to Memphis, Tenn.

Yet after all, while I might enter in the life of the penniless and endure temporarily their privations, I could only assume on my part for I knew that at a moment's notice, in case of accident or sickness, by revealing my identity every care and comfort would be given me. Consequently I was free from that mental suffering which is even greater than the physical suffering only those can understand who toil alone, homeless, penniless, and friendless in the world.

After my first visit to Chicago, New York, and Washington in 1909, I made a visit in the same year 7 to Pueblo, Kansas City, Boston, Philadelphia, Pittsburg, Omaha, and Salt Lake City; and in the Winter of 1910, I visited San Francisco, Los Angeles, Portland, Tacoma, Seattle, Spokane, and

Minneapolis. This was followed by investigations through the South, which really ended my crusade in the Spring of 1911, although I made a brief study of conditions in Milwaukee, Toledo, and Detroit during the following Winter of 1911–12.

CHAPTER II

The Welcome in the City Beautiful to its Builders

"And the gates of the city shall not be shut at all by day: for there shall be no night there."—Rev. 21:25.

On a bitter winter night, when the very air seemed congealed into piercing needles, as I was hurrying down Seventeenth Street in the City of Denver—the City Beautiful, the City of Lights and Wealth,—a young man about eighteen years of age stopped me, and asked in a rather hesitating manner for the price of a meal. At a glance I took in his desperate condition. His shoes gaped at the toes and were run down at the heels; his old suit of clothes was full of chinks soiled and threadbare, frazzled at ankle and wrist; his faded blue shirt was open at the neck, where a button was missing, and where the pin had slipped out that had supplied its place. His face and throat were fair, and he was straight and sound in body and limb.

"You look strong and well," I said to him, "why must you beg? Can't you work for what you eat? I have to."

His big, honest eyes took on a dull, desperate stare, as though all hope was crushed.

"This is the first time I have ever asked something for nothing," he said, "and I don't like to do it now, but I have been in Denver two days and I can't find a job. I am hungry." The last words trembled and he turned as though about to leave me. I stopped him.

"Wait a moment; I did not intend to turn you down. I am hungry myself; let us go across the street to the restaurant and get our dinner."

A Familiar Scene in a Western City. The Boy Is "Broke" But Not Willing to Give Up

I had made up my mind to study this strong, able-bodied boy, who was workless, homeless, penniless, and suffering in our city beautiful, which is famous for its spirit of Western hospitality and even displays it as soon as you enter its gate by a great sign, "Welcome."

As we sat at the table he told me that his home was on a farm back East, that he and his stepmother didn't get along very well, that his own mother died when he was ten years old and his stepmother had not been kind to him, but that he and dad were always great friends and had continued so up to the time he went away.

"I promised myself," he continued, as his hunger was appeased, "that as soon as I was old enough I would go West. I thought there were great chances for a young fellow like me out here, and so I worked and beat my way, and here I am to-day without a cent in my pocket. I have five dollars to my credit in the bank back in the old town near our farm, and if I knew anybody here I could get that money, pay my employment-office and shipment fee, go down to some works in Nebraska, and be at a job to-morrow," and he looked down in deep dejection.

"Well my lad," I said, "cheer up; all life is before you. Meet me to-morrow and we will see what

can be done." On the following day I took him to my bank, signed a bit of paper, and the banker gave him the five dollars. As we left the bank and started down the street, he took an old brass watch out of his pocket and offered it to me.

"I want to give you something to show my appreciation of your kindness to me," he said. "Here is a watch the pawnshop man wouldn't give me anything on, but it keeps good time, and you are welcome to it if you will take it."

"No, I will not take it; you will need it when you get down on the works," I said. "Where did you sleep the night before I met you?" His face flushed and he hung his head. "Was it not in the city jail?"

"Yes, and it was the first time I was ever in a jail in my life."

I did not question him further, but to-day I can not quite understand why he was not detained there the usual thirty days for the unforgivable crime of being homeless, as that was the way Denver had of treating her destitute visitors. 11

Then he looked up with the true spirit of conquest in his eyes. "I'll tell you what I am going to do the first thing; I am going to get a clean, new suit of underclothing, then I am going to take a bath, and then get my shipment."

"Come on, my boy," I replied, and took him to a cheap store to buy his clean underwear. Afterward we went into a barber shop where he took his bath. Denver did not then have its public bath—the beautiful public bath later built through the efforts of the Denver Woman's Club. I waited to go with him to the employment office to get his shipment. When this was accomplished, we shook hands in a good-bye, and I wished him God-speed.

Two weeks later I received a letter in which he said: "I have a place to work here on a farm at big wages, with one of the best men in the world, and I am going to stay and work and save my money to help dad back on the old farm to pay off the mortgage. It is nearly paid off now and the farm will be mine some day."

After that incident I was haunted. The picture of that boy freezing and starving so far from home was constantly with me, and yet, I thought, how much more pitifully helpless a woman or girl placed in the same position. I fell to wondering about the many other boys and men and women who were homeless, and of what becomes of the homeless unemployed in our city. I knew I was not alone in this incidental help I had begun; there were hundreds of men and women helping cases just like this case of my boy. And thus I set out on my crusade. 12

Taking my initiative step into the forced resorts of the homeless of Denver, I one night drifted into one of the big beer dumps where they sell drinks at five cents a glass which costs a dollar a barrel to manufacture. Many men were in the place seeking shelter and a snack from the free lunch counter. Twenty-five stood at the bar drinking enormous schooners of chemicals and water under the name of beer containing just enough cheap alcohol to momentarily dull and lighten care. Not a few were drinking hot, strong drinks, which more quickly glazed the eye, confused the brain, and loosened the tongue. A few had already crept into the stifling odors of the dark rear rooms and had dropped down in the shadowed corners with the hope of being allowed to spend the night there. These rooms in earlier days had been "wine-rooms," where the more "polite" and prosperous had gathered, but who took the "wine-room" with them further up town as the city grew.

Among the many gathered around the big warm stove was a man whose appearance told too plainly that the world was not dealing kindly with him. Stepping up to him I said in a tentative way, "Have a drink?"

"No, I am not a drinker." 13

I then asked, "Can you tell a fellow who is broke where he can get a free bed?"

He looked at me with an amused smile. "You are up against it, too, are you, Jack? Well, I am broke, too, and the only free bed I know of is the kind I am sleeping in, and that's an oven at the brick yards. A lot of us boys go out there during these slack times."

"An oven at the brick yards!" I said in astonishment. "How do you get there?"

"Well, you go out Larimer Street to Twenty-third, then you turn out Twenty-third and cross Twenty-third Street viaduct. It's about two miles. You'll know the kilns when you come to them; you can't miss them. But don't go before eleven o'clock; the ovens are not cool enough before that time."

"To-night I sleep in an oven at the brick yards," I said to myself, with cast-iron determination.

It was a very cold night, but at eleven o'clock I started out Larimer Street to find my free bed. Having crossed the Twenty-third Street viaduct I was lost in darkness; there were no lights save in the far distance. I stumbled along over the frozen ground, fearing at any moment an attack, for Denver is not free from hold-ups. I could hear men's voices, but could see nothing. It was not a pleasure-outing except as the thrill caused by the swift approach of the unknown may be pleasurably exciting. Finally the lights of the brick yard shone upon me with its great, long rows of flaming kilns. I had arrived at my novel dormitory. Stepping up to a stoker at work near the entrance, I asked: 14

“Can you show a fellow where he can find a place to lie down out of the cold?”

He raised his head and looked at me, and said, “I’ll show you a place.” Leaning his shovel against the kiln, and picking up his lantern, he said, “Come with me.” He paused at a kiln. “Some of the boys are sleeping in here to-night.” I followed as he entered the low, narrow opening of a kiln and raised his light. We were in a round oven or kiln about forty feet in circumference. By the light of his lifted lantern I counted *thirty men*.

“There are about seventy sleeping in the empty kilns to-night; I think you will find a place to lie down there,” he said, as he pointed to a place between two men.

I at once lay down, and with a “Good-night” he left me to the darkness and to the company of those homeless sleepers, who, in all our great city, could find no other refuge from death.

The kiln was so desperately hot that I could not sleep, and habit had not inured me to that kind of bed. Had I been half-starved, weak, and exhausted, as were most of my companions, I, too, could have slept, and perhaps would have wanted to sleep on forever. No one spoke to me. I endured 15
the night by going at intervals to the kiln’s opening for fresh air. It was then when I looked up into the deep, dark, frozen sky, that I thought what a vast difference there is in being a destitute man from choice and a destitute man from necessity. At four o’clock the time for a fresh firing of the kilns, we were driven from the great heat of that place out into the bitter cold of the winter morning. Very few of the men had any kind of extra coat, but, thinly clad as they were, they must walk the streets until six o’clock, waiting for the saloons or some other public places to be opened. Their suffering was pitiful. I afterward learned that many of these men, from this exposure, contracted pneumonia, and from this and many other exposures filled to overflowing the hospitals of the city.

During the entire week I followed up my investigations. I found men sleeping in almost unthinkable places; in the sand-houses and the round-houses of the railroad companies, when they had touched the heart of the watchman.

I asked one of the railway men why the companies drove them away from this bit of comfort and shelter.

“Because they steal,” was his reply.

“What do they steal?” I asked.

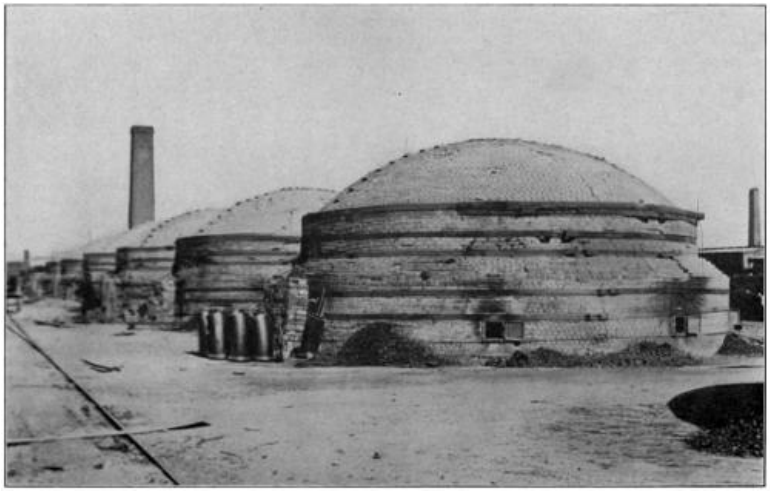
“Oh, the supper pail of the man who comes to work all night, an old sack worth a nickel, a piece of brass or iron, or part of the equipment from a Pullman car, or anything they can sell for 16
enough to buy a meal, or a bed, or a drink.”

“Do they steal those little things because they are hungry?” I questioned.

“Oh, I don’t know,” he said with a shrug. “They are often so successful in not being detected, I expect that has made them bold. Some may have been hungry,” he said, after a thoughtful pause. “Work has been scarce and hard to find, you know.”

“Yes,” I replied, “they have, no doubt, tramped the streets for many a day, footsore, dirty, ragged, and penniless and worst of all, discouraged and desperate. They must have clothing and food as well as a place to sleep. Without this they must suffer and die. They are haunted by this fear of death, knowing well what hunger and exposure means and the utter impossibility of securing work with their ragged appearance.”

“Yes, I know,” said the man, patiently listening to my growing realization of their desperation. “When they become bolder and break into a freight car to steal something, if not of much real value, or something to eat, they are usually caught and thrown into jail. But they can’t stop to think of that, I suppose; the poor devils have got to live. You mustn’t give me away,” he added confidentially, “but I know a special agent for a big railroad company who made a boast of the number of men he had sent to the reformatory and put in the penitentiary the past year.”



A Municipal Lodging House. An Average of Seventy Men Slept Each Night in the Denver Brick Ovens during the Cold Weather

I slept, or rather endured, the next night, with thirteen men who were sleeping in a box car on a bed of straw. Some were smoking. Is it any wonder that many thousands of dollars' worth of property are destroyed by fire in one night? I found men asleep in vacant houses with old rags and paper for beds. They also smoked, and endangered not only this house but the entire city; besides, they often robbed the house of everything available, to satisfy their hunger. I found them sleeping in the loft of barns, the only covering the hay under which they crawled. I found them under platforms of warehouses with pieces of dirty old gunnysacks, or a piece of old canvas for a covering. I found them curled down in the tower of the switchmen, in empty cellars, in vat-rooms in breweries, in hallways, driven from one to the other, and some "carrying the banner"—walking the streets all night. I found them in the rear-ways of saloons, on and beneath their tables, and last, but not least, in that damnable, iniquitous hole, the bull-pen in the city jail. 17

A few short years ago—the date and name is of no moment—a young man eighteen years of age was shot to death by a policeman in Denver. I went to the morgue and looked on the white, silent face of the murdered boy. His mother wired, "Can't come to bury him; too poor." And so he was laid in a pauper's grave; no, not a pauper's grave, but a criminal's.

I have noticed in my investigations in all the police systems of our various municipalities—I exempt none—that where someone has been murdered, or a sick man has been thrown into jail and his life taken there, or some other outrage has been committed by their wicked policies, they always try to blanket the wrong by making a public statement that the victim had "a record" and was well known to the police. 18

According to the newspapers, this young man's diary showed that he had been in the State seventy-four days and out of the seventy-four days he had worked sixty-four; but—convincing proof of his outlawry—they found on him a match-safe that a man declared had been stolen from him. As I looked on that dead boy's face I seemed to read, above all else, kindness. Had he been kind to someone; in return, had this match-safe been given to him? Hundreds of times have I seen these tokens of appreciation given: match-safes, knives, and even clothes from one out-of-work man to another—even an old brass watch that the pawnshop man considered of no value. The match-safe may have been given to this young fellow by a hardened criminal with whom circumstances had forced him to associate.

"He ran from the officer." If you, my reader, had ever been forced, as a lodger or a suspect, to spend a night in a western city jail, you would take the chances of getting away by running rather than face that ordeal again. 19

I was so deeply impressed by the injustice of this legal murder that, under a *nom de plume*, I wrote a letter of defense for the boy to his mother, a copy of which I sent to the press. It reached the governing powers of the city, but not the public. Almost immediately the officer was arrested, tried,—and acquitted.

After my investigations in Denver had revealed such startling conditions of those who must toil and suffer, my first impulse was to fly to the Church. I thought I had reason to believe the Church stood for compassion, mercy, and pity. I approached, therefore, several of our leading clergymen. My first appeal was to the pastor of the Christian Church, and his reply was:

"My friend, if you succeed in getting a free Municipal Emergency Home for Denver, you will build a monument for yourself."

To this I answered: "I have no desire to build a monument; I want our city to build a shelter for those who may be temporarily destitute among us."

Another, a Baptist, asked if it were Christian. I turned from this reverend gentleman with the belief that in his study of the Scriptures he had omitted the thirteenth chapter of First Corinthians, in which, I believe, the substitution of the word love for charity is conceded correct by the highest authority. 20

To another, a Methodist, I said, "Won't you speak a word to your people that an interest may be aroused to relieve the hardships of those who toil, who happen to be without money, and have no place to rest?" With a forced expression, he replied, "I don't believe in the homeless and out-of-work. I have found them undeserving and dishonest." I could only ask what our Savior meant by "the least of these," and reminded him that the last words Christ spoke before His crucifixion were to a thief.

I then made my way to the home of the Presbyterian pastor of the largest and most influential church in the city. I did not succeed in seeing the leader of this ecclesiastical society, but as I passed, I could look into the basement of the brightly lighted church, and I saw approximately fifty Japanese being taught—aliens who did not want our religion, but did want our language and modern ideas.

Going to the president of the Ministerial Alliance, I asked to be heard, but they had no time to listen. I then went to the Y. M. C. A. and the president said, "You can't expect every fellow to throw up his hat for your concern." Paradoxical as it may seem, the only three societies whom I asked for aid, who turned me down, were the Ministerial Alliance, the Bartenders' Union, and the Y. M. C. A. Later, the Women's Clubs, Labor Councils, and the Medical Societies were my warmest friends. 21

I then went to those in authority in the administration of our city, and among the many objections raised to my plea, the first was there were other things that needed attention more. For instance, there were overcrowded hospitals, which must be enlarged. The sick, I was told, were lying on the floors, and several children were being placed in one bed, just as they are doing in Chicago to-day.

Then it was declared we would pauperize the people; we would encourage idleness instead of thrift. My investigations had taught me how useless it is to talk ethics to a man with an empty stomach. The Municipal Emergency Home I believed would encourage thrift instead of idleness.

And then our chief executive declared that something effectual should be done to keep out of our State the army of consumptives who come to Colorado. I could hardly see how that would be quite just or right. But I could see, I thought, how the Municipal Emergency Home, rightly built and conducted, with its sanitary measures would be a mighty influence in our combat against the great white plague. Then the all-powerful declared the city could not afford it—the old cry of every city administration, where the political boss and machine politics rule, when it comes to creating an institution that is not in tune with their policies.

Being abruptly asked what I knew about Municipal Emergency Homes, I was forced to confess 22
that I had no knowledge whatever. I realized the need of information. I did not even know there was in existence on this whole earth of ours such an institution as I was asking Denver to build.

I have been greatly misunderstood in regard to the class and character of the destitute for whom I am asking favor. That I can now clearly explain, for what I found true in Denver in a small way I found true in every other city I visited. I classify them in two groups,—the unfortunate and the itinerant worker. Ninety per cent., taken as a whole throughout our country, are of the latter. The former and smaller percentage are chained by habits of vice, which our social system has forced upon them, or are physically weak, made so, many of them, in our prisons. And while, first, my plea is for the upright wage-earner, I am broad enough to feel that if we have been criminally thoughtless and negligent enough to allow social evils to exist and make derelicts and dependents, we certainly ought to be honest enough to stand the consequences and give them at least a place of shelter.

But the 4,000,000 homeless, honest toilers with us to-day affect the welfare of every home in our nation. They are an important force and factor in society. A moment’s reflection will show us quickly hundreds of good reasons why many of them at times should be moneyless and shelterless. As I throw back the curtain on these stories of human interest, I trust we may all of 23
us catch forcibly the evident need of not sitting idly by, supinely asking a good God to help us, but rather of letting our petition in word and act be a living prayer in helping Him.

The boy whom I met on our Denver street, whose condition I have described, can justly go to the Lord and complain, as well as proclaim to the world, that the City Beautiful held no welcome for him while in need of life’s direst necessities. It is not to be wondered at that the so-called Christian people of the City and County of Denver have forgotten that it is not enough to have a twenty-five thousand dollar Welcome Arch of myriads of sparkling lights, heralding to the world its hospitality to those entering its gate, and then forget their Christian duty to their fellow-men in need, for the City and County of Denver has been in a political turmoil and has been concerned not so much with the preservation of human rights as with the preservation of property rights. There is no other city in the region of the Rocky Mountains that could better afford to give a real welcome to the wandering citizen, the harvester and the builder, than Denver.

A city whose tax payers have permitted waste and extravagance to the extent of hundreds of thousands of dollars, in the expenditure of the tax payer’s money, surely could afford to create and maintain an institution where the wandering citizen, the homeless wage earner, may find a 24
Christian welcome and humane care.

If this boy should have attempted to go to the local charity organization, and had not been told that the Society did not help “floaters,” as I have known men in other cities to be told, he would undoubtedly have been informed, after going through a humiliating inquisition, that his case would be investigated and if found worthy relief afforded to him after such investigation. Imagine a hungry, homeless, penniless man, who must have whatever help he can get immediately, being told that his case will be investigated and relief afforded at some later date! What is a man in this condition to do? Did not the charity organization to whom the tax payers give money for the express purpose of relieving the needy and distressed, compel this very individual to beg, to accost the citizens on the streets who have already subscribed for his relief, and to still continue to beg from them? Does not such a charitable organization, by the acquiescence of the citizens of the city, put a premium on this hungry, homeless man to go and shift for himself as best he may, either by accosting citizens who have already been burdened by his relief, or by stealing, robbing, and if necessary demanding a life, to satisfy the needs whereby his existence may be made possible?

At a Denver Employment Office. Many of these Men Slept in the Brick Ovens the Night before

It is time that the citizens of the City and County of Denver, and for that matter, of all other municipalities of the United States, shall awaken to the call of duty in their respective communities in dealing rightly with those who are their wards, if they desire to minimize instead of increase the evils of pauperism brought about by indiscriminate alms-giving. 25

A great many times, through political intrigues, we find people at the head of charity organizations in our cities that have no business to be there. Their appointment to such places, in many instances, is purely political, and they are, therefore, not competent to dispense the money subscribed by the tax payers of the community. Very often only those individuals can receive consideration at the hands of such officials who bring a letter of introduction, or have some personal political "pull," while an honest and deserving man, coming from some other portion of the City or State, without any acquaintance whatsoever in the community in which he finds himself stranded, may receive no consideration whatever at the hands of such so-called administrators of public charity.

It has been conclusively proven that the charitable endeavors of our so-called charity organization societies are extremely unscientific, wasteful, and have a detrimental and pauperizing effect in-so-far as the work of the charitable is devoted to reclamation and not to prevention, which is also one cause for its failure.

Consider a moment one startling fact evidencing the spirit shown by organized charity in its effort so evidently to refrain from helping the needy: I found during my personal investigations that the societies keep *banking hours* from nine to five o'clock, and are closed at noon on Saturdays! From noon on Saturday to nine on Monday, is it not possible that some needy one in distress may need help? 26

Readiness on the part of the private citizen to subordinate personal interests to the public welfare is a sure sign of political health; and readiness on the part of public officials to use public offices for private gain is an equally sure sign of disease. Every municipality, by reason of its organization, supported by all of its citizens, ought to supply all communal needs, instead of permitting certain special interests under the guise of "religious" and "charity" organizations to administer to the needs of the less fortunate members of the community.

There are two very important facts that occupy the center of the stage of our complex civilization, to which all other facts are tributary, and which for good or ill are conceded to be of supreme importance. They are the rise of scientific and democratic administration of all the needs of the people, and the decline of private, special interests, clinging to the preservation of property rights as against human rights.

Determined is the demand of the people for a controlling voice in their destinies. The disinherited classes are refusing to remain disinherited. Every device within the wit of man has been sought to keep them down, and all devices have come to naught. The efforts of the people to throw off their oppressors have not always been wise, but they have been noble, self-sacrificing. 27

The report of charities and corrections at Atlanta for 1903 states that from among thirty of the leading cities of our nation, Denver is the only city reported as being severe toward its toilers, particularly toward that class which it is pleased to call "beggars" and "vagrants." Personal observation, however, proved to me that many other cities in the list were equally as cruel, and yet it is astounding to note in this report that the arrests in Denver for the crime of being poor—begging and vagrancy—which has undoubtedly correspondingly increased with the city's growth in the following years, was 6763, while New York City's for the corresponding crime, and same period of time was, for begging, 430; for vagrancy, 523; and Chicago, for begging, 338; for vagrancy, 523. This is approximately Denver's ratio with all of the other cities in the report.

CHAPTER III

Chicago—A Landlord for Its Homeless Workers

"These hints dropped as it were from sleep and night let us use in broad day."—Emerson.

On a stormy night in February, 1909, I arrived at the Auditorium Annex in Chicago. Donning my worker's outfit and covering my entire person with a large, long coat, unnoticed I left the hotel. Leaving the coat at a convenient place, I appeared an out-of-work moneyless man, seeking assistance in this mighty American industrial center. I made my way down Van Buren Street. Though the hour was late, there were many people abroad and almost every man, judging from his appearance, seemed to be needy. Stepping up to one on the corner of Clark Street, who seemed to be a degree less prosperous than all the rest, I said, in the language of the army who struggle:

"Say, Jack, can you tell a fellow where he can find a free flop?"

He raised his hand and pointed toward a stairway which led up over a large saloon, "You can flop on the floor up there for a nickle."

"But I am up against it right, pal. I am shy the coin for even that to-night."

Stepping up a little nearer to me and drawing more closely his tattered rag of a coat about his frail, half-starved body, he replied:

"Honest to God, Shorty, I have only a dime myself, but say, this is a fierce night to carry the banner. If you don't get a place, come back. I can get along without my 'coffee and' for once."

There are many places in Chicago where a poor man can get a strengthless cup of coffee and rolls for a nickle. One-half of this man's dime he proposed to spend for this supper, and the other half he would give me to provide the "flop" on the floor he had told me of.

He continued, "I am in line for a pearl-diver's (dishwasher's) job to-morrow. That means all a fellow can chew anyway. I can do better work than that, but when a fellow is down on his luck—but say, Shorty," he added abruptly, as we moved to part, "if you don't have a windfall like the Annex, Palmer, or the First National Bank, go over on the West Side; you'll find a free flop, and maybe between the sheets, and maybe a bath and supper; but look out for bulls and fly cops, and don't go too often, for you're liable to be arrested and sent to the Bridewell. I have been out of a job for two weeks. I have been to the flop several times, and I am afraid to go any more. I have had so little to eat lately, and from all I hear, I don't think I am strong enough for the battle of a workhouse; besides, I have never been in. Well, never mind, old man, you can find the place. It's on Union Street, just off of West Madison, called 'The City Lodging House.'"

How those last three words thrilled me! I who in fancy for months had been building a Municipal Emergency Home, rounding out and perfecting in my mind all of its wonderful possibilities! There was then such an institution in the world, and here in Chicago, and in a moment's time I was to grasp the tangible fact!

As I made my way toward my destination I saw evidence of the brutal police system, so notoriously obvious throughout our entire country. I had seen a half-starved, homeless man knocked down on the streets of a Western city by an ignorant, rum-befouled bully of a policeman, simply because he stood a little too far out on the sidewalk, and with a desire to learn something of the spirit of the police force of Chicago, I made my way to the Desplains Street Police Station, although possessed with a foreboding that I might be arrested, and subjected to some insult or abuse.

With a thumping heart under a false air of complacency I entered and asked the Captain where I could find a free bed. He looked pleasantly enough upon me, and in words which held a tone of pride that he could do so, replied, "Why, yes, go to our Municipal Lodging House," and turning to a subordinate, said, "Show this man the direction to North Union Street." The under officer pointed out the proper course, and I was soon lost in a maze of brilliant, scintillating, cheap saloon, café, and playhouse signs along West Madison Street. The half-hidden, frost-covered windows of restaurants were filled with tempting, wholesome food. The sparkling bar-room signs were a guide to warmth and temporary shelter. I reached North Union Street, and looking down an almost black street with occasionally a dim distant light, I saw no sign guiding the homeless man or boy, woman or girl, to Chicago's gift to its penniless toilers.

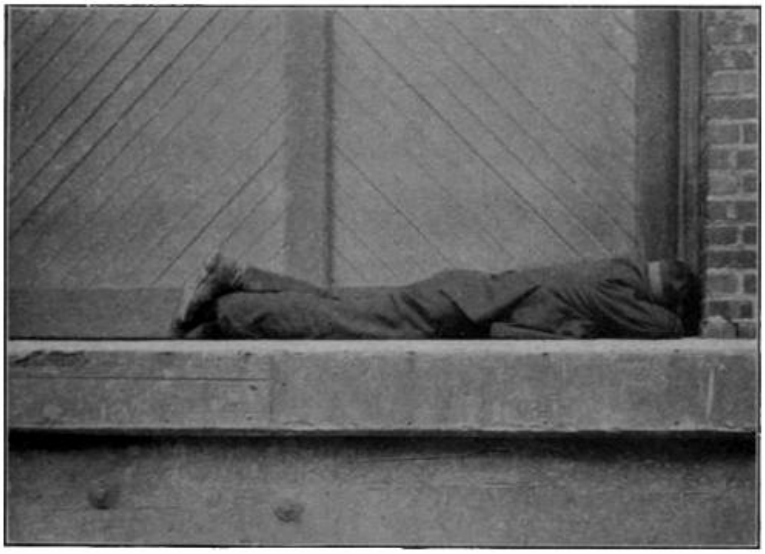
With fear and difficulty I found an old shell of a building. Arriving too late for a bed, I was allowed to lie down with sixty others, from boys of fifteen to old men of seventy, on the floor. In the foul air, unwashed, unfed, with my shoes for a pillow, with aching limbs, I endured, until daybreak, the sufferings which the temporarily homeless wanderer must suffer often many days until, if he does not find himself in some one of the other public institutions, he finds work and can again enjoy the comforts of a bed. And yet, how much this all meant to me! I did not sleep a moment of the night, yet above the dark side of it all, I caught the bright light of the golden thought behind this institution, for the establishment of which the City Homes Association, whose president was Mrs. Emmons Blaine, took the initiative, and which Raymond Robins worked into a

tentative establishment.

Several years have passed since my first experience in Chicago. At that time I was deeply impressed with the fact that the city had not forgotten. My criticism was extremely friendly. The superintendent wrote, thanking me for my investigations, saying he believed it would help promote better things in Chicago in caring for its homeless workers. But I was disappointed. To-day you walk through West Madison Street to Union Street, to Chicago's free "flop." On your right you will notice a magnificent new railway station, which, its owners boast, cost twenty-five millions of dollars. Possibly at the very doorstep of this marvelous terminal, destitute men will ask you for help.

And a little further along, should you glance up at No. 623, you will read this sign, "The Salvation Army will occupy here a new six-story fireproof hotel, to be known as the Workingman's Palace. Rates 15 cents to 30 cents per night, $1 to $2 per week."

"Stepping Up a Little Nearer to Me He Drew More Closely His Tattered Rag of a Coat"



Huddled on a Stringer in Zero Weather

You have reached Union Street, and you enter the same dark old street and the same old makeshift of an old building which thirty-five years ago was a police station and later a storeroom for city wagons, until made into a "Municipal Emergency Home." This shell accommodates only two hundred and fifty men, and on many a night during the last winter it has sheltered five hundred men, besides as many more in the "annex." There are four thousand in Chicago every winter's night without a bed or the money to buy a bed. There are five thousand men in Chicago who are willing to work ten long hours a day for a dollar a day, and this lodging-house can furnish two hundred men a day at that wage. Last year the ice companies, the street railway companies, and the packing-houses paid $1.75, and this past winter only $1.50, and out of that these men paid $4.50 a week for board. That these men are willing to work for such wages shows that a large proportion who seek this free shelter are honest workers. The chief of police gave orders and notice that men would no longer be sheltered in the police stations, and yet on one winter day an official of the Emergency Home marched sixty-eight down to a station and demanded they be taken in.

Follow this official through the institution and he will show you how he stores men away in every nook available, even allowing many to sit up all night on the stairs. He will show you how men lie

down under and between the cots of those who are fortunate enough to get a cot itself. He will show you in one end of the dormitory, on filthy blankets and mattresses, men huddled and packed like swine, and he will tell you that in the morning these men receive a certain portion of a loaf of bread and a cup of a decoction called coffee; and yet those men are willing to go out and work in the storm and cold for a dollar or a dollar and a half a day. What a commentary on the humanity of a city that is willing to see this strength crippled! What a lack of ordinary business foresight to ignore the conservation of this human force! 34

You will find in this Municipal free "flop" of Chicago no department for women. Thank God for that! You will find no separation of the sick from the well; you will find no medical examination other than vaccination. Such a lodging-house is an institution driving men into intemperance, filling our hospitals, and spreading with frightful fatality the white plague.

Those who come from abroad to learn of Chicago, and what it has done and is doing to banish destitution and its specter of homeless suffering from its streets, may first visit the public institutions representing a city's intelligence—the Art Institute, standing for its culture; its churches, charities and hospitals, representing its humanity. But they should also follow the course I traveled, to Chicago's so-called Municipal Lodging House, even though it will mean a sad reflection upon a city's care for its homeless workers.

Chicago is considered one of the greatest railroad centers of America; it is the hub of the fly wheel, East and West, North and South, of a mighty railroad industry. The old proverb, that "all roads lead to Rome," can certainly be applied to this of the greatest, most remarkable of all modern industrial phenomena—the Metropolis without a peer. It is estimated that there are over half a hundred different railroad lines running in and out of the city, all bringing their quota of human energy and activity to be molded into the great mass of industrial humanity of the greatest of industrial giants—Chicago. 35

A very prominent railroad official of a Western railroad declared that the railroad "in a way may be called the chief citizen of the State." If this statement be true, one cannot but acclaim that a mighty responsibility rests upon it. First of all it means that a transformation of heart and system must take place toward the wandering citizen, the homeless wage-earner,—an absolutely different method and a cessation of the present inhuman brutality.

The one wonderful and most hopeful sign of our day is that members of the great human family are beginning to recognize, in all phases of human endeavor, that our social life is absolutely dependent upon the co-operation and social service of one another. While the writer has a strong indictment to offer against the managements of the various American railroads in dealing with the more unfortunate members of society, nevertheless one cannot accept the already popularized beliefs that "the railroads lack the spark of human kindness." 36

The extent of what so-called charitable experts are pleased to call the "vagrancy" of the homeless, wandering wage-workers in the United States, can easily be determined by the industrial and economic conditions existing throughout the country. The demand for laborers of all kinds continuously fluctuates in all industries and localities. The majority of the homeless, wandering wage-earners are unskilled laborers, and because of their unorganized condition they are the reserve of that great standing army which is being maintained through the unjust, inhuman, and wasteful economic system, that pushes human beings down to the lowest level.

Most American railroads are to blame for the industrial conditions in which the unskilled laboring class finds itself. They offer starvation wages, shelter under unsanitary conditions, and permit the "canteen" and "padroni system" to pilfer, rob, and exploit the men working on the sections. And after the job at which they have been employed has been completed, they are left stranded whereever they have finished their work, instead of being given transportation to the nearest city or place where other work can be obtained.

Hundreds of thousands of able-bodied, economically useful citizens of the country are being put to immature death by the railroads of America, and an equally appalling number are being maimed and crippled by "accidents," and thereby made dependent charges on an already overburdened community. 37

From among the victims of the present-day railroad system (for it is a system) by which men are being crippled, maimed, and killed, there is a silent but earnest appeal, from the builders of our cities, the harvesters of the nation's crops, the miners of the nation's resources, the scholars and teachers of the future republic, for a more scientifically humane treatment, and for a guarantee that "Life, Liberty, and Happiness" shall not be a by-word but a living reality.

The great public, that pays the "freight," and even the officials of the American railroad systems themselves, are awakening to a realization of the fact that the torn-out rail, the misplaced switch, the obstructing tie, the burned bridge, the cut wire, petty thefts, and air-brake troubles, are all too often the result of retaliation for the inhuman abuse of the homeless, wandering wage-earner. Even that portion of the great public that rides "the velvet" are beginning to demand more protection, for their own self-preservation. The spirit of the various commonwealths of the Union to co-operate and demand by legislative provisions for safety is steadily on the increase.

Thousands of wandering wage-earners in search of work are killed on American railroads, because society as a whole, and the railroad as a public carrier in particular, are ignorantly uninterested in the welfare of the less fortunate members of society. The number of so-called 38

“trespassers” killed annually on American railroads exceeds the combined total of passengers and trainmen killed annually. From 1901 to 1903, inclusive, 25000 “trespassers” were killed, and an equal number were maimed, crippled, and injured. From one-half to three-quarters of the “trespassers” according to the compilers of these figures were “vagrants,” wandering, homeless wage-earners in search of work to make their existence possible.

Let us examine the economic loss and the financial cost to the railroads alone, not considering the loss to the community of the so-called “vagrants” killed and injured. Even the railroads are unable to give accurate figures on this matter. Sometimes the trains stop and pick up the injured and dying victims of their system, and bear them to hospitals, where the hospital and burial charges must, in most cases, be paid or guaranteed by the railroads. In many of the States of the Union, a number of law-suits have been successfully fought against railroads by so-called “vagrants” who have been thrown off a fast-moving train and injured, or maimed. Think of the barbarous orders of a railroad superintendent, to push or throw people from a fast running train, or leave them on the vast plains of the West in a desperate blizzard, as I have seen done. 39

How much cheaper would it be for the railroads to furnish these less fortunate members of the working-class with transportation to their respective destination, the nearest place where work is possible for them, and thereby suffer fewer depredations, petty thefts, delays to traffic, hospital and burial charges, and other expenses.

How much would the respective communities, and society as a whole, be the gainer, were the State, the municipality, to assume the expense for the creation and maintenance of Municipal Emergency Homes, and thereby make it possible for the homeless, wandering wage-earner to receive the hospitality of the community and be furnished with those necessities upon which human life depends, thus co-operating with the railroads, reducing vice, crime, and pauperism, and abolishing the existence of burdensome public charges.

In addition to the Municipal Emergency Home, provided with up-to-date sanitary facilities, the respective communities should furnish transportation to those desiring to leave for other parts of the country where work can be obtained or may await them. Such a Municipal Emergency Home ought to be the clearing-house for employers of labor and employees alike. Instead of the unemployed being exploited by the grafting employment bureaus existing in the various cities, 40
the business men, the men who need help, and the railroads especially, could make their drafts for workingmen on such Municipal Emergency Homes, which would be always in a position to assist them, while at the same time assisting the honest laborer who seeks work to sustain himself and make existence possible for those dependent upon him.

One of the greatest remedial agencies in solving this very serious problem is pre-eminently that of governmental and railroad co-operation, by which the land shall be taken out of the hands of the speculator, and reclaimed for those who desire to make immediate use of it and to live upon the fruit of their toil. Thus the many thousands of homeless, wandering American wage-earners, the itinerant and occasional helpers in our agricultural industry, as well as the casual, unskilled laborers of our cities, could be given a real lift on the road to economic independence.

In most of the European countries, the so-called crime of “stealing a ride” is almost unknown, because there the governments have established a chain of Municipal Emergency Homes where the itinerant workers are reasonably well taken care of,—provided not only with necessary food, shelter, and clothing, but given transportation to the nearest point where employment may be secured.

“Just before Thanksgiving, 1911, Leaving the Public Library, Chicago, after Being Ejected Because of the Clothes I Wore”

Would it not be a wise financial move on the part of the American railroads, while they are investing millions in useless and superficial adornments on fifty-million-dollar terminals, to 41
consider the advisability of building an Emergency Home in every station where the wandering, homeless wage-worker can find comfortable shelter and be given food to strengthen him on his way toward honest employment without having to “beat” the railroads?

American railroads will be forced sooner or later to see that it is up to them to take care of the homeless, wandering wage-worker, or the homeless, wandering wage-worker will take care of the railroads.

CHAPTER IV

The Merciful Awakening of New York

"I said, I will walk in the country. He said, walk in the city. I said, but there are no flowers there. He said, but there are crowns."

In New York I repeated my Chicago plan. I left the Waldorf-Astoria at ten o'clock, dressed in my blue jeans and with my cloak covering my outfit until I could reach unobserved a place to leave it. The police were courteous and directed me to New York City's "House of God."

Before entering I stepped back and looked at the wonderful building, beautifully illuminated. As I stood there with a heart full of thankfulness for this gift to those in need, I saw a young girl about fifteen years of age approach the woman's entrance. Her manner indicated that this was her first appeal for help. She hesitated to enter and stood clinging to the side of the door for support. At my right was the long dark street leading to New York's Great White Way; on my left the dark East River. I could see the lights of the boats and almost hear the splash of the water. As she raised her face and the light fell upon it, I read as plainly as though it were written there, those lines of Adelaide Procter's:

"The night cries a sin to be living
And the river a sin to be dead."

Then the door opened and I saw a motherly matron take the girl in her arms and disappear. This incident brought to me a startling revelation. This home was a haven between sin and suicide.

MUNICIPAL Lodging House, Department of Public Charities, New York City

The night I slept in New York's Emergency Home I was told a mother, with seven children, one a babe in arms, at one o'clock in the morning, had sought shelter there. And as the door was opened to receive her, she said, in broken, trembling words, "My man's killed himself—he's out of work."

Many men were seeking admission. I entered with the rest. At the office we gave a record of ourselves, who we were and where we were from, and what our calling was. Then we were taken into a large and spotless dining-room, where we were given a supper of soup, and it was real soup, too, soup that put health and strength into a man's body and soul. We also had coffee with milk and sugar, hot milk, and delicious bread and butter, as much as anyone wanted of it. After supper we were shown to a disrobing-room, where our clothes were put into netted sanitary trays and sent to a disinfecting-room. In the morning they came to us sweet and clean, purified from all germ or disease. From the disrobing-room we went into the bathroom where were playing thirty beautiful shower-baths of any desired temperature, and each man was given a piece of pure Castile soap. As we entered the bath a man who sat at the door with a pail of something, gave each one of us on the head as we passed him, a paddle full of the stuff. I said to the attendant, "What is that for?" "That's to kill every foe on you," he said, with an emphasis that was convincing. As he was about to give me another dose, I protested. "That's enough; I have only

half my usual quantity tonight." But I got another dab nevertheless.

After our bath and germicide, we were shown into a physician's room, where two skilled physicians examined each man carefully. The perceptibly diseased man was given a specially marked night-robe and sent to an isolation ward, where he received free medical treatment. Those who were sound in health and body, were given a soft, clean night-robe and socks, and were taken in an elevator up to the wonderful dormitories. I was assigned to bed 310. There were over three hundred beds in this dormitory, accommodating more than three hundred men. They were of iron and painted white, and placed one above the other, that is, "double-deck," and furnished with woven wire springs. The mattresses and pillows were of hair, and exceedingly comfortable. The linen was snowy white.

I had been in bed but a short time when an old man about seventy years of age took the bed next to mine. As he lay down in that public place I heard him breathe a little prayer, ever so softly and almost inaudibly, but I heard it—"Oh, God, I thank Thee!" And I said to myself, "That prayer ought to build a Municipal Emergency Home in every city of our land." It came to me then what a great and wonderful social clearing-house it was or could be. 45

I did not sleep, I did not want to sleep, but lay there taking mental notes of the soul's activity. The room was quiet and restful except for the restless man who silently walked the floor. As he came over near me I said to him, "Man, what is the matter?"

He came close to my bed and said, with a hot, flushed face, "I was not considered a subject for the isolation ward, but I am on the verge of delirium tremens. Feel my pulse, isn't it jumping to beat the devil?"

I felt his pulse; it was jumping like a trip-hammer. But in the way of assurance I answered, "No, your pulse is normal."

"Have we been up here four hours? They gave me some medicine downstairs to take every four hours, and if I was restless, I was to send down for it and take a dose."

"No, I think we have been up here about two hours. You might send down for it, and if it is a good thing to take a full dose every four hours, you might take a half-dose in two hours." 46

He hesitated for a moment, then agreed. I advised him to cut out the drink, and he went to the attendant for his medicine, received it, and slept like a babe until dawn. There is an attendant in each dormitory all night long, and he must report to the office by telephone every hour, not being allowed to sleep one moment on duty.

A few days later, after my visit was made public, I received many letters at my hotel, and among them was one from this man. He thanked me for my bit of advice to cut out the drink, and said that he had braced up and had not drunk a drop since that night, and that he had determined to be a man and fill a man's place in the world. His resolution was not due to my advice at all. It was due to the influence of "God's House," to New York's Municipal Emergency Home, and had turned him back to his true inheritance.

At six o'clock in the morning we were called. Every man took the linen from his bed and put it in a pile where it was all gathered up and taken afterward to the laundries. Every day fresh and spotless linen is supplied.

We then went down and dressed and were given our breakfast—as fine a dish of oatmeal as I ever ate, and again most delicious hot coffee with milk and sugar, bread and butter. And again every man had abundance. I said to a boy who sat on my right, "How do you feel this morning?" 47

"I tell you I feel as if someone cared for me," he answered, "I feel like getting out and hustling harder than ever for a job to-day."

This Municipal Emergency Home of New York's is absolutely fire-proof and accommodates one thousand men and fifty women. The health of its occupants is more guarded than at the most costly private hotels. The ventilation is by the modern forced-air system, in which every particle of air is strained before entering the dormitories. The humane consideration of the comfort of the broken and weary wayfarer is always in evidence, and speaks volumes for New York's intelligence. There are no open windows on one side, freezing one portion of the sleeping-hall, while the other may be stifling with the heat. The method of fumigating is of the best, as it does not injure in the least the leather of hat, suspender, glove, or shoe, or weaken the texture of the cloth. The sick man's nightclothes are not even laundered with the well man's clothing. The size, and degree of careful detail, of this wonderful home was an outgrowth of the awful and fatal unsanitary old police station lodgings, and yet the Commissioner of Police of New York recently told me that notwithstanding the extensive character of the institution, it was often pitifully inadequate, especially during the winter months. New York already needs at least four such homes.

CHAPTER V

HOMELESS—IN THE NATIONAL CAPITAL

"What is strange, there never was in any man sufficient faith in the power of rectitude, to inspire him with the broad design of renovating the state on the principle of right and love."—EMERSON.

It was late in the afternoon when I arrived at the Nation's Capital, and rode to my hotel between tiers of newly erected seats, and banners and flags and festooned arches, and myriads of many-colored lights which soon were to burst forth in royal splendor. Already the prodigal display, costing half a million dollars, to inaugurate a president, was nearing completion. Already people were coming from far and near, spending five million more.

The New Willard hotel had assumed that air of distinction it always does just before a happening of some national import. In the faces of the handsome men I saw and read the character of decision and intellect, and the many beautiful ladies, gowned in fabrics of priceless value, made an exceedingly pleasant study; and with this vision before me I was proud to be an American. But I had not come to study this side; it was "the other half" I wanted to know. I wanted to learn how our Capital helps its poor, how a man out of work, penniless, and homeless, is cared for in Washington.

At about ten o'clock I went to my room to change my evening clothes for my workingman's outfit. Walking down the stairs and slipping out a side door, I was not noticed, and was soon lost in the avalanche of humanity on the streets.

I asked of the first policeman I met where I could get a free bed, and he looked at me seemingly in surprise and said, "A free bed?" then continued, "Go to the Union Mission." I asked, "Do they charge for a bed there?" and he replied, "Yes, 10 or 15 cents." "But I haven't even that tonight," I answered.

Municipal Lodging House, New York City Registering Applicants

Then he seemed to remember that Washington had a municipal lodging house, and told me I would find it on Twelfth Street, next to the police station. I asked two other policemen with similar results, and started in search of my desired object. I looked down Pennsylvania Avenue, a blaze of lights, and for one mile I could see and read guiding signs of theaters, breweries, hotels, and cafés.

Presently I came to Twelfth Street, dark and gloomy, but there was no sign as in Chicago to guide the homeless man or woman, boy or girl, to the door of the free home. It was with difficulty I found it. There was a three-cornered box over the door, intended for a light, but it was not illuminated. Through smoke-dimmed windows there came a feeble light by which I could just discern the words, "Municipal Lodging House," and on the door the inscription, "To the Office."

Before entering I stepped back into the street and looked up at the building. It was an old three-story brick building, with no sign of a fire escape. I entered and found myself in a low and very narrow passageway. I applied to the "office" through a small window-door for my bed. There was an honest-faced, comfortably dressed young man just ahead of me, who gave his occupation as machinist, received his bed check, and passed on.

When I stepped to the window and asked for a bed, I received no word of welcome from a woman seated at her desk, her demeanor being decidedly unwelcome. Abruptly a man's voice asked from within, "Are you willing to work for it?" I replied earnestly that I was. The woman then snatched up a pen and asked, "Were you ever here before? Where were you born? Where do you live? What is your business?"

My answers apparently being satisfactory, she thrust me a bed check, and said something about

a light and something else which I did not understand, and slammed the door in my face. I stepped along and found myself in the woodyard among piles of wood, saws, sawbucks, and sawdust. I tried several doors, and finally found one that admitted me. A narrow flight of stairs 51
let me to a bathroom, where a number of men were already trying to get a bath. There were two attendants, one who was working for his bed and breakfast, and the other, I judged a paid attendant. I was told to go into a closet and strip, and to hang on a hook all of my clothes except my shoes and stockings and hat. Having done this, I stepped out into the bathroom. It was heated by a stove, which emitted no heat, however, as the fire was almost dead. There were two bathtubs, and six of us were standing nude in that cold room waiting each for his turn. The boy working for his bed made a pretense with a mop of cleaning the tubs after each bather, but left them nasty and unsanitary. I got into about six inches of water, and hurriedly took my bath, because of the others waiting. I did not want to wash my head, so omitted that, but just as I got out of the tub the Superintendent came in and said, “You haven’t washed your head yet; get back in there and wash your head.” I immediately and meekly complied.

Shivering with the cold, I got out, was given a towel to dry myself, and then a little old cotton nightshirt with no buttons on it. Several of us being ready, we were led by the Superintendent up another flight of narrow stairs, through another long hall, and up two more series of steps to a small dormitory. I would have suffered with the cold if I had not seized an extra blanket from an 52
unoccupied bed, and I slept very little. I was afraid to go to sleep, for if the building had taken fire not one man could have escaped. So I lay and took mental notes and soul thoughts of my companions and surroundings, and of all I had seen and heard since I left Denver.

I heard one boy say to another, “I tell you, I’m hungry. I could eat a mule and chase the rider up hill. Did you have any supper to-night?” And the other boy replied, “A policeman gave me a dime. What do you think of that? And I got two scoops of beer and the biggest free lunch you ever saw, and I feel fine.”

I heard a man say to the one next to him, “Do you think this place will be pulled to-night?” and the other answered, “Why, no; what makes you think so?” The first one said, “They pulled the Union Mission one night for vags, but I don’t think they will pull this place, because it’s a city lodging house.” Comforted by that thought, they both fell asleep.

During the night a frail boy, with no clothing except the thin nightshirt, went to the toilet, down the long cold halls and stairways, into the still more cold woodyard. When he returned he had a chill, and as he lay down I heard him groan. I said, “What is the matter, boy?” and he replied, “I have such a pain in my side.”

Just at daylight we were called, went down into a cheerless room, and were given our clothes, then on down to the cramped dining-room, with scarcely any fire, where we were huddled 53
together, thirty of us, whites and blacks. Here we waited one hour for breakfast, and then we were driven out into the woodyard for some reason we could not find out, and waited another half-hour until breakfast was called. During that long wait almost the entire conversation was about work and where it could be found.

We went in to breakfast and sat down to a stew of turnips and carrots, in which there was a little meat. In mine there were three pieces of meat about as big as the end of one’s thumb. There was some colored sweetened water called “coffee,” and some bread. I did not care for mine, but the other men and boys ate ravenously. When the boy on my right had finished his, I said, “Ask for some more.” He replied, “It wouldn’t do no good; they only allow one dish.” Then a hollow-eyed, thin-handed man on my left said, “Are you going to eat yours?” I said, “No,” and he eagerly asked if he could have it. I said, “You most certainly can,” and then he asked me if I was not well. It was the first word of kindness I had received. He took the dish and emptied it all into his, but glancing up I caught the appealing look of the boy opposite. He took the boy’s empty dish, putting part of it into his dish, and the boy ate as though he had had nothing before.

Having finished breakfast, and while we were waiting to be assigned to our work, the door 54
between our room and the inner room was left open for a moment, and we saw the Superintendent seated at a well-appointed table with flowers upon it, a colored man waiting upon him. One of the boys looking in said, “Oh, gee, look at the beefsteak,” and then another boy looked at me, and said, “You see how Washington treats the out-of-work, and this place is self-supporting, or more than half-supporting.” And then a boy who had come early and worked his two hours for that bed and that breakfast, gave us a cheerful good-bye and started off to walk seven miles to begin work on a farm, a place he had secured the day before.

We waited to be assigned to our work. I wanted to saw wood, the wood looked so clean and inviting, and, too, I had sawed wood when I was a boy on the farm, and knew how; but I was not allowed to do so, and was given the task of making the beds. It was rather repellant to me at first, but I thought of those far down through the years of the past, a great deal more worthy than I, who had done things much more humble for humanity’s sake. I can assure the honest man and boy who slept beneath those coverings that night that I had tried my best to make them comfortable, although the linen was not changed, nor the blankets aired.

Some of the men scrubbed, and some swept the floors and stairs; some worked about the dining-room; others sawed wood.

While waiting in the woodyard for breakfast, I jokingly said, as we looked at the wood, “What’s 55
the matter of getting out of here? Then we won’t have to work.” And one replied, “We can’t, we

are locked in.” To prove if this was true I stepped to the door and found it as he said. We were locked in and could not have escaped in case of fire or accident if we had tried.

There is a sign, sometimes seen to-day in the dance halls of our Western camps, “Don’t shoot the pianist, he is doing the best he can,” and so with the Superintendent of Washington’s Municipal Lodging House, under the conditions he may be doing the best he can. Work is always a grand thing. The floors and stairs were clean, also our food and dishes. He impressed me as being the right man in the right kind of a place. But the Washington Federal Lodging House is only a suggestion of such an institution. As the house now stands it is the lodger, the workless man and boy, who keeps the floors and stairs and windows clean. They do it willingly, but they should be treated fairly for their labor. Not one should be allowed to go to bed hungry. He should be given a clean, warm bed to sleep in, and a good wholesome breakfast, and all he can eat. He should be given a pleasant welcome, an encouraging word, and a cheerful farewell,—it means so much, and costs nothing.

I did not stay to see the inauguration. Somehow Washington had lost its brightness, and the grand men and beautiful women their interest. I had read almost every week for a number of years of “T. R.,” and of his democratic way of walking on Sunday morning to church, and then I fell to wondering why he never walked to a few other places in Washington, which were only a stone’s throw from his home. But one with great cares cannot be blamed for thoughtlessness in “little things.” I did not go to church as I intended. I spent the morning asking the press to appeal to the city of Washington, where Lincoln and Washington lived, thought, and acted, the city of love, charity and freedom, not to let another day pass until they had started a movement and sent a delegation to inspect and to copy the Municipal Lodging House of New York, that they, too, might build one, to be the example of our country.

CHAPTER VI

The Little Pittsburg of the West and Its Great Wrong

"Even the night shall be light about me."—Psalms *139:11.*

In Pueblo, Colorado, I discovered they were finding men dead in an ash-dump of a railroad company. Pueblo, called "The Little Pittsburg of the West," is distinctly an industrial city. It naturally attracts thousands of workingmen during the course of the year, and when the demand for labor is supplied, it follows that many men will congregate there, willing to work but often unable to find employment immediately.

The great ash-dump, about a fourth of a mile in length, afforded warmth to the destitute homeless man, who had his choice between this exigency and the city jail. Men would lie down on the warm cinders, and while they slumbered, the poisonous gases would asphyxiate them. The death of their brother workers had made men cautious and when I was there they no longer crawled out upon the ashes, but lay down on the edge of the dump, where the ground held a certain degree of warmth.

I joined the miserable group one night, and as I lay there, and the night grew cold and dark and still, I could see, like serpents, the tongues of blue poisonous fumes leap from crack and cranny. I stood the exposure to the limits of endurance, and then crept away to that other humane expression of Pueblo—its only "Municipal Emergency Home," the "Bull-pen" in its old bastile.

It was midnight as I entered, and a man hearing me in the hall came out of an office and looked at me inquiringly. Finally he asked:

"What do you want?"

"I would like a place to sleep."

"Come this way and go through yonder," he said, pointing the way to the jailer's office.

I went as directed. As I entered, the jailer, who was asleep in a large reclining chair, awoke and greeted me pleasantly enough.

"Good-evening. What can I do for you?"

"Can you show a fellow where he can lie down?"

He immediately got up, and picking up his bunch of keys, said, "Follow me."

I followed him through two huge iron-grated doors, to another door which opened into a great dungeon cell,—Pueblo's first open portal in creating the criminal and crime. Huge chains with great iron balls attached were lying in the passageway leading to the cell.

As the jailer swung back the monstrous iron door, he said:

"I think you will find a place there. If the hammocks are all taken, you can lie on the floor."

The great key was turned, and I was in Pueblo's "Municipal Emergency Home."

With the first dreadful feeling of suffocation and nausea caused by the foul air and the odor of unwashed bodies and open drains, and the awful fear of fire as I realized the impossibility of escape from behind so many iron-bound doors in the old rookery of a building, I would have begged to be released, but neither the jailer nor anyone else appeared until six o'clock the next morning. I therefore had to endure, and after I had finally adjusted myself to the frightful conditions around me, I was able to make my observations.

There were twenty canvas hammocks, all of unspeakable filthiness, hung one above the other, on iron frames. There was no pretense of bedding. The occupants covered themselves with their old ragged overcoats, if they happened to have any, and those who were not so fortunate, simply shivered in their rags.

The cots were all taken and an old man some seventy-five years of age lay on the concrete floor, which was covered with tobacco juice and the expectorations of diseased men. Vermin were running over the floor and on the tin dishes left there from the last night's supper.

Water from the toilet of the women's department above had run down the wall, and under this old man now sound asleep, and on into the waste basin.

I walked back and forth in my horror for some time, passing in front of the hammock beds and finally a man raised his head and, evidently thinking I was walking for warmth, said:

"Friend, you will find it warmer over there by the steam pipes."

I wonder why he called me "friend"? A spirit of kindness from one man to another, in a place like that! Think of it!

I spent the entire night walking the floor or sitting on an old battered, inverted tin pail, studying

the wretched inmates of the dirty, desolate cell.

I saw a man get up, and with outstretched hands, feel his way to the drinking place. I went over and helped him. He was totally blind. He told me he had once been kept in that place seventeen days. A one-legged man who had gotten up, hobbling without his crutch, helped him back to bed.

Never was sound sweeter to my ears than the rattle of the jailer's keys when he came to let me out. He kindly asked me to stay to breakfast, but I did not accept. I was only too glad to escape to my hotel, to wash out the material evidence of contact with the foulness gathered on that most miserable night.

Mayor Fugard, who had been in office only two weeks, had already made an appeal for a new City Hall and City Jail, and I felt it was a courtesy due him to call upon him before going to the press with my story. When I told him I had paid a visit to Pueblo's two city lodging places, and had spent a night in the "Bull-pen," he threw up his hands and exclaimed:

"Good heavens! You have more courage than I have. I am glad you have come to our city and I am glad you have investigated conditions just as you did. I want you to take your report to every paper in the city, for I desire everyone to know the conditions of these places, just as they are."

When I left Pueblo, I called on him to say goodbye, and he took me by the hand and said:

"You may quote me to the public, through the press, as saying that, as soon as possible, Pueblo will abolish the 'Bull-pen' and will yet have a Free Municipal Emergency Home that she will not be ashamed to own."

CHAPTER VII

"Latter-day Saints" Who Sin Against Society

When I lie down I say when shall the night be gone, and I am full of tossings to and fro unto the dawning of the day.—Job 7:4.

As Elizabeth Barrett Browning sang of Florence, so one may sing of Salt Lake City. "Like a water lily resting on the bosom of a lake," so rests the lovely Zion, reposing in a valley of green fields, trees and flowers and fruits, with placid lakes and flowing crystal streams; surrounded by soft gray mountains, rugged, clear cut, grand, their peaks covered with perpetual snow beneath whose surface lie untold millions of precious metals.

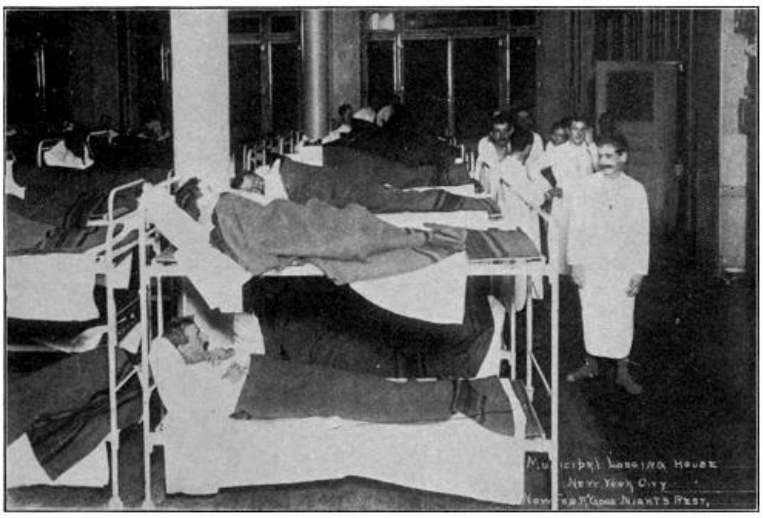
Besides precious metals, Salt Lake City has coal, oil, and salt, and an unsurpassed valley in agricultural fertility. Looking down upon the metropolis of Utah, one might almost fancy it a great sleeping town among its green trees, but I can assure you it is not so. Enter its gate and you will find it a veritable beehive of commercial industry, a city of a hundred thousand people, fast expanding, and becoming one of the great railway centers of the Western empire,—a city calling for the workers and many of them, for it is just the "hewers and drawers" that Salt Lake needs and must have.

In Boston, I once stopped in Scolly Square and listened to a number of Mormon missionaries expounding their doctrine. They were not, as many might imagine, old men with long gray beards, but were young men of perfect physical manliness, with the clear-cut eyes of those who lead temperate lives. They talked of Moses and the prophets, and in the midst of the talk, a well-dressed young man standing next to me interrupted by crying out, "Don't talk to us of the Blessed in Heaven, and those canonized by the church! Give us a little practical religion. Tell us what privileges Salt Lake City offers to the man who is poor because he must work with his hands. Has Salt Lake City abolished any of the social evils that pauperize her people? Has she driven out the corrupt political machine? Has she established a municipal building to offer to temporarily homeless people shelter and food as a safeguard against the jail? Has she created a public bath, an emergency hospital, a free employment bureau? Tell us of a Christianity such as this, and we will listen." The Mormon Elders seemed stunned into silence, and as the young man turned to leave, he addressed me, saying: "My God! How I suffered in that city! I am a printer by trade. I became destitute looking for work while there and suffered not only from hunger and exposure, but I was arrested and thrown into jail as a vagrant, simply because I was homeless, helpless, and penniless!"

It was during the first week in November that I left for Zion. On my journey I was obliged to stop over at a station called Green River, about one hundred and fifty miles east of the city. The weather was cold and raw, there was no fire in the station, and I felt extremely uncomfortable.

In the distance a dim light was visible, and I started to find out what it might offer of comfort, and possibly breakfast. On my way, I encountered six young fellows just crawling out of a warehouse in which was stored baled hay, on top of which they had been trying to rest. They were all thinly clad; their teeth chattered with the cold, and they shivered until their bones seemed to fairly rattle. They, too, went with me to the light which revealed a cheap restaurant. It was only a board shack but there was a stove in there touched with a deep, ruddy glow, and hot coffee and rolls was to be had for ten cents, and much more if one had the price.

Municipal Lodging House, New York City
Physicians' Examination Room



Municipal Lodging House, New York City
"Now for a good night's rest"

Seated at the table, one of the boys looked up to me and said, "Do you know where a fellow can get a job around here?" He told me they had been working just over the border in Colorado, in and around Grand Junction and Delta in the fruit belt, for the past six weeks.

"I thought I had a place for the winter. A ranchman said he would keep me at good wages, and I felt I was fixed, but the fellow who lived with him last winter returned and he took him back. Us fellows are on our way to Salt Lake City, but I am told just now that the harvest having closed, the town is full of idle men looking for work, and I thought if I could strike a job here I would stay." 65

"If you have been working steadily for six weeks in the fruit belt, I presume you have plenty of money to tide you over, and you will soon be in some place where you are needed?"

"No, we haven't, that is the trouble, and we must walk or beat our way to Salt Lake, although we have been working every day possible. We were paid two dollars a day. It cost us a dollar a day to live. We lost a great many days by stormy weather. Peaches could be picked only at a certain degree of ripeness, and often on pleasant days we would be obliged to wait for the fruit to reach that state, to be accepted by the packers. So we haven't much money left. Our clothes are worn out, and must be replaced. You can easily see how necessary it is for us to save the little left of our earnings."

I knew every word this boy was telling was true, for the Fall before, I had picked fruit for two weeks near Grand Junction to satisfy myself what it meant to toil in an orchard,—to see what it meant to the orchard owner, and what it meant to the railroad in transporting that fruit. Thus, I knew, from personal experience, that the worker who garnered the harvest for the people, filled just as important a place as the orchard owner or the railroad company. 66

"Last night," the boy continued, "I tell you we were tired and hungry when we reached here. We walked twenty-five miles yesterday and each of us fellows chipped in fifteen cents, and we bought three loaves of bread, a piece of meat, some vegetables and coffee. We went down by the railroad track just below town and made one of the finest 'Mulligans' you ever saw. Didn't it smell good, that cooking 'Mulligan' and hot coffee! And it was almost done when a fly cop of the railroad company came along and shot our cans all full of holes and drove us away, declaring we were camped on 'private property,' the right-of-way of the railroad company. We were robbed with all the pitilessness that would be shown a hardened criminal!" His face took on a look of fierce, piercing hatred.

Those boys had been creating dividends for that railroad, and they knew it; and every one of them should have received free transportation to Denver, Salt Lake, or to some source of labor, instead of abuse and persecution.

I looked out of the window and saw my train coming into the town, and I ran to catch it, and left my little company of toilers waiting and watching for an opportunity to beat their way on a freight to the "City of Saints." 67

After reaching Salt Lake, I looked down, from the window of a fashionable and exclusive hotel, in the heart of the beautiful city, upon Salt Lake's shame,—down upon dens of vice and iniquity that would put to shame many cities who boast of no moral standing whatever.

I found the boy's report was true. The city was filled with men idle after the summer and autumn work, which the early coming winter and sudden cold weather had closed down. I drifted around among these idle men and talked to a great many. I found a vast number temporarily homeless, and out of money, suffering. Why was it? Industry seemed to be at its height, a great deal of building was going on; in fact, there seemed to be work of every sort for everyone. The reason was very evident. Employment could not be obtained at any of the employment offices without money. It was the universal statement among the homeless penniless men that not one employer

would stake a man to live until pay day.

In the evening I put on my worker's outfit, and set out to look for a free bath and bed. I asked the first officer I met where the public bath house was, as I was "broke." He looked at me in astonishment, and then replied, "I'll tell you, Salt Lake is a little shy on free baths just now. You might go down to the Jordan River, but it's pretty cold this time of the year." 68

Then I began to look for a bed, and asked another policeman where the City Lodging House was, as I was in need of shelter. He raised his hand and pointed through the alley to a bright light, the City Jail. And so in this city, amidst the "Latter-Day Saints," men are compelled to lose their self-respect, and seek shelter in a vermin-infested city jail, or else become a common "Moocher."

I did become a mendicant and went to the Y. M. C. A., but they could do nothing for me. I was about to enter the Salvation Army, when the lights went out and the place closed for the night.

I then joined a group of young fellows (who, by the way, had also come from the Grand Junction fruit district), and I asked them, "Boys, if you are busted, where are you going to sleep?" They answered, "In a 'side-door Pullman' in the railroad yards." Inviting myself, I said, "I am with you."

These young men were all strong, healthy fellows, except one who was slight and delicate, whose large eyes seemed to hold a strange, intense light. There was the red glow of fever in his cheeks and when he coughed I caught a glimpse of a crimson stain. One of his pals was thoughtful of him that night. He had a little money and he slipped it to the boy, who was sheltered from the first penetrating cold of the early winter for one night at least, and had a warm supper, bed, and breakfast. 69

Reaching the dark and gloomy railroad yard, we stealthily threaded our way among the cars, fearful of arrest from the yard watchman, looking for a car which possibly might contain some straw. Finally we found one. The odor was that of a car in which hogs had recently been shipped. Soon the half-starved, body-wearied boys were sound asleep, but for me, sleep was impossible,—I was perishing with the cold. It was a marvel how they could sleep at all. It was obvious that they were suffering and only getting fitful snatches of sleep, which their restlessness plainly showed. The only reason they really kept from freezing was because they were huddled closely together. In a short time I realized that my experience would be dangerous to health if I remained longer, and I slipped out and away.

As I walked up that great long broad street of the city, I thought a great deal about Salt Lake and its people. I wondered if there was any deep moral, humanely reasoning love there. I wondered if its citizens' love for their brothers in this great republic would much longer allow those conditions to prevail. I wondered how they could be made to see that they needed these itinerant workers for the upbuilding of their city and the State, and if Salt Lake and Utah could be induced to do their share toward offering these men a decent welcome and a refuge until they could be placed at honest work. 70

CHAPTER VIII

Kansas City and Its Heavy Laden

"All religions are beautiful which make us good people."—Auerbach.

Just before the opening of the great harvests of Kansas, I reached Kansas City. Ten thousand men had congregated there in anticipation of work. The season was late and the harvest would not begin for a week or ten days. The men must be right at hand. While all of them could be classed as homeless, migratory wage-earners, they were not all penniless by any means. Only a small percentage of them were without actual means of subsistence, although there were probably a thousand of really penniless men in Kansas City when I reached there, men who must beg, or steal, to make existence possible.

By actual experience I soon found that immediate work was unobtainable. On the eve of my first night in the city I sat with a number of unfortunates on the projection of the foundation of the Salvation Army Hotel. Beside me was a stout young man of good manner and with a pleasant, open face. Turning to him in a casual way, I said, "Where can a fellow find work?"

"I don't know, unless you get a job down on the railroad," he replied. "I live in Indianapolis. I'm out here to work in the Kansas harvests, but I'm sorry I started so soon for I'm here about two weeks in advance of the work. It has been such a cold, late Spring."

Just then a police officer came down the street—it is remarkable how unpleasant a drink or two will make a policeman,—and rapped us up with the ingratiating command to "Move on!"

After the officer had passed, I again took a seat, but the boy remarked, "You had better not sit down again. He may return any moment, and he'll club you. He clubbed me yesterday and I haven't gotten over it yet."

So we got up and walked toward the Employment Office to investigate the work he had spoken of, and as we walked I noticed that my companion limped,—the result of the "clubbing" he had received from the policeman.

I could not help thinking of his needs and his situation. Seeking to draw him out, I asked as if I sought to have him treat, "Have you the price of a beer?"

"No," he replied, "if I had I would buy something to eat."

"Are you hungry?"

With a forced laugh he replied, "Yes, I spent my last dime last night for a meal. I held it in my hand so long it had grown rusty but I had to let it go at last."

Putting my hand in my pocket and pulling out a silver dollar, I laughingly remarked, "Well, I'm not broke, but I will be when this little lump of sugar is gone. I'll tell you, Jack, I'm a believer in combines, the kind of combine that a hundred cents make, and we'll go shares on this one."

I wish all Kansas City could have seen the expression of hope that lit up that starving lad's face. My sharing with him was something more substantial than the sermon or inexpensive advice usually handed to the starving man.

"Well," I said, "we're partners now, and we may as well be broke as to have only this, so let's go and eat it."

I led him away from the neighborhood of the City Hall and the City Jail, and the Board of Health and the Helping Hand Mission, and out of all that black and heartless region, to where we could get a clean meal without being poisoned by some cheap slum eating house. We talked as we went along, and I asked him where he had spent the previous night.

"Down in the yards in a freight car, and it rained nearly all night. The car leaked, and at about two or three o'clock in the morning it grew very cold. I suffered a lot. I was afraid of being arrested, for we're not allowed to sleep in the yards. But the watchman was decent and let me stay until daylight."

I had heard of the "Helping Hand" Mission Lodging House, known to those who are forced into it as the "House of Blazes," and I asked him why he had not gone there.

"There was no room," he replied.

Coming from the chop-house we went to an employment office, where we read upon the blackboard:

"Wanted—Fifty men in Oklahoma, $1.35 a day, free shipment."

We stepped inside for further information and found that board would be three dollars and a half a week. The boy studied for a moment and then said:

"Let's go."

“You go,” I replied, “you are strong enough for the work, but I’m not. I may meet you down that way when the harvest opens.”

“I think I will go,” he replied. “It’s hard work, ten hours a day, and if I lose two days out of the week by bad weather or sickness or a hundred other reasons, or buy a few things I’ve got to have, I will be in debt to the company at the end of the week. But it’s better than to stay here and beg or starve. Some fellows can ‘mooch’ but that’s one thing I’ve never got low enough to do, and I hope I never will. It’s only a bare existence there, but as you say, the harvest will soon be open. I’ll go.” 75

Suiting the action to the word, he went in, obtained his transportation, and on coming out, shook my hand with both his own while he earnestly said good-bye and begged of me to be sure to meet him again if possible. He started off, and as he reached the first corner on his way to the depot, he stooped down and rubbed his knee as if in pain, but cheerfully, and with a final wave of farewell, he straightened up and disappeared.

But he could not disappear from my thoughts, this starving and shelterless boy, down and out, ill-used, yet ever ready at the first suggestion of hope to rush again into life’s battle. And so I have related this incident of meeting him at length, although it was nothing in comparison with some of the terrible things I learned that afternoon. In fact, rarely in any city, have I seen so much human misery publicly exposed, and in so small a space, as I did there, around the block bounded by Main and Delaware, and Fourth and Fifth Streets.

I saw men driven like animals, eight at a time, into the bull pen of the city jail. When night fell and the streets were ablaze with light I was still walking about and observing. I felt in my pockets. The last cent of my dollar was gone. The chop-house had left me broke. So I began to inquire where the homeless and penniless could find shelter.

In the main, I found that conditions were the same as in Denver, except that Kansas City had the “Helping Hand” institution, to which I have referred,—an ostensibly “religious” institution, backed up in its operations by the co-operation of the city authorities. 76

Recalling what I thought I knew about this institution, it required some courage to trust myself to its tender mercies, but I determined to try it and learn about the actual conditions existing there.

I went first to their religious service, where I heard an exceptionally able address on the features of Christ’s humanitarianism, and on the wonderful merit which there was in the application of the “square deal” principle between man and man, individually and collectively.

The house was filled with a large number of men whose broken appearance told only too plainly that the world was not dealing kindly and “squarely” with *them*. When the speaker had ended his address the men were asked to come forward and thereby signify that they had accepted the teachings of Christ as they were interpreted by the preacher. Not a man stepped forward.

That night, as a destitute workingman, at this same place I asked for a bed. I was told I could have one but was expected to do two hours’ work for it.

“I am perfectly willing to do so,” I replied.

The office was caged in by a heavy iron wire as though to be protected from thieves. The man at the desk said: 77

“Well, leave me your hat, and when you have done your work in the morning you will get it.”

I humbly handed him my hat, and numbering it he threw it on a pile of many others. He was obviously holding my hat as a ransom, fearing to trust my honor.

I was given a bed check corresponding to the number of my hat, and told to go upstairs. A man sat at a desk on which an old, smoky kerosene lamp was burning. He showed me into a room in which *one hundred and sixteen men* were sleeping. He did not turn up the light, even for a moment, so that I might see the kind of a bed I was getting into. He explained this by saying he feared to awaken the dead-tired, half-starved individuals on the bunks. As a result I was afraid to get into my bed at all, but laid down on the outside of the covering and stayed there all night. Not a word had been said about supper or a bath.

The odor of the hundred unwashed bodies was nauseating. There was the usual consumptive and asthmatic coughing, and the expectoration upon the floor; there were no cuspidors, and the air was stifling.

Not far from me I heard a young man moaning, and every few moments he would exclaim, “Oh, my God! Oh, my God!” I went to him and asked:

“What is the matter?” 78

“Oh, I am suffering from inflammatory rheumatism,” he groaned.

I felt of his arms and hands, and found them burning hot and swollen hard from his elbows to his finger-tips.

“Can’t I go out and get something for you?” I anxiously asked.

“I don’t know what to tell you to get. I need a doctor.”

I called an attendant. The sufferer asked if he could get a doctor from the city hall across the street.

“No, not until nine o’clock to-morrow morning,” was the answer.

The man had two rags about twelve inches long and three inches wide. All night long, at intervals of every twenty or thirty minutes, he went to the water faucet, wet these rags, and bound them upon his arms.

I thought by contrast of New York City’s wonderful Municipal Emergency Home, and of the kind medical treatment given at any hour of the night to its inmates.

On arising in the morning we went down-stairs and waited an hour for our breakfasts. We could see our hats piled up behind the iron bars.

When the long wait was over, we were given a breakfast consisting of dry bread, stewed prunes, and some liquid stuff called coffee, without milk or sugar. What a hungry man would eat at that 79
table, if he had been able to stomach it, wouldn’t amount to a value of over three cents a meal. While we ate we were supposed to refresh ourselves spiritually by reading the religious mottoes on the wall. “Come unto Me all ye that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest,” “Blessed are the Merciful,” “He came to preach deliverance to the captives,” and “When did you write Mother last?”

After that so-called breakfast I was sent to work in the long, poorly ventilated room, in which the hundred and sixteen men, unwashed, diseased, and foul, had slept the previous night. I worked two long hours making beds and cleaning floors, in payment of the three-cent meal I could not eat, and the bed I dared not get into. The Mission people valued our meal at ten cents, and our beds at ten cents, and we were paying for it at labor at ten cents an hour, while at every other place in the city employers and the municipality were paying twenty and twenty-five cents an hour for common labor.

The boys who had paid their ten cents for a bed sat out in the office, and stood a chance of getting a job at twenty or twenty-five cents an hour at the labor bureau, but the boys whose hats were held as a ransom had no such opportunity.

It was not a “square deal.” And right there I saw one instance of its demoralizing tendency. In the room where I was at work a young boy was dressing himself. He looked up at a coat and hat 80
which hung by the door, and asked me, with an innocent look:

“Whose hat is that?”

“I don’t know.”

“Do you think it’s a tramp’s?”

“I don’t know, but I wouldn’t take it if I were you.”

After a moment’s thought he said:

“I’ve got a job this morning if I can get there, but I can’t stay here for two hours and get it.”

In a few minutes I noticed that the boy and hat were both gone. I suppose he thought it a fair exchange since he had been compelled to leave his own in the office, and who will say it was not?

The floors were filthy, the beds rotten. The blankets were stiff and the sheets ragged; they were both contaminated with all the filth of diseased and unwashed men. I don’t believe the blankets had been changed for years or the sheets for weeks.

It seemed to be the custom of the superintendent of this place to keep up a show of cleanliness by making the men and boys do the scrubbing for nothing. When a bed is to be looked at by a “charitably inclined” visitor, clean pillow slips and sheets are put on, but they are for exhibition purposes only. As for the beds that are actually in use, they are well worth the immediate attention of the Kansas City health authorities.

Only the real inmates, and not the casual visitors, can know the “Helping Hand” for what it is in practice. Morally, it is a breeder of crime, and not an aid in any way to the recovery of self-respect. The only commendable feature about it is the Labor Bureau run in connection,—an adjunct that every Municipal Emergency Home should have.

Such a Bureau is proof that the cry of men not wanting to work is a false cry. I wish those who pay heed to it could have seen the object lesson that morning when those hundreds of middle aged men, young men and boys, almost tumbled over one another in their eagerness to reach the window and get the jobs of carpet-sweeping, dish-washing, store-clerking, stenography, and other kinds of work that were being given out.

Can such a rich city as Kansas City afford with impunity to neglect its duty to its “hewers of wood and drawers of water?”

CHAPTER IX

The New England "Conscience"

"See to it only that thyself is here,— and art and nature, hope and dread, friends, angels and the Supreme Being shall not be absent from the chamber where thou sittest."—Emerson.

Studying in Boston—as is said of Paris—is being born in Boston.

When a boy in my teens I spent four years there, and those four years awakened in me the brightest dreams and brightest hopes for a successful future.

After thirty years, I am again in this renowned center of intellectual culture as a student, but this time as a social student in pursuit of knowledge of how our "Modern Athens" cares for the honest, out-of-work, penniless, homeless worker.

At half-past ten at night, in search of a free bed, I made my way down to a building, at least seventy or more years old, looking for Boston's Municipal Lodging House, "The Wayfarers Lodge," better known as "The Hawkins Street Woodyard." (Boston is rather given to pretty names. They have a Deer Island also.)

My reception was not at all encouraging for a destitute man. I was not even asked if I was hungry, but was shown at once into a bath-room, located down in the cellar, which was dark and uninviting.

After my bath I put on a nightshirt taken from a basket, and carrying my hat, shoes, and stockings in my hand, I climbed two flights of stairs to the dormitories, leaving the rest of my clothes to be fumigated, as I supposed, but I doubt very much if that was done, as they had none of the purified odor of thoroughly disinfected clothing I had noticed in New York.

There was no sign of medical inspection, nor any attempt at separation of the sick from the well. I should judge one hundred men to have been in the two dormitories that night. There were boys not more than fifteen years old sleeping by the side of men of seventy. The beds were shoved absolutely tight together, which gave the appearance of all sleeping in one bed. When it became necessary for any one of them to get up during the night he was forced to crawl over the next men or over the head or foot of the bed.

As there were no cuspidors, the men expectorated into space without thought or care of where it fell.

Two men came in and took beds next to mine. The one on my right was an intelligent workingman, the one on my left was a drunkard with a horribly offensive breath from disease and rum.

The beds had no mattresses,—a blanket was simply thrown over the woven wires,—and as I sank down on one, it became a string beneath me. A blanket was our only covering, and the pillows, filled with excelsior, were as hard as boards.

I said to the man on my right:

"Did you have any supper to-night?"

"No, I didn't, and I feel pretty weak and hungry. I spent my last thirty cents this morning for a breakfast, and what do you think I got for it? I got a piece of beefsteak four inches square so tough I could scarcely eat it, and some potatoes fried in rancid lard."

I made no reply and the exhausted and half-starved man fell asleep.

"I wish I had a couple of drinks of whiskey," said the man on my left.

"Oh," I replied, "you don't want much; one drink would do me."

"Yes, but I've got beyond that," he said; "it takes a good many drinks to do me, and they can't come too fast, either." Then, with a sigh, he added, "My dear old Daddy, God bless him, I have one thing to blame him for. He taught me to drink, and here I am in this charity business—a drunkard."

And he, too, turned over and fell asleep. But I could not sleep; asthmatics and consumptives were coughing constantly, and the wreckage around me was too much for my sympathies.

The coming of the daylight through the windows was a welcome sight. I got up and went to the drinking place, and asked a burly looking attendant if it was time to get up.

"Naw, taint!" he snapped, with a wicked scowl.

When I went back to bed I saw this man lock the two doors leading from our dormitory to the outside toilet rooms, and for half an hour the men were obliged to use the basin at the drinking place for sanitary convenience!

When the doors were finally unlocked, supposing it to be the signal for us to get up, I went with

hat and shoes in my hands and sat down in a chair by the door. When the attendant to whom I had spoken earlier, came up the stairs and saw me there, without a moment's warning he seized me by the wrists, jerked me to my feet, and giving me a shove thrust me in a most brutal manner through the door, exclaiming:

"Now, will you stay in there until you are told to come out?"

I shuddered to think what would have happened if I had been a half-starved boy, and had resented that man's insult. Doubtless I would have been beaten into insensibility.

Finally, after another half hour, he yelled from the doorway:

"Hey, there, you fellers, get up and get out of here!" 86

Quickly we obeyed and were driven down into the cellar. From there we were driven to the woodyard, where we were made to saw wood for two hours. The strong men sawed their stint in much less time than the weak ones. For the latter it must have meant two long hours indeed, weakened as many of them were by a chronic hunger and disease, and having gone supperless to bed and being as yet without breakfast.

When I had finished paying for my "entertainment," I was again driven into a place to put my saw and saw-buck away, and then I was allowed to go to breakfast into a cheerless, overcrowded room; even at this stage of the game I was driven to three different places before I was allowed to be seated.

They brought me some bean soup with beans swimming in it, so bitter with salt I could not eat it; a water cracker so hard I could not bite it, and a dirty slice of bread, that one of the indigent, but willing workers, carried in his soiled hands and dropped by my plate.

A very hungry looking young man who sat beside me tasted his soup and exclaimed:

"I'm hungry, but I'll beg or steal before I'll eat this stuff."

We both got up and left the "Hawkins Street Woodyard" in disgust; he going down the street for breakfast, and I in another direction to my hotel. 87

During this, my social study, I have received many letters from the itinerant worker.[B]

I may add that I did not investigate Boston's Associated Charities, but I did catch a suggestion or two that as far as helping the temporarily out-of-work and destitute toiler, both man and woman, they were inadequate and their good qualities did not exceed the "Hawkins Street Woodyard."

Dressed in my garb of a worker, which encourages confidence because it excites sympathy, on another day, on the Boston Common, I was attracted by two idle men sitting on a nearby seat, one an Irishman and the other a Swede. They seemed to be feeling about as good as cheap Boston beer could make them, and the Irishman in an earnest yet jovial way was trying to convince the Swede that the world was flat instead of round. I dropped down on the seat beside them, and just then the Swede saw a man he thought he knew, and abruptly left us.

I turned and said to the Irishman in a tentative way, "Where can a fellow find a job?"

He replied, "Do what I'm doing. I'm an actor, and I'm playing the drunkard's part in 'The Price of a Man's Soul,' every night, over at Hell's Corner on Tremont Street."

This answer naturally surprised me; but without a trace of astonishment, and with seeming indifference, I said, 88

"I am with you, friend, for that is a part in which I sparkle; but on the square, what do you do for a living?"

"Well, I'm a barber, and as fine a barber as ever held a razor. I owned a big shop once, and I hired twenty men, but it went when I went. I am so low down now, no one wants me. Oh, occasionally I'll get a job in one of the cheap places. I worked two hours last night in Cambridge, and two the night before in Chelsea."

Then with sudden digression, I said, "Where can a fellow get a bed and something to eat if he's broke?"

"You can go down to the Hawkins Street Woodyard. But don't go there unless you have to!" And he described its wretchedness, which I knew from my own experience. The man was truthful on that point, and I believed in him.

I laughingly said, "What's the matter with going down to the 'Island'?"

"Well, I can tell you all about those places. I have done time in all of them. One day in Charles St. Jail, one week at Tewksbury, and forty days at Deer Island."

"Can a man with no crime but poverty go there and get work, and be paid for it?"

He laughed sardonically. "You can get work all right, but your pay is tough board and abuse. They'll probably set you to digging graves at Tewksbury. They die over there like sheep with a plague." 89

“But what of Deer Island?”

“Well, I’m a barber, you know, and they put me in the barber department. One day two of the prisoners, also doing my kind of work (all men who come there have to be shaved), were two minutes late coming in from the yard to work. That made the attending officer mad, and he said, ‘I’ll fix ’em!’ and he forced those men for hours to stand with their faces to the wall with their hands over their heads. It was a question of obey or be thrown into a dungeon perhaps for days. I saw that punishment inflicted many times, and I saw men fall from exhaustion and pain and be dragged out. Where they were taken, I don’t know, and many of them were old men, too.

“One day I was sent over to the hospital to trim, as I was told, a young woman’s hair. I took only my shears and comb. On arriving there I found a young woman with a head of hair that shone like silk, and fell three feet down her back. She was in tears and begging that it might be spared. She was only there for thirty days and it meant leaving the place doubly disgraced. But the Matron declared she had seen a louse in her hair, and her word went. When I came in she asked me if I had brought the clippers. I said, ‘No.’ She ordered me to go and get them. Feeling sorry for the 90
girl I told her it wasn’t necessary to cut the hair. I could clean her head perfectly without cutting off a single hair. At this the Matron said, ‘Are you an officer or a prisoner here? Get your clippers and do as you are told, and quickly!’ I knew what it meant to be disobedient. I saw before me the dungeon-inferno. I left the girl crushed and sobbing, and that wealth of hair almost worth its weight in gold upon the floor.

“There was a mutiny among a few of the men, demanding a change in their food. They were working all day for nothing but that food, but because of their demand, they were thrown into the dark dungeon, fed on bread and water for ten days, and I saw some of those men, as they came out from the darkness into the light, faint on the prison floor. One of them was an old man with a long, snow-white flowing beard, and you know how proud an old man is of a beautiful beard. Well, I was ordered to cut it off and he pleaded as the young woman did for her hair, but in vain. He said to me, ‘This is my first time on the Island. My wife knows I am here, but my children don’t. Wife has forgiven me, and I am to leave in a few days, and I had looked forward to such a happy home coming, but they won’t recognize me now, and this puts upon me a double infamy. All of my friends know I am here. I did not mean to be uncivil, I meant to do right, but I was 91
drawn into the revolt, not realizing I was doing wrong which would put us in the dungeon. I feel so weary and broken. I wish now more than ever that my prayer in the dark dungeon had been answered, for I prayed many times in there, that when the light came to me again it would be the light from that land of Him who said, “I was sick and in prison and ye visited me.”’”

I looked in wonder at the man speaking to me, scarcely believing him. He noticed my expression and said, “Those were his words, his very words. I remember them for they impressed me.”

“Is this true?” I asked. “Is there a law in Massachusetts allowing a man to be condemned and thrust into a dungeon for ten days for a petty offense like this?”

“I have not told to you one hundredth part of the suffering I saw at Deer Island. The cells there are absolutely dark. There is a small slide in the door where the doctor peeps in to see if a man is dead, or gone mad.”

“If he is dead, what then?”

“Well, if he has no friends, he is put into a box and carried just over the hill to the burying plot called ‘The Haven.’”

I was so touched by this man’s story, I could listen no longer. I got up and took him by the arm and said, “Let’s cut out our fault.”

He replied, “I’ll have to, I guess, for its cutting me out.” 92

I strolled on up the Common, and thought of all it meant, “The Haven” over the hill. This man told me he had been a citizen of Boston all his life. Who would believe this story of a destitute old floatsam cast up from the wreckage of America’s temple of Elegance? Had he told me the truth or a lie? I have many reasons to believe every word he told me was true, but there is no man who can verify this story, except the man who has done forty days at Deer Island.

In a conventional visit to the Island, I looked into the men’s prison just far enough to see tier upon tier of small cells in which all the prisoners are locked for twelve hours of every day. The dungeons I did not see as they are never open to visitors.

It was a clear beautiful day. Blue sky and blue sea, all around, white ships sailing by, the men working in the fields, the women busy in the sewing rooms, all inspired me to think that Deer Island could be made a place of hope and cheer. But that vision was far from the reality. The prisoners kept a funeral silence, happiness or hope was not for them. Even their work was stolen from them.

I said to one intelligent looking man who was working in the garden, “It helps a fellow to come down here, doesn’t it?”

He answered, “Yes, if we are not made physical wrecks by the treatment we receive, it does help 93
us. But then, when our time is up, we are disgraced and thrown back helpless into the same old slums of the city, just as before.”

The Penal Commissioner of Boston told me that he could use thirty beds a night in a Municipal Emergency Home, just to accommodate the men and women who were daily discharged destitute from Deer Island.

While Boston has done much for its poor, its sick, and its children, there still remains the problem of the utterly down and out, the shelterless and moneyless, but honest, workers.

Can Boston allow New York to excel it in caring for it shelterless workers? I hear the cry, “Where can we get the money?” When you ask that question you are putting a price on a man’s soul. I wish some goddess of gentleness would touch the hearts of those “munificent” and “public spirited” citizens who founded the Boston Public Library, that they might also build a Municipal Emergency Home, and ornament its frieze with a perpetual beauty of words, “Dedicated to the advancement of the Commonwealth and Humanity.”

I am not without historical sentiment. I love local antiquities, if they can be mine to enjoy without oppression. Boston has old burying grounds and churches worth millions and millions of dollars. The dead have rested there a long time. Why not build for the living who have nowhere to lay their heads, a Municipal Emergency Home that would be a living force for the upbuilding of the morals and economic security of the commonwealth?

CHAPTER X

PHILADELPHIA'S "BROTHERLY LOVE"

"Hast thou Virtue? Acquire also the graces and beauties of Virtue."—FRANKLIN.

I had read that Philadelphia's hospitality was her great virtue, and that it was characteristic of her people to bestow upon the stranger and the homeless—who are and who come within her gates—a blessing of care and kindness nowhere else known,—to make them feel that at last they have found a haven.

The first Philadelphia police officer I met I asked several questions about the city. His manner toward me was a surprise. He seemed very willing to talk with an apparently homeless man. We spoke of a number of things, among them the Philadelphia Coat of Arms which ornamented his hat, representing the shield of honor and the scales of Justice. I said, "It is beautiful and stands for a high ideal." He replied doubtfully, "Yes, if it is carried out."

I then strolled down to the corner of Eleventh and Race Streets, and seeing another policeman I approached him with the question:

"Where can a fellow get a free bed?"

He looked at me in surprise.

"I don't know. You might go down to the station house on the next corner. They may give you a bunk."

I walked slowly down to the station house. Was it possible that in that great city of "Brotherly Love," its police could not direct a destitute man or woman, boy or girl, to a place of rest, to a home of shelter,—to be fed and given comfort and good cheer,—except to a jail and behind iron bars?

I entered the station where there were a number of men around the desk. I asked the Captain where a penniless man could get a free bed. He asked,

"Haven't you the price of a bed?"

"No, I have not a penny in my pocket."

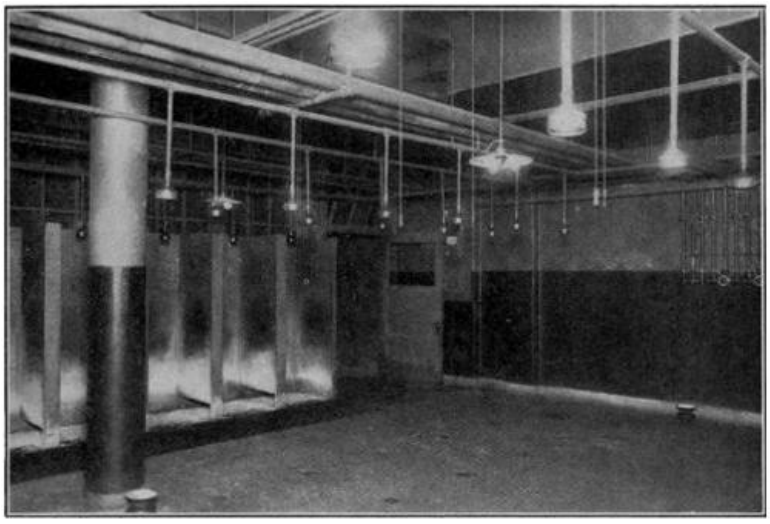
"Well, I'll give you a cell," he said, and opened a register to write my name. I asked,

"Is there not a place in the city where a man can work for his supper, bed, and breakfast?"

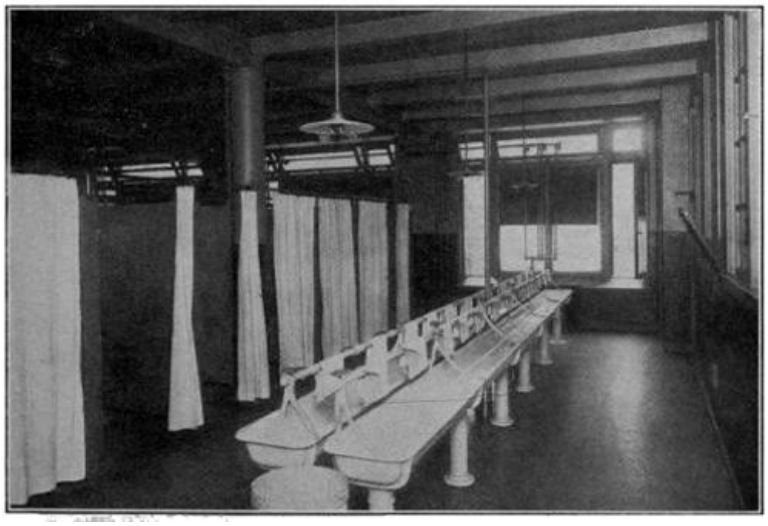
"None that I know of," was the answer. Then an officer said,

"You can go down to the Galilee Mission."

I asked where it was, and they directed me. Just as I turned to go the policeman nearest to me handed me a dime.



MUNICIPAL Lodging House, New York City
Men's Shower Baths



MUNICIPAL Lodging House, New York City
Female Showers and Wash Rooms

I started as directed, down to Winter and Darian Streets, to the Galilee Mission. I had proceeded 97
but a short distance when I saw standing on a corner one of the great army of workers. His appearance told me plainly what he was,—his hands were calloused, and his half-worn shoes were covered with a white viscous substance, and a dim mist of lime dust clouded his entire person. I stepped up to him and asked where I could get a free bed.

“Don’t know of such a place in the city, but you can get a bed at the Lombard Street woodyard by working three or four hours for it. But don’t go there unless you have to—they won’t treat you right.”

I thanked him and went on down to the Mission. As I approached it, one of the followers of the Mission, with a Bible or hymn-book under his arm, was at the door in an altercation with one of the great army of unfortunates. The man had an honest face, but the glazed eyes told he had been drinking. I heard the attendant say,

“Now, you get out of here or I’ll fix you! I’ll have an officer here in a minute, and he’ll land you in jail in pretty quick time.”

The man was at the drinking faucet at the side of the building.

“I haven’t done anything. All I’m doing is getting a drink of water.”

What the trouble was, I do not know, but what I saw was a seemingly peaceable man abused, 98
thrown out on the street, with the threat hurled after him of police and prison.

I stepped around to another one of the attendants at the door, and I asked if I could get a free bed there. He said in a hard way, “No, you can’t.”

“I am willing to work for it.”

“Well, I don’t know whether there’s any left. If there is by half-past nine or ten you can have one, but you understand you’ll have to work for it.”

I said, “I am not very strong. Will the work be hard?”

“If you’re sick why don’t you go to the hospital?”

“I’m not sick enough for that.”

“Well, I’ll tell you one thing, if you get a bed here you’ll have to work good and hard for it whether you’re sick or well.”

“Could I get anything to eat before going to bed?”

“No, you can’t,” he answered.

I then strolled down to the “Friendly Inn,” supposedly a shelter for destitute men, located on Ninth and Walnut Streets. I asked a pleasant looking young man behind the desk if I could get a free bed. He told me they had no free beds nor any work to do to pay for one, but added, “I have no authority, but if you will wait until half-past ten o’clock, the Manager will be here and he may give you one.”

Remembering my brief encounter with the workingman on the corner, I did not wait but started 99
for the “Lombard Street woodyard.” After reaching Lombard Street I walked for half a mile, and for the entire distance the street was crowded with people, but I did not see a white person until I reached the woodyard. The thrift of the colored people of Philadelphia was markedly noticeable. Saloons were rare in the neighborhood. Their homes were comfortable, they were well dressed and seemingly happy.

I came to a large four-story substantial brick building with a small iron porch at its entrance.

There was an iron balcony out from each window and over the entrance door, and on the rear a similar row of balconies, but no fire escape that I could discover. If the building had not been so large it could have been readily taken for a police station, there were so many policemen about the place.

I entered and found myself in the presence, except for the policemen, of the first white man I had seen on Lombard Street. A kindly appearing gentleman asked me a number of questions, and among them if I was sick. My answer apparently satisfactory, he said,

“You will have to work for your lodging here.”

I asked, “How long?”

He replied, “Three or four hours.”

I was then ordered to take a bath, which was compulsory, and was perfectly right and a good thing. Water, however, does not cost much. After the bath I was shown into a large dormitory, thoroughly ventilated and immaculately clean (made and kept so by homeless workers) containing fifty beds, of which thirty were occupied that night. The beds were very clean and comfortable, except the pillows, which were pretty thin and hard. I judged they were stuffed with cotton, and cotton gets into a lump sometimes. Some of the men coughed all night. At four o’clock, for some reason, one-half of the men were called, and why they were called at that hour I could not learn. At five o’clock the rest of us were called. I had slept in a clean ten-cent bed for six hours, and was then driven out. For the spirit to drive is also evident there. When we went into breakfast there was some bread and spoons on the table. We had no need of a knife and fork, as we had nothing to use them for. We were then given a plate of bean soup and a cup of stuff called coffee. The soup had a nasty taste, like rancid lard or strong butter, and the material called coffee was luke-warm, and nauseating. It had not the slightest flavor, taste, or strength, and we were not given sugar or milk. This was our breakfast. I could not eat or drink a mouthful, and I was not the only one, for there were others of the half-starved boys and men at that table who ate nothing, and those who did eat forced it down, and made faces while doing so. 100

Now, this was not because I was used to Bellevue-Stratford fare, for I have roughed it throughout the West in mining and cow camps, and know good coarse food from nasty coarse food. 101

We then went down in the reading-room, a sort of chapel, where there was a rostrum with an organ and a pulpit on which was a carved cross. The room was filled with chairs. At one end was a large table covered with old magazines and papers. Did you ever notice how charity people think old magazines are good enough for a poor man no matter how bright mentally he may be, or how much he loves to keep up with the times?

We were told we would have to wait until half-past six before going to work. I almost fainted from hunger, and was suffering terribly with a headache. I went down to the door and asked if I could go out, saying I would return. I was told, no, I could not. In this chapel I was virtually imprisoned, to be kept there and turned loose at the will of its superintendent. There were two big well-fed policemen sleeping on the chairs, and I fell to wondering what they were there for, and what they had had for breakfast. I wondered if they were there to watch us, and I said to one boy in a tentative way, “What’s the matter of us making a sneak?”

He replied, “No, I won’t, for I promised I would work, and if they catch you trying to make a sneak, they’ll throw you in jail.”

Then I wondered what the large kindly man at the desk, who did not have to wash or scrub floors or saw wood, had had for breakfast, and what the other big good-natured attendant had had, whose only business was to boss the “under dog.” I also wondered what the other members of the society of organized charities had had for breakfast, and if they were driven out of bed at four or five o’clock in the morning to eat it. 102

At six-thirty we were put to work. A number of us were sent to the woodyard and several of us were put to washing, cleaning, and scrubbing the floors and stairs.

I was set to washing, and I asked the “boss” attendant, “How long will I have to work?” He replied, “three or four hours,” the same as the attendant had told me at the door when I entered. However, after working from half-past six until twenty-five minutes to nine—kept in there just at the time when I ought to have been out looking for work—I was allowed to go.

As I was leaving I said to a boy about fifteen years of age, “Are you going now?” He said, referring to the attendant, “He’s not told me that I could go. These people treat a boy mighty mean here. They worked me from half-past six yesterday morning until four-thirty in the afternoon.”

“Why didn’t you leave after you had worked for your bed and breakfast?”

“Well, it was so near dinner time, and I won’t beg or steal, so I waited for the cheap dinner, and they worked me, as I told you, until four-thirty in the afternoon, but I am going to try to get a job to-day, if possible.” 103

Does Philadelphia need a Municipal Emergency Home? Philadelphians, you, too, send your delegation to New York and inspect their new Municipal Emergency Home, that you, too, may have one even surpassing that New York Home, or at least turn the one you have into a humane

one, for you cannot afford to have New York surpass you in its humanitarian activities. Keep the great reputation you have of “Brotherly Love” and “Hospitality,” and if you do, your lives and your city will continue resplendent, and this new refuge will speak in wonderful language the praise of “The City of Homes.”

CHAPTER XI

Pittsburg and the Wolf

"I resolved that the wolf of poverty should be driven from my door."—Andrew Carnegie.

Our train was late, and would not reach Pittsburgh until noon.

The porter had given me a pillow, and while we were sliding smoothly down that great tongue of land between the Monongahela and Allegheny Rivers, where in 1754 stood an old French fort, and where to-day stands Pittsburg, the greatest industrial city of our nation with its population of 750,000 souls, I fell into a half wakeful reverie. I was thinking of its steel, and its iron, its glass, its coal, and its oil, of the mighty fortunes created there by the sweat of the working masses; of the few who had made those great fortunes, of the struggle, the worry, until the treasures of the earth were theirs, until they possessed gold and silver, and houses and lands, through the exploitation of those who must toil. We think or used to think of men who from poverty had achieved great wealth, that they were self-made and worthy of great honor, but that idea seems to be growing less significant nowadays. I thought of the scandals that are rife, and that have come to us from time to time from the great Iron City, and I saw that achievement had left in many cases, indelible marks in a wreckage of mutilated homes and lives. Then my dream changed to the blue jeans, to the great industrial army of bread winners who filled just as great a place of import in the building up of the city, and of its great fortunes, as did the few who exploit them. I thought, too, of their battles of the past for equity and justice, and of the one at that time going on at McKee's Rocks; I thought of the lives sacrificed in such battles, of the contention and agony, of the suffering of body and mind for life's simple necessities, and all to keep together humble homes, to protect the manhood of honorable American citizens, and to insure the safety of little children, to make a living wage possible.

We were nearing the city. Surely, I thought, this great city, with its vast wealth, must abound in privileges to labor. I have heard that people who achieve great wealth do not always forget. My first impulse was to pass right through without trying to investigate conditions in Pittsburg, for I had received many wounds of late from those in charge of "charitable" institutions. I had been misunderstood and severely criticised, called a seeker after notoriety, and my motives had been questioned. All because I dared to prove to the world that the institution maintained and assisted by private charity, especially the methods of the charity organization society, cannot stand the test of an honest and impartial investigation.

I was weary in mind and body, and had almost lost sight of what had stood out before me as duty. The silent voice which had been leading me on was scarcely perceptible. I had been reading Victor Hugo's "Les Miserables," and I held in my hand this great masterpiece. Aroused from my lethargy I opened the volume and read, "A man should not recoil from the good he may be able to do." I looked, and my wounds were healed, and thus I stopped in Pittsburg.

I found a neat room in a respectable neighborhood, where a man in working clothes could walk in and out without comment. Soon I was on the street, an unemployed, destitute workingman, except, as I discovered afterwards, that I had in one of the pockets of my overalls a penny. My first object was to look for work. Inquiring I found that it was estimated, on good authority, that there were 50,000 unemployed men in Pittsburg and its environs at that time. At McKee's Rocks alone there were 8,000.

I went first to Pittsburgh's Street Railway Company, where I found one hundred and fifty young men in line putting in their applications for work at twenty-four cents an hour. If those applications were accepted, the men were obliged, and were willing, to work one whole week for nothing to become qualified. I did not file an application.

I picked up a paper and read: "Ten men wanted as supers at a theater. Apply at the stage door entrance." I went to the place, and found fifty men waiting, although it was an hour before the appointed time. There were men of all ages and types, from some scarcely more than boys to old men of seventy. I talked with a dozen who had prospective work in sight and were willing to do anything to tide themselves over until their positions were secured. One man said, "I have a place in a wholesale grocery open for me the first of next week, and although this work will only pay fifty cents a performance, it will buy me enough to eat, and I can sleep any place until I get my job. I hope they will choose me." Then the manager came out and chose his ten men, the largest, roughest of the lot. I was not among them, and the boy who was going to work in the wholesale grocery was still on the street. The men selected were as pleased as though they had received a Christmas gift that would not wear out, and one big, rough, tough looking fellow, with almost tears of joy in his eyes, said, "Who would have tought dey would have taken me wid dis front on?" as he looked down at his soiled and ragged clothes; and another just as happy replied, "What do ye tink dey want? A fellow with balloons on his legs and a cane? Naw, dey want a feller that can do somethin'."

I then drifted around among the employment offices, and found a little army looking for, and getting, shipments to work. As I strolled about, I found a carpenter's rule, which I picked up and slipped in the upper side pocket of my jumper. Strolling along a little further I saw on the sidewalk a bright new nail. I don't know why I did it, but I picked it up also, and put it into the

lower pocket on the other side. The night was coming down and I was very tired and hungry. I began, as an indigent man, to look for a place of rest and a meal, the latter a thing I never missed on these investigations, but often had to postpone for long periods. I was perfectly willing to work for that privilege if I could find such a place.

I was compelled to try the so-called “Christian Missions,” and they made a good starting point for my investigations,—investigations which proved to me that they prey upon the gullible with a pretense of helping the homeless.

I went first to the Salvation Army and asked for a bed. The attendant told me he could not give me one as their lodging house was run for profit and not for charity.

“I am willing to work for it. Have you no such place.”

“We have,” was the answer, “but it is closed.”

Then I went to the old Liberty Mission on Fourth Street and I read the following inscription over 109
the door, “The man who belongs nowhere belongs here.” Prayers were being said on the inside, and the doorway was blocked by a desk behind which sat a negro. I asked if I could get a free bed. He answered, “You can for ten cents.”

Still on the street, I made my way to the Volunteers of America on Second Avenue, made an appeal for a bed, and was flatly denied that comfort unless I had twenty-five cents to pay for it.

So, touched by the lack of hospitality offered by “Christian” institutions in Pittsburg to an indigent man, I looked straight at this Volunteer, and said earnestly, “Is there no place in all this great city where a destitute man can find an asylum for only one night?” and started for the door. I think my ardent manner created a little suspicion, for he called me back and said, “You might ask the Captain; he is out there holding service in the street.”

I stepped out just as they concluded their service. I addressed one of the followers and asked for the Captain. “He has just gone,” was the answer, “but what do you want of him?”

“I am without means, and I wanted to know if he would give me a bed for the night.”

The follower said, “No, I don’t think we can, but I can give you work. Do you want work?”

“I do, where is it, and what is it?”

The work proved to be driving one of their wagons four miles out in the country. 110

“And what do they pay?” I asked.

“I don’t know.”

I said, “It is late and I am tired, and I want to be taken care of just for to-night. I may find work at my trade to-morrow. Do you see?”

He replied with a sneer, “Oh, yes I see,” and abruptly turned his back upon me and went in to pray. All that was left for me was the public park.

Pittsburg has no breathing spots, squares, or parks down in the city, although there is a large fine park, I am told, several miles out. Just across the Allegheny River in Allegheny City (Greater Pittsburg) is a beautiful park with many statues, fountains, flowers, and trees; but I must cross the bridge and the toll was one cent. I reached down in my jeans for my last penny, paid my toll, and went over. How lucky I was in having that one last penny! It was one of the places where “the penny counts.” I had been told during the day that one of the inducements offered to Allegheny City for coming into Pittsburg was that this toll, a mighty revenue, would be abolished, but as yet it still exists.

What a night of midsummer beauty it was! No singer ever sung, or artist ever portrayed, a fairer scene! I was very tired and hungry, and dropped down on a seat to rest. “And the cares that infest the day seem to fold up their tents like the Arabs and as silently steal away.” I could have 111
dropped to sleep and slept with the peace of a little child; with no covering but the boughs of the green trees, with no watcher but the stars in the sea of blue above me, with no company but the song of the night bird that could sing all night.

Many people were seated on the benches. Near me were two men. I drew a little nearer to them and engaged them in conversation.

“Are you out of a job, too?” one of them asked. “You can’t remain here all night, if you are thinking of sleeping in the park, for the police will drive you out. This would be a fine place to rest, wouldn’t it? We would like to remain here until daylight. We have work promised us at Homestead. We might as well walk out there to-night, and go before we are told to go.” The last words were to his partner. They turned to me again saying, “Good-night, old man, hope you’ll have luck,” and were gone.

I then walked a long way up the park, noticing that already it had been cleared of its weary ones, that they had been driven from these haunts of nature back into the black holes of the city. I saw but one old white-haired man sitting with his head in his hands, sound asleep.

I stepped up to him, and touching him, said, “Why don’t you lie down on the bench and sleep; you would rest so much more comfortably?”

He awoke with a startled look, and said, “I am afraid.” 112

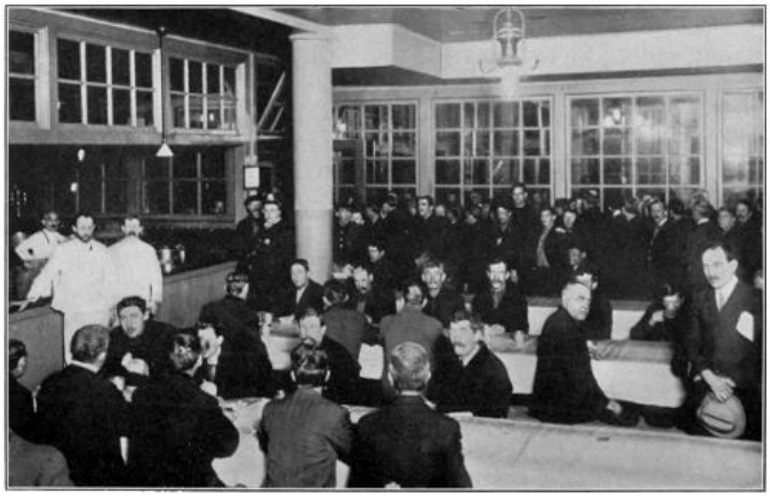
“Afraid of what?”

In a frightened manner he replied, “I don’t know.”

I knew he was afraid of the police.

“I don’t think anyone will trouble you.” He laid his old, exhausted, worn-out frame down upon the seat, and was almost immediately lost in the slumber he so needed. I had left him but a moment when I saw a policeman in the distance who stopped and viewed me closely, then turned and went in the direction of the old man. I was inclined to follow him, but I did not dare, nor could I wait to see the pathetic finish. I strolled back down the park and saw by a light in a distant tower that it was midnight. The park seemed utterly deserted but for a dog sleeping under a bush.

I went back to the gate by which I had entered, and sat down near it. Between there and the bridge was the part of the city given over to dens of vice, which are open all night, among them being scattered places of legitimate business which are open only in the light of day, and in the night afford a deeper shelter for crime and the criminal. I took a seat near the entrance thinking that I would wait until an officer came along, and get an actual example of his treatment to a man in my position.



MUNICIPAL Lodging House, New York City
Men’s Dining Room

The moon was setting behind the towers of the city. The shadows were lengthening; that part of 113
the city near at hand looked grewsome. The park was silent and somber. As I waited I saw two men standing in the shadow just outside the park; from their manner, I knew they were discussing me. Presently they started through the entrance toward me, and as they did so one of the men put his hand in his lower coat pocket. Half protruding from the pocket I caught the gleam of a revolver. As they approached, my heart for a moment seemed to stand still. I did not dare to run or cry out. I simply arose and stood behind the bench. They walked rapidly and directly toward me. When they came near enough to observe me closely they stopped. Then one of them said in a disgusted manner, “I told you so; it’s only a hobo,” and they hurriedly turned and left me.

I had to get back to Pittsburg, and learn what it means to the fullest to be a homeless man in this great industrial center. It came to me that I had spent my last penny coming over. How could I get back? Surely it was the place where the penny counts! During the day I had been told that the only free crossing between Pittsburg and Allegheny was the railroad bridge, used by the railroad employees. I must find that. In spite of my startling experience, I was compelled to thread the gloom of this black part of the city to find the bridge.

I found it and started to walk the ties, fearing at any moment that the headlight of a fast approaching train might flash upon me. Suddenly I slipped on an oiled tie, falling. In the darkness 114
I threw out my hand, clutching an iron rod. In my stumble I discovered for the first time that two planks had been laid on the side of the bridge where one could safely walk. With a feeling of relief and security, I quickly stepped upon them, and the rest of my walk upon the bridge was filled with a feeling of gratitude for my escape.

Shortly after crossing the bridge, I saw a policeman and asked him where I could get a free bed, or if I would be allowed to sleep in the park. He gave me a severe look and in a harsh manner said, “No, there is no free beds in this town, and you can’t sleep in the park, either.”

I said I knew some people on Fifth Avenue who, perhaps, would take me in, but I did not care to trouble them at that hour. I asked him the way to the Avenue and he directed me. I had gone scarcely half a block when he commanded me to stop.

He came up to me and said roughly, “Who are you, anyway? I don’t believe you have a place to go.”

I replied that I was an honest man.

“What is your business? What do you do?” were his next questions.

With no other thought, except that I must answer something, I told him that I was a carpenter. He started to search me and all he found was the carpenter’s rule and the nail which I had picked up the previous day. 115

After that process, which by the way was quite illegal, he softened toward me somewhat and said, “Well, you seem to be an honest man, and if you have no other place to go you can go to the city prison,” and pointing to a bright light some distance down an alley, added, “It is over there. They’ll give you a cell.”

With his eye upon me, in spite of some hesitation I had to go as he directed. I reached the prison and entered, and, as I had done in other cities, asked for a place to lie down until daylight.

I was asked no questions. The night sergeant simply said, “Come this way,” and he locked me in a cell which, although it was not of the bull-pen type, was little better than one in its general appearance and condition of uncleanliness. The only places in it where I could lie down were the floor or an iron slab which partly covered the lantine. I could hear the groanings of the unfortunate men and women who, for reasons of their own, were compelled to spend their nights in prison. I could hear other prisoners appealing to the jailers for medical aid, water, or release from their cells. One young fellow in a cell opposite mine, for about two hours hung in one position to the bars of his cell in an endeavor to attract some attention. Every little while I heard the crying of a young girl, one who had “forgotten her mother and her God.” 116

Never in any prison did I feel such oppression. I came near swooning. The thread of endurance as I lay on the stone floor snapped, and the darkness that came upon me brought forgetfullness.

My sleep was of short duration. Long before daylight I asked to be released. The jailer, who seemed to hold a spark of humanity, said, “I wouldn’t go out if I were you for the police are liable to pick you up.” Shortly after dawn I was released.

Taking my belongings from my lodging house I left for more comfortable quarters. After a refreshing bath and a restful sleep I interviewed the Mayor of Pittsburg and the members of the City Council, and gave an interview to the newspapers.

On the following morning, while passing by a newspaper office, I noticed on the bulletin board a headliner reading:

“Free beds for the homeless poor of Pittsburg.”

CHAPTER XII

Omaha and Her Homeless

117

"A good mayor is useful; a man should not recoil before the good he may be able to do."—Hugo.

In the Antelope State, on the Big Muddy River, on a plateau rising from the west bank of the river is built the city of Omaha, the metropolis of the State, with a population of 150,000 people. Omaha was called the "Gate City" on account of its important commercial position when it was founded in 1854. It was one of the first to breathe of the mighty progress of civilization in our great West; and, like all of our growing Western cities, is eminently an industrial center—meat packing, breweries, smelters, machine shops, brick yards,—and it is an important railway center. Because of all of this, it continually beckons through its portals a vast number of the army of the seekers after work. Omaha, too, boasts of its culture and humanity, and of a social distinction around which cluster names which in the years to come will be intimately connected with the history of the country.

118

I reached Omaha on a Sunday morning in September. What a gloomy day for the penniless toiler this God's day is, in the great city, when unwashed, unfed, and homeless, he walks the streets! All places for obtaining work are closed and he can simply drift until Monday morning, when industrial activity is resumed.

I found the city of Omaha spending thousands of dollars for the entertainment and amusement of visitors to the annual convention of a great fraternal organization. While its stores and blocks and public buildings had been placed on dress parade with gaudy decorations, and while the glad hand of hospitality was stretched out to these guests from thousands of its citizens, there was no welcome for the honest laborer who might happen to be homeless and penniless within its gates, and no provision for him but the filthy concrete floor of the huge steel cages, beneath the crumbling plastered walls of the city jail.

I walked down the darker streets in the lower part of the city where the out-of-work are forced to gather. In Boston I thought I had never seen such a gathering of human misery as I found on Boston Common, but nowhere have I found that condition so evident in a smaller way than in Omaha.

119

Approaching a policeman, I asked for the public baths. It was my first test to find out what our Western cities were doing to provide that great sanitary necessity. I was told there was "nothing doing," and the policeman glanced significantly towards the "Big Muddy." I do not know of a single public bath west of Chicago except in Denver.

I then decided to try for the first time the Young Men's Christian Association, which poses as an institution assisting those needing help, and which is supported by benevolently inclined contributors and its income enhanced in the same way. When I applied at the Omaha Y. M. C. A. for a free bed and bath, a most affable, well-dressed, neat-looking clerk behind the desk assured me nothing would give him greater pleasure than to accommodate me, but their beds and rooms were fixed up "pretty nicely," in fact, too nicely to be given away. Then I asked for a bath, and he assured me that was a member's privilege only.

I then sought the Salvation Army. My answer there was to the effect that if they gave fellows like me free beds they would be overrun every night.

Next I went to the Union Gospel Mission on Douglas Street. The door to the lodging house upstairs was locked. Downstairs a gospel meeting was being held. I waited until the meeting was concluded. The dormitory was not open, there were bright lights there, and people were going to their beds. I approached the attendant, who was closing the door, and asked him if he would give me a bed. He kept right on closing the door in my face, meanwhile saying that he wished that he had a free bed himself, that he slept in the street when he hadn't "the price."

120

I then applied to members of the Volunteers of America. They could do nothing for me as they had no lodging house, but thought I might find shelter at the City Mission. I went there and found the place locked and dark. It was a reception about as cordial as that which I received once at Genoa where I went to visit the birthplace of Columbus. After standing on tiptoe reaching up and ringing the bell of that curious house for about five minutes a barber stepped out of the house next door and said in a mixture of Italian and broken English: "Eh, Miestro Colombo, eh not-a-to-home. No ring-a-de bell so damn-a loud. Miestro Colombo eh dead, all a-right dead,—yes-a-four hundred years!"

Later with two or three other "down and outs," I lay down on the grass in Jefferson Park. Very soon a policeman came along and drove us out. "How many times have I got to tell you fellows to get out of here? Now, *get* out of here!"

A short time afterward I met another policeman and asked him where I could get a free bed, telling him I was broke. He looked at me rather savagely and said, "You can't get nothing like that in this town." Then he added, "You might go to the city jail, but it is chock full now that the car strike is on."

By this time it was midnight. From down in the lower part of the city I saw a man standing listlessly on the curbing. In a moment he sat down. I strolled along and sat down beside him. He was penniless, starving, had eaten nothing since morning, and had no place to rest, but he was not hopeless. In fact, he was in a rather happy mood, for he had a place to work ten miles out in the country, on a farm for one dollar and a half a day and board, and if he made good it would be an all winter job. Soon after daybreak he was going to start out. When I told him I, too, was without a place to sleep, he told me I was welcome to his blankets which he had down in an old shed under the tracks where the owner had let him spread them down the night before. He doubted, however, whether I could stand it. 121

“I tried it last night, but if there was one I believe there were ten thousand rats infesting the place. I was fearful of losing myself for one minute for fear they might attack me, and so I spent the night just as I am spending this one. The farmer did not want me to come out until Monday morning, although I wanted to go out Saturday with him when he hired me.”

Thoroughly tired out, I bade my hopeful midnight acquaintance good-night, and sought my hotel. As I lay in my comfortable bed I thought of the homeless, moneyless ones who belonged to Omaha that night and who were shelterless and hungry.

The next day I visited the City Jail. There I found eight ten-by-ten cells, the bull-pens. Crowded into a single one of these, I counted fourteen men. The shocking closeness of the place was stifling, and I hurried out. 122

I saw, far up the street, a great mob pressing down, and as soon as I got within hearing and seeing distance, I made out two men driving a team of horses hitched to an old wagon partly filled with potatoes. The men were driving directly down the car track, hindering the traffic of the cars. Two policemen stood back of these men trying to get hold of the lines, and they were beating them or trying to beat them into insensibility. The men’s shirts were torn into shreds and the blood ran down over their faces and over their clothes to the bottom of the wagon. I did not find what the trouble was about, but it was as though I had caught a leaf from those other days of social unrest, when the poor of France cried for bread, and the thoughtless paid so dearly for their folly.

There was no place for a homeless man in Omaha that night—not even in the city jail. A strike was on.

CHAPTER XIII

San Francisco—The Mission, the Prison, and the Homeless

"Liberty to the captive, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound."—Isaiah 61:1.

Having received many letters from the Pacific Coast inviting me to come that way, and having heard what a Mecca for the itinerate worker it was, I felt impelled to investigate the "Commercial Emporium" of the Western shore. I had already made my appeal to Salt Lake City, so I went directly through from Denver to the "Golden Gate." I arrived in San Francisco, one of the most wonderful and beautiful cities in all the world, on Monday, February 8, and began at once my serious study of the problem I had come to investigate—the problem of the man who works but who may be playing in hard luck; the penniless man temporarily out of a job; the unfortunate boy seeking work far from home.

I found the wheels of progress and industry in the city exceedingly active and bright; yet I found a great many men out of work. The employment offices were crowded to overflowing. I found the men at the head of these institutions perfectly willing to get a man a job at thirty dollars a month, for a fee of two dollars and a half, or fifteen dollars a month for a fee of one dollar and a half, but they refused point-blank to tide a man over, that is, to trust him for the fee until he drew his first pay.

I stood one morning in one of the employment offices in this great city and counted there two hundred workingmen, looking for work. By my side was a boy, hungry, homeless, penniless, who could not go to work because he had not the price to pay for that privilege. Until he could get the price, he must beg, steal, or continue to starve. His shelter two nights before had been divided between the doorway of a freight house and the city prison, and the previous night in a "free flop" mission.

"I am not clean," he said, "I am soiled and ragged and no one wants me around," and added, "God, if I could only get rid of the things that were given me last night, without money and without price."

I said to him, "Go to the public bath," and he asked with an expectant look on his face, "Where is it?" I replied, "I don't know," and he said, "Even though I took a bath, these are the only clothes I have, and they must be cleaned."

I did just what ten thousands of the good citizens of San Francisco are doing every day, I helped the temporal needs of that boy; but it was a wasted effort, and I knew it, for the next night he may have fared doubly worse than this one.

The boy told me a bit of his life's history and the reason for his condition. He told it in such a clear, straightforward way, he impressed me that he was telling the truth.

"My father is a merchant in Ohio and fairly well-to-do. I had a position in one of my home town banks as assistant teller and bookkeeper, getting seventy-five dollars a month. Although I am but eighteen years of age I felt I was capable and ought to be earning more money. The institution I was working for felt they could not afford to raise my wages, and having a friend coming West, and also having that dream for the West, all of us Eastern boys have, and having fine letters of merit, I thought I could better myself, and I left, coming directly through to San Francisco. My ticket, however, was good to Los Angeles.

"After spending ten days here, I found it was impossible to get work in my line of business even though I offered to take much less than I was getting at home. Realizing that my money was fast slipping away, I went on to Los Angeles, where I found even a more discouraging condition than here.

"I made up my mind I would endure anything before I would ask assistance from home, and so I filled my letters with tales of prosperity and wonderful prospects. But finally, my money was all gone as well as my personal effects, including two hundred dollars worth of fine clothes, which the pawnshops got for a few dollars. My chum had returned East, and then I began to look for anything to do. I started into the country. The hardships I have endured in trying to live and find work in the California cities would fill a book, but the hardest experience of all was at Santa Anna, where I was arrested and thrown into the Santa Anna jail for ten days, for illegally attaching myself to the Santa Fe Railway, and aimlessly wandering about with no visible means of support, and no objective place in view. I lost my hat the afternoon I was arrested in Santa Anna, and when I left the sheriff gave me this one. It was a pretty good 'lid' when he gave it to me. And so I made my way back here, and if I don't strike something to do to-morrow I am going into the army. They will have to write Dad and get his consent. They will take care of me until they hear from him. Goodbye, old man, thanks to you, I am all right now until I hear from home."

Here was a young man, strictly temperate, without one visible evil habit, a young man of brain, brawn, grit; just such boys as California wants, needs, and should help and keep, and it had no place for him!

The rest of that day I tramped the streets looking for work, and I inquired at a hundred places, I

think, where work was going on, but all places seemed filled and no one seemed to want me—at least not that afternoon. At several restaurants they offered to let me help wash dishes for something to eat.

I could have begged, it is true, without being arrested, as the labor Mayor at that time was in every sense a humanitarian, and soon after taking office had issued a mandate to his police department to molest no one on the street asking alms. When remonstrated with, he said, “We may be imposed upon many times, but I would rather help twenty dishonest men than turn down one honest one.”

The spirit of alms-giving in San Francisco was markedly noticeable, and I asked a man whom I saw hand a dollar to a man who asked for aid, why that spirit was so active. He replied, “If you had been here and gone through the terrible earthquake with us, you would fully understand. We were all dependent on one another at that time. We have all realized what it means to be homeless. We have not forgotten.”

This observation seemed to apply only to the Mayor’s order and to the citizens in general as I met them on the street; for I found the religious bodies of an entirely different nature,—those at least, with which I came in contact, not being remarkably generous.

The night was coming down. It was exceedingly ominous to a destitute man. It had begun to storm, with a commingling of rain and snow, and a chilly blast from the ocean. 128

Myriads of lights came out like a burst of good cheer from the Ferry House to Golden Gate Park, but they held no warmth for the penniless, thinly clothed man. The restaurant windows seemed to glow with good things. I saw many, very many boys and men, and occasionally a poorly clad girl, stand and look longingly at the tempting viands. I saw one young fellow down on Third Street standing before a cheap but exceedingly clean restaurant, whose windows were filled with tempting, wholesome food. I stopped and watched him. Among the passing crowd was a workingman with a dinner pail. The young man reluctantly, it seemed to me, asked of him a dime. The workingman strode on, but had gone only a few steps when he turned back. Stepping up to the young fellow, he put his arm about his shoulder and said, “What would you do with the dime if I gave it to you?” The penniless man’s face beamed with joy and appreciation of the sympathy shown, as he said, “I would buy something to eat.” The workingman gave him a quarter, a part of his day’s wages, and the hungry man entered the restaurant, and ate as though he had been denied that blessing for a very long time. The workingman, as he went his way, I heard whistling far down the street.

“The Small Dark Door Leads down under the Sidewalk and Saloon. San Francisco Free-flop of Whosoever-Will-Mission”

In this incident I saw in imagination the spirit of San Francisco’s beautiful Municipal Lodging House, with its food, shelter, bath, and medical attention, building up of character, good citizenship, and making for good government. I felt that the spirit of kindness shown by that workingman would be the crowning virtue of this new and wonderful Home. 129

It was getting late. I was very tired, and knew I must find shelter from the storm. I would not ask of anyone on the street the price of a bed. Someone out of pity might give me money he actually needed for himself. I decided to seek first some of the Good Samaritan institutions which make a business of helping the needy. But where they were I could only find out by inquiring of the policeman. I must approach them with all that dread and terror excited by the expectation of evil which all destitute men in our American “cities of liberty” come to look for at the hands of the police.

I approached an officer and asked him, “Can you tell a fellow where he can get a free bed?”

He did not look at me suspiciously; he did not take the law in his own hands by questioning me on the street; he simply placed his hand on my shoulder in a kindly way and said, “Right here is Kerney Street. Keep right down Kerney until you come to Pacific,—you can’t miss Pacific Street,

—and you will see the ‘Whosoever Will’ Mission. They have some kind of a ‘free flop’ there, but if they don’t take care of you, go to the city prison.” 130

It was eleven o’clock when I approached the "Whosoever Will" Mission. The meeting had just closed. I counted twenty men and boys standing on the street outside of the place. I slipped up to one of the boys and asked where the “free flop” was. He said, “About a block down the street.” I asked him, “What is the show for getting a free bed?” “Mighty poor,” he replied, “us fellows all got left. If you want a bed you have got to be here and go to the meeting and if you are lucky enough to get a ticket you can get a bed.”

Just then I glanced through the door and read an inscription, “He that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out.” In making a closer study of this institution, I found it in appearance a veritable Cleopatra’s Needle literally covered with quotations inside and out. I then asked where the lodging house was, and if he thought a man would stand any show of getting a bed without a ticket. He replied, “You might try,” and directed me to the “free flop” a block down the street on the corner. There I encountered about twenty more men standing idly about. Seeing a light through a door, I entered, believing I was entering the “free flop,” but found myself in a negro saloon frequented entirely by colored men. I went out again into the crowd, and stepped up to a thin, emaciated boy, a boy evidently dying with some lingering malady. I asked him where the 131
“flop” was, and he pointed down to the sidewalk and said, “It is under here, the entrance is there at the corner.” I slipped over to it, and found a very narrow and almost precipitous stairway leading down under the sidewalk and into a basement under the saloon. This stairway was absolutely gorged with human beings seeking shelter. After seeing that the sick boy had entered last and that I might force him back into the night, I entered, and when it was discovered, before I had scarcely gotten into the place, that I had no ticket, a big bully violently thrust me toward the door and in a loud voice shouted, “Get out of here,” and almost threw me up the “golden stairs” and back into the street.

Here I found a number of boys and men who, like myself, lingered about ticketless and shelterless. I said to one of them, “What are we going to do for a bed?” He replied, “I’ll tell you; you can get in if you will drop down that manhole, and once in you’ll be mixed up with the crowd and won’t be noticed. I let three fellows in that way the other night. It’s mighty heavy but I’ll hold it up till you drop down if you want to try it. But, say, I want to tell you if you ain’t got nothing on you, and you don’t want nothing on you, you’d better try the lumber yard. It isn’t so warm as down there, but it’s a great deal cleaner. That’s where I’m going.”

I was determined, however, to see this one free lodging house of San Francisco, but I hesitated 132
for just a moment. I wasn’t quite sure where I might land, and if I was discovered neither was I quite sure that I might not be murdered. But my fear quickly passed and I said, “All right, lift her up,” and down I went. I did not have far to drop, and found myself in that portion of the “heavenly flop” under the negro saloon where hell overhead was already making the night hideous. Between the cracks in the old board floor I could see the light of the saloon shining through. I made no attempt at trying to get a bed. All I wanted was to make a few notes and get out.

The room where I found myself was filled with double board bunks, the upper bunks coming so near the ceiling, or floor of the saloon above, that a man could just crawl into them. Some of these poor objects were making an attempt to get a bath from a shower in a corner, but even if they succeeded in getting this excuse for a bath, they were obliged to crawl back into their filthy clothes or onto the still more filthy bunks. Some men, under the sidewalk, I saw spread out old newspapers on the boards, and lie down unwashed and unfed in their wretchedness.

Slipping out as quickly as possible, unnoticed, I reached the street. The night air and open street was as a pleasant dream which follows the waking hours of one who suffers.

At the Salvation Army the attendant told me he was not authorized to give anything away, and all 133
that was left me was the old city prison.

Threading up an alley, I found myself at the Old Bastile of San Francisco. The keeper at the door said he would allow me to lie down in the cell house, but first he must be assured I had neither knife, gun, or razor upon me. Satisfied I was not an escaped lunatic, or a desperado with an arsenal concealed about me, I was turned over to the turnkey, who led me to the chamber of horrors, a long room about sixty by thirty feet. In the center was a row of large cells, or “drunk tanks,” in which were being thrown the unfortunates of both sexes in all degrees of insanity, from the raving delirium tremens to the semi-idiots, the fighting drunks, the laughing drunks, the sick drunks and the sleeping drunks. The jailer pointing to a pile of blankets, said, “Take one of those and find a place to spread it down.” The lodgers were allowed to lie down on the stone floor in the narrow passage which surrounded this row of cells. The passage was so narrow that they had to lie in single file, which left just space enough to walk between them and the cells. I seized a blanket; there seemed to be just one space left.

If you have ever been in an insane asylum, or in a cell house of your States prison, where some unusual sound startles and terrifies the inmates, you can frame some idea of what it means to 134
sleep around the “drunk tanks” in the city prison. Women with disarranged clothing, and disheveled hair, were pleading and babbling, and begging to be released, declaring they could not breathe, and in piercing tones crying that they were suffocating. Strange as it may seem, these women this night were more or less refined in voice and language, and the most vile and vulgar epithets hurled at them by the men derelicts in the adjoining cells met with no response. Men raved and fought, and cursed and groaned. The jailer was kept busy separating them. As he

was forcing an aggressive prisoner from one cell to another, the toe of the unfortunate caught me in the side, which left me a sore and stinging remembrance of that awful night for several days.

When the call came to the lodgers to get out, it was like a voice from the immediate presence of God. We were each given a piece of bread and a cup of stuff called coffee. The jailer, George McLaughlin, was a man of cast-iron decision and gruffness, yet under the most trying circumstances his actions toward these troublesome unfortunates were exceedingly kind. As we drifted out of the Old Bastile, he gave us each a word of good luck and a cheerful farewell. It was a jail, yes, and no man can ever sleep in a jail and keep his self-respect, but we were welcome and not cast out.

San Francisco is at work. She has sent her delegation to New York City to inspect its beautiful and wonderful Municipal Lodging House. The delegates returned completely won over to the idea. San Francisco will soon have its Emergency Municipal Home.

CHAPTER XIV

Experiences in Los Angeles

"Ye are not of the night nor the darkness."—I Thessalonians 5:5.

On one of Los Angeles' perfect winter Sabbath mornings, I was idly strolling down the street, when a breezy, pleasant faced woman appeared, looked at me closely and then asked if I was homeless. The genial little lady urged me with a great deal of force to come to the institution in which she was interested, and where, she assured me, I would be well fed and sheltered as long as I chose to stay. So pleasant was the description of her home, her welcome so genuine, I rejoiced in the thought that here in hospitable Los Angeles was provided an emergency home for those with whom untoward circumstances had not dealt kindly.

I was interested at once in the invitation so kindly extended to me, and I asked the good woman how I would get to the "home." She began by telling me which street-car to take. I said, "Just give me the street and number and I will walk." She answered, "I can not do that very well." She explained to me that she would give me carfare but was not allowed to do so. There was another woman a little further down the street who could and would give me the required nickel. Walking on down the street, I was told by a man standing on the sidewalk that there had been several women on the corner urging men to come out to a free home, and giving out carfare, but they would not return until the next Sunday morning.

Following the woman's directions, I took a car. After riding what I supposed to be about two miles, I asked the conductor if we were nearly there; he laughingly replied, "We haven't started yet." And then I found that this "home" was nearly four miles from the place where laborers congregated in the heart of the city. A four-mile walk—a pleasant prospect for a hunger-weakened man, perhaps ill as well!

On finally reaching the place, I found it an institution of some kind of religious enthusiasts. There were many there. It was one of their feast days, and the end of the dinner was near at hand. I was given a cordial welcome, and handed a plate of potatoes and beans. Tea, coffee, and meat I learned they regarded as sinful, smacking too much of the flesh.

This plate of potatoes and beans, the leader declared, was sanctified food. On this feast day there had been a shower of pies and cakes, but the sanctified pie had run out. We were invited to remain to a four-hour feast of religious worship, which would be followed by another feast of edibles. As this latter attraction was referred to many times, we had reason to believe a regular Belshazzar was in store for us. Out in a sort of shed, after four long hours of religious praise, in a din of sound of voice and song, beneath swinging collections of crutches and pipes and bottles, we were called to the promised supper. Back into the banquet hall? Oh, no! But we carried the backless benches in from the shed, and placed them in a row along by the back or kitchen door of the house. I noticed there were only about half seats enough for the guests, so that one half stood while they waited, and it was nearly an hour from the time we began to gather for the much heralded "full meal" before we were served.

The weather had changed. At the going down of the sun, in southern semi-tropical climes in midwinter, there is a penetrating chill in the air. Cold mist and rain is of frequent occurrence. With the fast falling night had come a chilling fog cloud. It was an appalling, an appealing, a heart-rending, cruel sight, this company of two hundred and fifty men. There were no women among them.

As these destitute men stood there, half-clothed, enveloped in the vapor of the coming night, I read, on almost every face, despair and hopeless grief. I judged that a great many of them were tubercular, or the thin emaciated faces may have been evidences of exposure and want. I, too, was suffering with the cold, and I turned to a strong, healthy young fellow near me and said to him, "That cup of hot coffee will receive a hearty welcome." Just then an attendant came out of the kitchen with a very large pitcher and filled it with cold water from the hydrant. My interlocutor turned and laughingly remarked, "Jack, there is your hot coffee!" Then the chief leader of this spiritual beneficence appeared, rubbing his hands together, and said to a visiting brother as he glanced down the line, "Isn't this glorious?"

After more prayer, they came to us bringing what they called sandwiches, one for each man. These "sandwiches" were two very thin slices of bread, between which they had put a touch of some sour sort of sauce, and with each one was given a *cup of cold water*. A gaunt, sunken-eyed man, with white trembling hands, said to me, "I am afraid there won't be enough to go around and we won't get any." But we got ours, and he swallowed it almost in a mouthful. I held mine waiting for an excuse to give it to him, and soon he asked me, "Aren't you going to eat yours?" I replied, "No, I do not like the sauce between the bread." I shall never forget how eagerly the thin hand grasped the slice, as he exclaimed, "I would give a fortune, if I had it, for a cup of hot coffee!" And then some hungry wretch spoke up, saying, "If Christ was on earth today, I think he would have changed that cup of cold water, given in his name, to hot coffee." I asked this starving man if he could not find work, and if he had no trade. "Yes," he answered, "I am a lather, but since they use the steel laths it is hard for us to get the work we formerly did. Besides," he continued, "I am not young any longer nor strong enough to keep steadily at work as I once

could, even though I now had the work to do. I came down here believing I could get work, easy work, out-doors in the fruit and orange groves, which would be beneficial to my health, but the fruit trust hire all Japs because they can get them cheaper, and, even though I have offered to work as cheaply as they do, they will not hire me."

The day was done and this little drift of the flotsam and jetsam of Los Angeles floated back to the city to buffet with chance and luck for a place to sleep.

When I first arrived at the "institution," I asked for the privilege of staying until I could help myself. The attendant told me he would see me after the service. As nothing was said to me again nor any of us urged or asked to remain, and being obliged to find something to eat, I left. As we went away, each man was offered a nickel for carfare, and I said to the helper who doled out the nickels, "Will you give me another to come back on? I must go to the city to look for work." But I found he couldn't think of such a thing. 141

No doubt, on the minds of the gullible rich and charitably inclined who contribute to such institutions, the report of this feast day and of the great number "fed" must have made a great impression. These people were teaching Christ, too, as they understood or pretended to understand Him. On this day, if they had found one man of character strong enough to accept and follow the beautiful Christ Life, was it not worth while? From their standpoint, yes, but they overlooked utterly the sin of continuing the pauperization of those two hundred and fifty men, by their makeshift charity. During their four hours of praise and prayer and "testimony," not one single word was said about the causes that compelled those men to be there. Nor a single remedy was mentioned to change conditions, nor a word uttered against the methods used by religious societies, missions, single and associated charities, prison associations, societies for the prevention of crime and mendicancy, in their dealings with mendicancy.

It was after dark when I again reached the city. The rain had ceased, and the myriads of scintillating lights filled the city with a glow of splendor. I began my testing of the generosity of the city of Los Angeles toward its destitute homeless. As in other cities, I met with rebuffs at all of those institutions and religious bodies ostensibly existing for the sole purpose of helping the homeless. I tried all that I had heard of or that the police knew anything about. Finally, as I had been in other cities, I was driven to the Municipal building provided for law-breakers and criminals. As I sat there waiting for the jailer to lock me in, I thought of the frightful night spent in the bullpens of other places,—of the nerve-racking night when I came so near swooning in the city prison of Pittsburg, and last but not least, of that madhouse, the Old Bastile of San Francisco. As I heard the clang of iron doors, and in the distance the cursing of men and the cry of lost women, I said to myself, "I don't think it necessary for me to go through this terrible trial to bring before the good people of Los Angeles the need of a Municipal Emergency Home," and I quietly crept away. 142

On the following Sunday, I addressed the Y. M. C. A., and I told them of my experiences in Los Angeles. I spoke of going first to one very prominent institution and of being denied any of its privileges for less than thirty cents, in real money. I did not give the name of the establishment and when I had finished, one of the officers of this body got up and said, "If Mr. Brown had come here he would have been taken care of." I replied, "This was the first place I came to." After they had caught their breath, he haltingly said, "But Mr. Brown, you did not see the right man."

I found in Los Angeles, as in every other city that I visited, that the Y. M. C. A. is nothing more nor less than a rich men's club. I found men worth a great many thousands of dollars rooming there. They paid from thirty to fifty dollars a month for their rooms. And I found boys on small salaries also living there but living on one and two meals a day, in order to be able to pay their paltry room rent. 143

CHAPTER XV

In Portland

"To live honestly by one's own toil, what a favor of Heaven!"—Hugo.

"Dell me, vhere I find me a lawyer?" In broken accents, these words came to me from a German laborer who stepped up to me out of five hundred unemployed men who thronged Second Street in the vicinity of the labor bureaus.

"I am a lawyer," I responded; "what is the trouble?"

With an amused expression, eyeing closely my blue jeans, he said, "You vas not a lawyer."

"No," I answered, "I am not a lawyer, but tell me your name, and what is your trouble, and perhaps I can find you one."

"My name is Steve Goebel. Vell, I dell you, I go there," pointing to the employment office near at hand, "seven days ago, und I pay two tollars for a job at lumber camp Rainier, fifty, maybe seventy, mile avay. I pay my fare out there. I vork six days und six hours for vun seventy-five a day, ten hour a day, den dey dell me dey no vant me no more. I work so hard in rain und vet, und I vear mein clothes out, und I pay five tollars a veek board. Vhen dey dell me dey no vant me no more dey offer me dhree tollars for my six days und six hours' work. I owe the commis, vhat you call it, fifteen cents for leedle tobac. Den dey take from me vun tollar hospital fee und dhree tollar poll tax, they say, or road tax, und offer me dhree tollar. I not take dot dhree tollar,—somevun dey rob me. I hafe leedle money. I come back part vay on boat, as far as my leedle money bring me, den I valk back here. I dell the office how I get treated und dey says nefer mind, ve get you anoder job, but I say I valk all night, I am hungry, den dey give me den cents for breakfast."

I took this man to the office of the City Attorney and left him there to tell his story. I afterwards repeated the story to one of the leading newspaper writers of the city. He looked at me very earnestly, and said, "Do you think there will be a thing done about it?" I looked at him without reply, and he continued, "There won't be a thing done. There is no law for the poor man here."

MUNICIPAL Lodging House, New York City
Women's and Children's Dining Room

The man had been robbed in as low and cowardly a manner as only a most depraved degenerate could be guilty of. Portland had helped to make that man destitute, and now he is forced to beg, steal or starve, until he finds another job, or perhaps, through desperation takes his life. Similar experiences in Portland have forced a great many to do that very thing. Several men have been found dead in a pretty green square in the heart of Portland's breathing spot, called the Plaza, and postmortem examinations have revealed nothing in their stomachs. And these tragedies have taken place almost within a stone's throw of the Associated Charities.

A great pile of water and pitch-soaked blocks of kindling wood was piled in front of No. 10 North Second Street, a Jap restaurant. Some of the blocks were so heavy it was with difficulty they could be carried even singly. The wood belonged to the Japs. An old man, an American, some sixty odd years of age, was carrying it in. I asked him if he did not want a helper. He said, "I would like a helper but there is so little in it and there is not enough for two. I am carrying this all in for thirty cents and it will take me, I think, three hours."

This old man had a good, kind face, and his clothes, though worn, were clean. He continued, "I have been playing in a little hard luck of late and must get all out of my work possible." I then asked him if he had breakfasted. He had not. I said, "I have a little money, come and have some breakfast and carry in the wood afterward." He said, "No, I won't take your money, I will soon be

through here and get my pay.”

I was seated in Tragedy Square (the Plaza), near a neat, well-dressed young man, and while 147
sitting there two young girls about sixteen or seventeen years of age came out of a door across the street, and passed through the Square. The young man remarked:

“Do you see those two young women? They have just come out of the Woman’s Department of the Free Labor Office. You can tell from their appearance they are honest girls, but they would sell all that is dear to them, even their purity, for something to eat and a place to sleep. I may be wrong but from their appearance I feel it is true.”

Stunned as by a blow, at the words from the lips of this stranger, with noticeable feeling I said, “That can’t be possible. In this city of wealth, whose citizens boast of their refinement, their reasonableness, and their kindliness!”

“I know whereof I speak,” he answered, “for I have a girl friend whom I have been helping for over a year. Just recently she confessed to me why she forgot the teachings of her childhood and mother, why she forgot her dream of being honorably married and becoming all that her mother was. She said, it was because she was hungry and had no place to sleep. She could not ask for charity or beg. ‘I didn’t know where or how to beg,’ she said, ‘but then I met you and you were kind to me.’ I did not know this when I met that girl. I thought she was what she was from choice and not from necessity.”

As he got up to leave he said, “I am going to marry her and she shall be all that God intended her 148
to be. I am going to help her, but there are many, very many girls who come to Portland, and who, through lack of life’s necessities, are forced to forget.”

And this instance could be multiplied a thousand times, and in a thousand ways, in a thousand cities.

In the afternoon, I began to look for work. I found that no privileges existed for labor; that the destitute working man, the man who was “broke,” was forced to seek shelter where the homeless dog and rat seeks shelter. Men here, as in other cities, were forced to the fermenting refuse thrown from stables because it held warmth! Often men slept out in the open air behind billboards and in a hundred other deplorable places, where they could get a little rest unless discovered by the police and thrown into jail.

In my search for work, I went to the offices of the Portland Light, Power and Electric Railway Company. I asked the clerk what show there was to get work as motorman or conductor. He answered, “pretty slim.” Nevertheless, he asked how old I was. When I told him, he said there was no work for me, that there was a brotherhood of the railway employees which was an adjunct to the company and one of its rules was not to hire a man over forty. I said, “It is true, I am fifty, but I am just as strong and well, able-bodied and competent as I was at twenty-five.” But that 149
made no difference. I then asked, "If I were of an eligible age and you should give me work, what do you pay?" He said, “You are expected to work the first ten days for nothing. Then you receive twenty-four cents an hour for five years, then thirty cents as long as you live and work.” I said, “I am broke, and even though I were of an age to be chosen, I would be giving my time to you during those ten days, and a man will starve to death in nine.”

A man who looks for work does not lose his worthiness, but the man who is forced to ask alms, to ask something for nothing, does.

I then took the part of a cringing, disgraced, dependent with nothing to lose and nothing to gain, except to try and keep God’s gift, the spark of life, until in my own opinion, at least, I could place myself in a position to be honorable. I knew that I would be looked upon suspiciously by the police, possibly thrown into jail; that in all of the places where I would ask for aid, they would look upon me as mean, base, low,—mental defective perhaps, or a victim of some awful habit. My poverty would be, of course, all my fault, as “there is no need of any one’s being poor.”

I first looked for the Associated Charities. I scanned the papers closely, not knowing but that they might advertise to give a destitute man or woman, boy or girl, a lift. Finding no notice, I found the place at last, after a good deal of difficulty. Reaching there at about five minutes after five, I 150
saw a sign on the door which told me they kept the usual “banking” hours, 9 A. M. to 5 P. M. I wondered whether, possibly, some one might not need a little help between 5 P. M. and 9 A. M.

The Y. M. C. A. here, also, had nothing to give an indigent man, any more than in the other cities where I had been.

Strolling down Burnside Street I came to an establishment with a sign, “People’s Institute,” over the door. I entered and asked for help. They had nothing to give away but religion. Yes, they had a reading-room, where a number of men sat reading in profound silence. Here I saw several other signs: “No Smoking,” “Do your reading here, your talking on the outside, but not at the door.”

I inquired where a man was supposed to talk, and was told that it was “in the park or a block down the street.”

I wandered down to the river. Glancing across to the other side I saw a huge sign, which read: “Salvation Army. Industrial Home.” I crossed the river and on reaching this work-house of faith and worship I saw that the lower floors were locked and dark. Climbing a stairway leading to the second story, I found myself in a rambling barrack. Hearing a noise in one of the rooms I made

my way there and found a man preparing supper. I told him of my hard luck, and that I was willing to work for it if I could get a lodging for the night and supper and breakfast. He went right on pealing his onions and potatoes, telling me decidedly that the meals were for the officers of the Army and he was not allowed to give anything away. The Industrial part of the "Salvation Army Industrial Home" seemed to have ceased to be at the finishing of that great sign. The Captain told me later, however, that if I had asked the right man I would have been helped, but that I had asked the cook. 151

For several hours I drifted around. In some of the "beer depots," as they call the saloons there, I found as many as two and three hundred men at one time. A policeman, whom I saw fulfilling his duty by driving a boy whom he suspected of being under age, from one of these resorts, directed me to two missions,—The Holy Rollers and the Portland Commons. Should I be denied shelter there, he told me to go to the jail, but added that I should not go there unless I was obliged to.

The Commons had a name which indicated that it was meant to serve all. I climbed the stairs to an office. The only man available about the place told me if I had been there and attended the service they might have done something for me. When I asked him if I could receive supper, bath, bed and breakfast by doing some service in return, he stared at me and asked me what kind of a place I thought they were running!

This is a simple statement of what a homeless man meets in Portland. If I had seen Staff Captain Bradley of the Salvation Army he would probably have given me a bed; or, had I come in contact with Mr. W. G. MacLaren of the Portland Commons, I would have been taken care of. I did not meet Captain Bradley after my investigation, but I did meet W. G. MacLaren, and found him a sincere Christian gentleman, doing a great deal to help those in need. I discovered, for the first time in my experience, a life-line running from the city jail to a mission, and the mission was Portland Commons. The night captain of the jail, Captain Slover, who ought to be chief of police of that city, was at one end of the line and W. G. MacLaren at the other. 152

Many discouraged, unfortunate workers have, through the efforts of these two men, become honored citizens. Both Captain Slover and Mr. MacLaren know that private and individual effort is a failure; that it is as one trying to dip the ocean dry; that under our national, municipal, social and political systems, their work is useless. These men believe in municipal ownership as far as taking care of those in need is concerned. They are strong advocates of a Municipal Emergency Home.

In Portland I found a boy who had been dragged at two o'clock in the morning from a delivery wagon where he was trying to sleep, and put in jail. Captain Slover sent him to the mission. On the street I saw another boy whom I had met in San Francisco a month before and who now was on his way to Tacoma, to which place his brother had written him to come, as he had a steady job for him with good pay. He had been pulled out of a freight car at three o'clock that morning and taken to jail. He told his story and they believed him. Afterward, while visiting that jail (the only Portland Municipal Lodging House) I found it such a filthy, disease- and crime-breeding institution that I wondered that the police themselves did not succumb. I found Russians thrown in there who were never in jail until they came to America. I saw the "drunk tanks" into which unfortunates were crowded and where, I was told, they were often found dead from suffocation. 153

On Sunday morning I attended the First Congregational Church. It was not the regular service but a sort of joint meeting with the Foreign Missionary Commission. The minister preached thirty minutes about how much he pitied the poor little dwarfed soul. I heard not a single word about trying to save the soul (and the body) of the hundreds of shelterless and hungry men in the city of Portland who were searching for the possibility of carving out an existence for themselves and those dependent upon them. In its neglect to care for these, the church seemed an accessory to death rather than to the uplift of unfortunate men and women.

During my entire work, I have been honored only once by being called upon by a minister and asked to speak in his church. "The Every Day Church," it is called, situated far out, almost in the suburbs, on the east side of Portland. Its pastor, Rev. James Diamond Corby, will surely be heard from in the near future. He is one of the men of the hour in that city. The *Oregonian*, the leading newspaper of Portland, which has been the bell sheep of Oregon for a great many years, and which thinks the jails and prisons of our country are too attractive and should be made less so, did advocate the establishment of a Municipal Emergency Home when I first went to Portland. On Easter Sunday morning, however, they crucified my idea and cartooned the Municipal Emergency Home, as the hairy hand of socialism tearing down the American flag! 154

Shortly after leaving Portland I received the following letter which speaks for itself. Do not fail to read the postscript.

"Portl Ore Jan 24 1910.

"Mr. Brown I read a artical of yours in the Sunday Oregonian on the Down and outs, belonging to that club I thought it might interest you to read this and therein you might solve the question, (what makes a tramp). I was born in Creston, Lancashire, Eng on the 27 of Nov 1876 my mother & father both died before I was four years old, and I was brought up with a family who we boarded with, my new mother was an angel, but her husband was a brute to me, but he was all right to his own children, but anytime I done wrong there was always that old song we ought to have sent you to the workhouse instead of trying to raise you to be a man. Notice what chance I had. At 10 years old I was put to work in one of those dreaded cotton mills, a half a day to school 155

and a half a day in hell to work till I was 13 years old and then I went in on full time. 3 more years of this slaving and I got a chance to come too U. S. and I jumped at the chance, a cousin of mine paying my fare too Woonsocket where some more of those hell holes of cotton mills are, and so again in too the cotton mills I went, but a little over a year of such wrongs, I seeked new fields. I run away and went to boston, mass, where one night finding myself stranded I went to the Municipal lodgins, and get a poor bed and some soup. God only knows what it was made of and the next morning I was out and hustling and having a natural love for a horse, around the sales stables I went and I found out a man could always pick up a piece of change runing horses up and down the streets and taking them down to depot, and geting warmed up one day and having no other clothes I caught cold which turned into pneumonia and I went to the city hospital. the treatment there was fine and I never will forget the face of my nurse. when I came out I was weak and scaled about 90. having no money that night I had to go to the Municipal loding, and I told the officer in charge about coming out of the hospital that morning and he asked me to show him my discharge papers and I handed them out to him and he looked at them and tore them up
156
right in front of my face, and said you — — — — your working the hospitals are you, and then he kicked me all the way down to the bath room and said he see that I sawed enough of wood in the morning, and he was there and after working a while I fell from weakness and the brute kicked me while I lay helpless and one lodger said something to him and he was promptly hustled inside and the patrol came down and took him away but I noticed he did not send me to see the judge. No, instead he told me to get out and never show my face again, which I never have. A few days after I got picked up on the street one night kind of late and took a front of the judge the next morning, the first time I was ever in a court room and charged with being Idle and Disorderly and was sent to the Reformatory at Concord and was for the next 13 months known as 9510. having no friends on the outside and having to have a position before they let you out some skeeming had to be done. but anyway I got out in 13 months and I was just as bad off as I went in but I was supplied with a lot of the knowledge of crooks. With the $5 they gave me I started for New York. I got stranded in a town called Portchester and the next day me and another Down and out started to walk to white plains and it was there I begged my first meal and it cost me 6 months in jail. White plains is a wealthy town and that night I asked to sleep in the police station and in the
157
morning they had the man of the house where I asked for something to eat in the office and they brought me out to have him identify me and then the judge says 6 months, never give me a chance to say a word. why, because it was Graft, they shipped me through 2 other counties to the Kings County, Pen. and them having a Jail of their own in there County. I then thought it was as cheap to steal because I was just as poor when I come out, and so I started in on a life of crime. I committed a few small acts around new York and raised a little money on the proceed, and so I started back toward Boston but I fell in New London, and had to wait 3 months for trial and then on account of my youth and me pleading guilty (which they could never have proved if I have been an Old timer) they let me off with a year in Gail. When I come out they gave me 3 dollars and says start a new life, well I went to boston again and I got work around horses at the race track and in the fall I lost my position through the horses being sent home and so again I started to ramble this time towards the west, but I got as far as Buffalo and being broke one evning I made a raid on a wholesale grocey and got about 15$ and a wheel. I spent the 15$ around the Tenderloin in about as many hours and then I tried to sell the wheel but the jew would only give me 2 Dollars and I wanted 5$ and a policeman happened to come along and he settled the proceedings by taking me to the station, and after waiting about 2 months for a trial the judge
158
says 9 months, the reason I got such a small sentence was because I turned the trick off right in front of station No. 1 in Broad-day-light. Why as I got through the window after breaking it I looked out into the street and saw a half Dozen big policemen sitting on the steps right across the street and it made me laugh every once in a while. While in the Buffalo pen I swore I would quit stealing for a living and to this day I kept that promise which is about 8 years ago because it aint right and jails made me a thief. I come west working on stock ranches, race tracks, rail-road camps, logging camps and all kinds of general work. But there is one question I would like to ask you before I end this letter. Every once in a while I find myself broke and out of a job and forced to beg on the streets to get the necessitys of life, and so I must conclude by cutting this letter short as I have no more writing paper and of course no money. but I am going out on the street and see cant I dig up a few old rusty dimes and now Good-bye—hoping you succeed in your undertaking of trying to get Municipal lodings such as new york as got because I have been there and no it is allright but the main point is to have decent officers in those places an not Brutes like Boston got. But the question (Why does a tramp keep tramping)

P. S. I have just come down from the free Employment office and there is a big sign on the window Dont loafe in front of this building come inside, and when you get inside there is another
159
sign entilted Dont loaf in this office.

Nobody in this part of the country knows my right name because I have about a dozen or maybe more but if you care to write you can address John Murphy in care of Peoples institute corner of 4 and Burnside sts. Portl Ore”

CHAPTER XVI

Tacoma

“The greatest bravery is theirs who humbly dare, and know no praise.”

I stood one day on the curbing of the principal street in Tacoma watching the construction of a sky-scraper. Near me stood a man of thirty-five, also watching. In reply to a question of mine concerning the wages of these builders who were taking such fearful risks, he said:

“They receive four dollars and a half a day, but one does not have to float in the open air on a steel beam fifteen stories high, only, in order to hold his life in the balance. I am working for the lumber trust for two dollars a day down in the Sound. I work on slippery logs under which is a current so swift and treacherous that a misstep would be absolutely fatal. But I was glad even to get that job for I was broke when I reached here and slept three nights sitting up in a chair in a saloon. The police thought I was a worthless old bum, I guess, for every little while they would come along and rap me awake. Out of my two dollars, I am saving a little, though, and I have a promise of a better job. If I get that I will soon be able to send for the wife and little ones,” and as he left me the thought touched his face with gladness.

It was a rainy day, the Puget Sound country being filled with rain and cloud during the winter months. I walked up to the City Hall, the Associated Charities, the Free Labor Bureau and City Jail, which are all near together. I counted twenty-five men standing out in the rain waiting for work. They were a pitiable lot. Stepping inside, I discovered why they were forced to remain in the storm. The office space for applying for work was about large enough to accommodate six men comfortably, and there, also, was a very noticeable sign which read, “No Loafing in Here.”

Tacoma offered no privileges for the destitute out-of-work man. Here he will find no free bath but the Sound, no free bed but a chair in an all-night saloon or the jail, no free meal without begging or snatching from the free lunch counter. I counted just one hundred men sitting up all night in chairs in the various saloons of the city, and once more I appeal to Tacoma, and to every other city, not to take the saloon from the needy until it can give something in its place.

What a conflict of opinions troop in at the suggestion of the word saloon! The saloon is a livid, malignant tumor, a virulent festering ulcer discharging corruption, abhorrent, odious. It breathes disease from neglected cheap lodgings, bull-pens and prisons. It is a destroyer of the City, State and Country; a murderer of reputation, character and society, a slayer of faith, love, hope and belief in God. Yet I have found it (who can deny it?) a Christian institution, saving the lives of men. It is doing what the church does not, or will not do. It stands a haven to the man who is desperate. It offers shelter and food to the homeless and destitute without demanding that he become a mendicant. It is true it may be only a chair, but it is under a roof and provides him shelter from the night. The food may be snatched from a fly-infested free lunch, but whether he drinks or not there are no questions asked.

To all cities I want to say, “keep your saloons until you have something else to take their place.”

While I was making my investigations in Tacoma, I stepped into the Penal Mission. There was quite a large company praising God and testifying what God had done for them. After seeing what I had seen, and knowing what I knew, I could not refrain from telling them that I thought since God had done so much for them they surely ought to begin to do something for God. So I began by telling them a little of the suffering as it had been revealed to me in Seattle and Tacoma. I was abruptly interrupted by the leader who asked me if I were a Christian, and gave me to understand that this was a testimony meeting. That was just what I thought I was doing—testifying for Christ—and though I was remonstrated with by several men, semi-believers, for leaving, I silently stole away.

While in Tacoma I met Archdeacon Grimes, an old, tried and true friend. He introduced me to the Tacoma Woman’s Club, which I found to be one of the most active Women’s Clubs in this country. The labor councils also were deeply interested. Tacoma may have been thoughtless, perhaps in the past, but Tacoma is so no longer. The city has awakened to her needs and is going to see that these needs are filled.

CHAPTER XVII

In Seattle

"There are no bad herbs or bad men; there are only bad cultivators"—Hugo.

I shall never forget my first visit to Seattle several years ago. I came from Tacoma by boat. As we rounded the point in the bay the magic city burst into view. It seemed like the work of genii, this mighty commercial gateway to the land of the Alaskan,—a wonderful, beautiful city, solidly, grandly built and in so short a time. It is a miracle of American industry and enterprise. Its citizens have force and power and determined character. Yet here in this beautiful spot, I found, as in other cities, the starving, homeless, and destitute.

"Will you give me enough to get something to eat?" asked an eighteen-year-old young man as he stopped me on one of the principal, prosperous streets of Seattle. He was such an object of pity that I hesitated and regarded him closely before I replied. So soiled and wretched was he that I stood apart lest he might touch me. Not alone did his clothing speak of his misery, but his face seemed burned with sin and neglect.

"Go to the Charity Society," I said.

"Will they help me?" he eagerly asked.

I looked at a clock nearby and saw that it was then fifteen minutes after five.

"It will be useless for you to go there now as they close at five, but," I said, "although I'm about broke, too, I will buy you a beer."

His lip trembled and tears actually filled his eyes as he said, "I can find a lot of fellows who will buy me a beer, but I can't find anyone who will buy me something to eat."

The next day I looked for work and to see what privileges were accorded for the out-of-work, destitute man in Seattle. First, after a jungle hunt, I found the Charity Society. After waiting a half-hour far up in a very high building in a dark room with a lot of rubbish, I was seen and put through a humiliating lot of questions. I was not asked if I were sick, or hungry, or whether I had comfortable clothing or needed medicine. I was asked if I were a church member, if I supported my wife, and many other such questions. Then I was offered a ticket for two twenty-cent meals at a restaurant and a bed at a Mission Lodging House. I took the names and addresses of these places and making some trivial excuse for not taking the tickets (although I could have given hundreds of them away that night) I left. I found the restaurant in a slum, and while I stood in its doorway I counted eight saloons. The lodging house I found in the heart of the worst tenderloin ever created. The sleeping quarters were in a basement. Its immediate surroundings were Chinese and Japanese who come to this country bringing all of their own vices and who then promptly adopt all of ours. Three doors from the entrance to the lodgings is a brothel of the lowest character. It harbors seventy-five scarlet women of the worst type, and it is only one of the many near at hand. These places, which, with all the other corrupting influences for sin, make up Seattle's worst hell, cannot be described. Yet it is here that the heads of the greatest of all the virtues send their homeless to rest. I rejoiced to understand that Seattle abolished this frightful tenderloin at the end of the administration which was in control of the city at the time of my visit.

While loafing late in the evening in one of the big beer joints, a strong, healthy fellow with whom I had been talking (and in our talk we discovered we were both broke) said, "If I had thought for one moment I would not have been at work by this time, I would not have sent so much of my money home." Then he continued, "Where are you going to sleep to-night?"

With a quick thought, I replied, "Oh, I am fixed for something to-night. I have two places and you can surely have one of them if you want it. One is at the Salvation Army. I was up there not long ago and the attendant told me they couldn't think of giving me supper, bath and breakfast, but if I would come and help him clean up between eleven and twelve o'clock at night he would give me a place to lie down, and you may have it. Do you want it?"

"You bet I do," he answered. Then I said, "It is nearly eleven o'clock now. Let us go there."

As we approached the place I said, "I'll not go in and you will stand a better show."

He went in with an uncertain manner. He was not used to begging. Presently he returned and said, "I don't see anyone."

"He is back in there somewhere," I said, "hunt him up."

Trying again, I saw him come out with a broom. Looking through the window he saw me, smiled and shook his hand as he began sweeping. He had got his job and covering.

The next day I met two brothers, one of whom was pale and trembling and staggered as he walked. I said to the elder boy (for they were only boys), "What is the matter with the kid?"

"Sick. They let him stay in the hospital until he could walk. I guess he is still sick."

These boys, one a tradesman and the other out of work, had no home, no money, were obliged to

beg, and were sleeping under the most horrible conditions. I think that if the search light could be thrown on every man destitute of a home, and into the places he is forced by circumstances to seek rest in Seattle, the humanitarians and the people of that city who really care would walk their streets and know no peace until a remedy had been found. 168

As I looked up the street I saw a large stone building and asked a citizen where the city jail was. He pointed to the great stone building and said, “That is the City Hall. On the top floor is the City Jail.” I remarked, “That is wonderful. That is the first jail I have ever found located as that one seems to be. It must be very bright and light and sanitary, compared to most of the prisons, which are under or almost under the ground.”

“Yes,” he replied, “it is, but it makes me shudder when I think of the awful den we had for years before that was built.”

I then strolled up and paid a visit of inspection to the jail. Reluctantly I was given an order by the police captain, directing the turnkey to grant me the privilege of looking about. The place impressed me with its cleanliness, its light and its good ventilation. He showed me first its bull-pen, one huge cell of concrete and steel, absolutely bare, where the inmates could only stand, lie down, or sit down on its concrete floor, and I remarked, “You must have as many as twenty-five in there at a time.”

“Yes, seventy-five,” he replied, and I saw again before me the vision (though it was midday), of the midnight scene of that midnight hell. Then I asked, “Where is the lodgers’ cell?” 169

He looked at me a little quizzically for a moment, and then showed me another cell about half as large as the bull-pen. “This is it,” he said.

It contained, as I remember, six young men or boys, I judged in their teens, and at that time of day I could not understand why they should be locked in there if they were only lodgers. So I said, “Lodgers are often forced into the bull-pen, too, are they not?” and he said, “Yes.” This lodgers’ cell, as he called it, was also absolutely bare, a stone floor the only rest for the man who must work or look for work on the morrow. But there was the Associated Charities, and if the three hundred shelterless in Seattle could have found it between nine and five o’clock, they would have been given a bed no doubt. At least a bed was offered me there.

Then my turnkey tapped slightly on a solid steel door of a solid steel cell. The only possible means for the ingress and egress of air to this dungeon was a small opening about half as large as an envelope. If I am not mistaken there was a slide door on that opening which could be closed, too, a device which is on all other similar torture chambers I have seen. He lightly tapped on the door, in a subdued way, with an expression as though he ought not to speak but must, and with an assumed, non-consequential smile, he said scarcely above a whisper, “There is a man in there.” 170

“What is he in there for?” I asked.

“They are trying to make him tell something they think he knows.”

Then he pointed to another one and said, “There is a man in that one also.”

“And what is he in there for?”

“I don’t know.”

“How long are they kept in there?”

“Ten days, sometimes.”

I knew the rest. The people of Seattle know the rest, or if they do not, they can learn it from the other stories of this book. There may be laws governing these torture hells and other prison abuses, but any government that allows them to exist is a government that will ignore the existence of these laws. I found in Seattle, also, six boys held for the Juvenile Court, locked in a cell in the county jail. I thought of Denver and her beautiful Detention Home for such as these.

Sunday evening came. I had heard frequently of a certain clergyman since coming to Seattle, and believing a change of thought and scene would rest my tired heart and brain, I climbed the hill. I passed one Romanist Church on the very crown of the hill so large and elaborate that I fancied it must have cost a million. At last I reached the object of my search. This church, too, looked down on Seattle’s best and worst. I entered. It was a large church. I think perhaps three thousand people were in attendance. The minister, in surplice, was giving out his notices. One was that the Prison Association wanted more clothing. (I afterward read that this same minister recommended more and harsher discipline in our jails, especially commending the whipping-post.) As the service continued, however, I found that I could not intelligently receive a word. Between the sentences I could plainly hear: “They are trying to make him tell something they think he knows!” 171

CHAPTER XVIII

SPOKANE

"Justifiæ partes sunt non violare homines; verecundiæ non offendere."—CICERO.
"Justice consists in doing no injury to men,—decency in giving them no offence."

"He passed the prison. At the door hung an iron chain attached to a bell. He rang. The door opened. 'Turnkey,' he said, politely removing his cap, 'will you have the kindness to admit me and give me lodging for the night?' A voice replied, 'The prison is not an inn. Get yourself arrested and you will be admitted.'" These words were spoken to Jean Val Jean at the prison door in the village of D—— in France, in 1815. All who have read the Victor Hugo masterpiece know the wonderful story.

In April, 1910, nearly one hundred years afterward, in the city of Spokane, I stepped up to a police officer whom I met on the streets and asked where I could get a free bed, having no money, nor friends, nor home in the city. He answered, "You can't find anything like a free bed in this town." Then I asked if I could sleep in the city jail. He replied, "No, you cannot. We have 173
received instructions to send no one to the jail." Then he added, "Get yourself run in and you can lodge there."

Here was a condition of things I had met with nowhere else. Even the shelter of the prison was denied a penniless wayfarer. Nothing daunted, I resolved to try to the fullest what Spokane might offer one like me. I was told that one of the missions had a lodging house. They perhaps would take me in for charity. I determined to try. I met a man on the street and asked him where it was. He said he believed they once had such an institution. He thought it was closed, but he was uncertain. "Ask a cop," he said. "You will find one on the next block."

I went as directed and soon saw an officer of the Spokane police force. Stepping up to him, I asked for the mission lodging house. Instead of replying, he said, "What do you want to know for?"

It was, or ought to have been, his duty to answer my simple civil question. What right had he to question what I wanted to know for? What business was it of his why I wanted to know? But he was of the Spokane police force and was endowed with authority. I replied, "I am without money and I am looking for a place to sleep. I thought perhaps they might give me a bed." I turned and started to leave him, but catching me roughly by the arm, he said, "Hold on here. Don't you leave 174
me." I saw before me those horrible nights I had endured in other prisons, and my first impulse was to run. But I remembered the eighteen-year-old boy in Denver who was shot to death for running from a policeman.

Then the Spokane officer said to me, "Who are you, anyway?" I answered, as I had in Pittsburg, "I am an honest working man."

"And what do you do?"

"I do anything I can to earn a living." He pulled me around and looked at my face on both sides, then said. "Let me see your hands." He regarded them closely, remarking, "They are pretty soft and white for a workingman's."

"There are thousands of workingmen who have soft hands," I replied. "There are waiters, barbers, bookkeepers and clerks, and hundreds of positions which keep men's hands soft and white."

"Yes, but your hands do not correspond with your clothes."

"I wear gloves when I work. There are a great many of us fellows who do the hardest manual labor and wear blue jeans who wear gloves at our work. There is a lot of work that will lacerate the most hardy hands."

His answer was, "Come with me. I am going to take you down anyway."

We were not far from the jail. He did not ring up a big team of horses, a wagon and two or three 175
men, or an automobile, to rush me to the jail as they do in other cities, although they do this in Spokane, also. We walked, and while we walked, he assured me twice that he would take the softness out of my hands by thirty days on the rock pile. He had absolutely and completely taken the law into his own hands before we ever reached the jail. This policeman knew what could and would be done to me, simply because I was apparently poor and helpless, and if their system in Spokane was as it is in other cities, I could be so nicely used for graft.

Fathers and mothers throughout America, what if it had been *your* boy in Spokane that night, without money and without a home? Think of the awful result! Put him in my place—about to receive the first stigma of a jail, to be thrust for thirty days among hardened criminals, made such by this same social system, to receive wanton insults and abuse, his health probably ruined for life,—possibly murdered! A man was dying at that very time in the city of Spokane, from abuse in that same city jail. Spokane began, from the first moment of my arrest, legally to plunder me, soul and body.

As I walked, I tried to incorporate into my being, the suffering and the feelings of such a man or boy. They would not have accepted his statements as to his identity, no matter how hard he tried, as I knew they would be obliged to receive mine, and there would have begun the destruction of another American citizen.

176

On reaching the jail the officer stopped me in a dark entrance. Pulling out his search-light he threw it over me, at the same time feeling me all over. Why he did this I could not understand, unless he may have thought I had a bomb to drop when I reached the Captain's office.

Intending only to make a quiet investigation of Spokane, I did not leave my credentials at my hotel but had them in an inner pocket of my vest. These included several letters recently received from prominent and well-known people of the Coast. My proof was sufficient and I was promptly released. They seemed to be surprised that I was sober, and said, "Brown, how can you associate with these men and not drink?" "That is not necessary," I replied. "There are thousands of homeless, starving men in our nation to-day who never drink."

While I was telling my story to the force, a reporter for the leading paper of the city came in, and that paper the next morning carried a story which stirred the town. As a result Spokane is going to have its Free Municipal Emergency Home. It is true that I found a desperate condition of things in Spokane for the man without the dime. But Spokane is no longer a country town, hid in the pine woods of Washington. She is a city—a city of stupendous natural resources, a city of a great awakening. She has begun a wonderful physical adornment and is combining with it those benevolent adornments to conserve her citizens. Spokane believes in the abolition of all influences that destroy. She is a force in the world to-day.

177

CHAPTER XIX

MINNEAPOLIS

178

"I never wear hand-made laces because they remind me of the eyes made blind in the weaving."—MARIE CORELLI.

The morning of April 19, 1910, found me in Minnehaha Park, Minneapolis, resting on the green moss below the "laughing waters" of Minnehaha Falls. This wonderful spot of nature took possession of my imagination until I was in one of God's factories, where a thousand creations were coming into life and beauty. The sparkling translucent falls, touched with a silver light, became a marvelous lace-weaving loom. I caught, white and shining, the actual resemblance to the hand-made Irish, the Duchess and Rose-point. Over all this great workshop of the Diety was joy, peace and happiness. For the first time real lace to me was beautiful, for it was of God's creation. The vision of eyes made sightless, the stooped shoulders of the aged, the little, starving children overworked for the mere pittance to exist, these were not in the weaving. To the thoughtful, any adornment, the price of which is paid by the blood of human lives, is no longer 179
beautiful. Here I saw that every bird and bee, all insect life, even the smallest and most abject about me, either were building or had built homes.

I then remembered my mission to Minneapolis. "Surely," I said to myself, "with this temple of worship to which the good folks of Minneapolis may come, thoughtlessness and selfishness will not be found here."

Yet I wondered if I should find it. I had come to continue my battle for my homeless brothers. The approach of late afternoon and night found me wandering about the streets a jobless, moneyless man looking for work and shelter. I found Minneapolis not in advance of other cities, and much behind many in its care for its homeless toilers.

I first went to a private employment office. There seemed plenty of work to do, work for everybody, but I could find no private office where they would give me work and trust me until pay day.

I visited the city free employment bureau where I counted fifty men looking for work. There were chairs for fourteen. The rest seemed quite willing to stand as long as their feet held out, in the hope of securing something. As I scanned their faces I thought a large percentage of them seemed of the type driven to such a condition by lack of opportunity to make an honest living. Later I learned that many of these men came day after day, hungry and cold, after having spent 180
the night huddled up somewhere in the open air.

Next I became a beggar. I began looking for a public institution which would give me a bed, since I was unable to pay for one. I first tried the Associated Charities. The attendant took me into a little side room where as in other places, all sorts of rubbish was stored, and asked me the usual list of humiliating questions. Finally he told me they could do nothing for me, as it was too near their closing time.

Doubtless this institution does many worthy things, but providing shelter for the homeless man without money is not among them.

Directed by the attendant at the Associated Charities (who at least had gotten rid of me), I went to the Union City Mission. The attendant here, after making me repeat my questions regarding the possibility of a penniless man getting a supper and bed, turned on his heel without answering me and began to turn on the lights—for evening prayers! At the Salvation Army lodging house the attendant simply said: "We ain't got nothin' to give away." At the Y. M. C. A., "the beds were all full." The attendant *didn't know* whether or not he could allow me to take a bath,—simply a polite refusal.

Next I appealed to the police. Asking the first officer I met where a man without money could get a bath, I was directed to the river. He then recalled the advice however, saying it was too early in 181
the season for the public baths to be open. Another policeman referred me to the old city lockup (Central Station) for lodging, saying, "Go there. They will give you a cell."

I did not go to the extreme of enduring the hardships forced upon the indigent, honest workers of Minneapolis. It was not necessary. I knew the pitiful condition only too well.

Just as I finish this story there is laid on my study table a letter, which reads:

"In the latter part of the year 1910 the Board, realizing the necessity of providing some lodging place for the transient class unable to pay for accommodations, decided to install a Municipal Emergency Home on the second floor of the old city lockup (Central Station). The work of installing this home was accomplished at an expense of $3,426.28. It was opened on the tenth of January, 1911, prepared to accommodate fifty applicants. The first three months of its operation demonstrated the fact that in order to care for all demands it would be necessary to increase the space.

"We have now a Municipal Emergency Home that will accommodate a hundred and forty. The

house is just as sanitary as it is possible to make an emergency home. It has all modern improvements, separate beds, baths, medical attendance, and fumigation. Lodgers are furnished with clean night-robes and socks and given a good wholesome breakfast. Of course this is entirely free. If a man has money we turn him away. The home is supported by public taxation."

CHAPTER XX

In the Great City of New York

"The day-laborer is reckoned as standing at the foot of the social scale. Yet he is saturated with the laws of the world."—Emerson.

When my investigations on the Pacific coast were over I felt that the strenuous part of my work,—that is the work of coming down to the personal level of destitute men,—was over. But from the South came such an appeal that I was prompted to continue my study at first hand for another year. So late in the summer of 1910, I found myself, a penniless man again, drifting along the docks on the west side of New York, seeking work as a longshoreman.

I was unsuccessful until about 10 A. M. Then a flag was run up at pier forty-three indicating that a fruit ship from the south was docked. Just then a young man hurrying along asked, as he passed me, "Are you looking for work?" I answered in the affirmative.

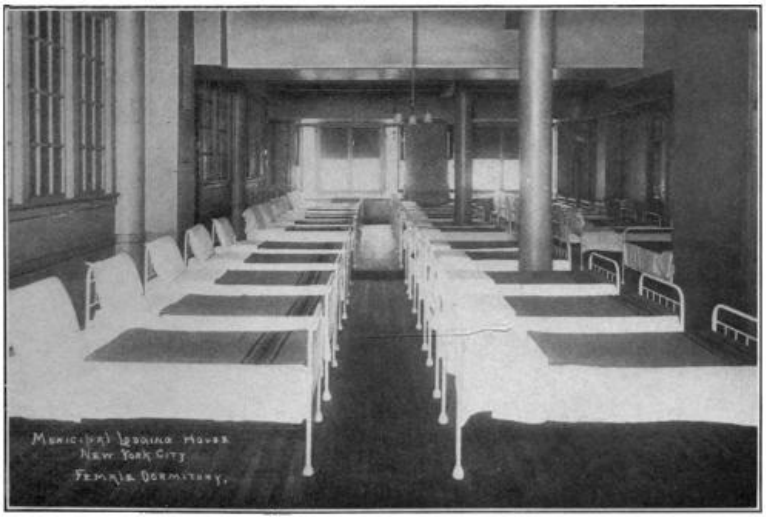
"Hurry along then and we will get in on the job."

Running breathlessly we reached the dock. There were two hundred ahead of us. After an hour of jostling, pushing, crowding and clashing with upraised hands we succeeded in getting near enough to the distributor to arrest his attention long enough to receive a work-check which entitled us to work at the wage scale of twenty-five cents an hour.

I noticed among the workers as we continually passed and re-passed one another, a pale, slim young man. He had a hectic flush on his cheeks and wore colored eye-glasses. The work was extremely laborious, so much so that, after working approximately an hour and being unaccustomed to such work, I began to tremble and to have frequent sensations of dizziness. I realized that I must desist, so cashed in, receiving twenty-five cents for my work. Just ahead of me, cashing in also, was the pale young man, whose whole frame seemed to shake involuntarily, while the flush on his cheeks had turned purple. It was evident that he also had no strength left to continue the work. As we left the pier and strolled down West Street to Battery Park, he told me his story:

"I need money bad, but I couldn't do that work. I am a Swiss, a watchmaker by trade, but because of my failing eyesight a specialist declared I must absolutely change my occupation or go blind. What can I do? I am fitted for nothing but my trade. While struggling for a comfortable existence for myself and young wife my health failed. I feel that the only hope of regaining it is an absolute change of climate. I have a friend in Texas who writes me of the opportunity offered to the truck gardener there, but it takes money to go and it takes money to establish yourself when you reach there. You see I have no money. I believe, even here in New York State, if I could have an out-door, country life, I would speedily get well. I am living with my sister in Brooklyn. She is poor, also, but it is a home. I suppose I might start out and work for enough to eat on my way, and steal my passage to some health-giving climate. I may eventually be forced to do this. But even if the railroads had not created State laws making it a criminal offense in all States to travel that way, I could not go now."

MUNICIPAL Lodging House, New York City
Male Dormitory



MUNICIPAL Lodging House, New York City
Female Dormitory

He showed me a letter from the Johnsbury State Sanitarium for the Insane he had received that morning, stating that his wife was no better. She was laboring under an hallucination, demanding continually that mass be said for her. Her little babe was expected in about a week, and it was expected of him as soon as possible to send clothing for it.

I sat and pondered for awhile, looking far out to the Statue of Liberty Enlightening the World. Passing time had pierced it full of holes, letting the daylight through. I left the young man, and a little later was strolling around the docks on the East Side. Finally I came to Wall Street. Here at 186
the entrance of this street I came upon the quartermaster's department of the United States Army. Over the door was the Coat of Arms,—the Eagle for Uncle Sam, the Sword for Defense, the Key for Security. Walking about half the length of Wall Street, I came to the great sub-treasury of the United States, and directly across the street, almost in hand-shaking distance, the powerful banking concern of J. Pierpont Morgan & Co. Going on, I came to the other end of this world-renowned street where stands Old Trinity. I was weary beyond words to express. So I sat down on the steps to rest. Presently, high up in its tower, the chimes began to ring. A little later, from within the church rang out an old familiar hymn, one stanza of which seemed peculiarly appropriate.

"What num'rous crimes increasing rise
Through this apostate isle!
What land so favored of the skies,
And yet, what land so vile!"

"Good heavens!" I said to myself, "what ails that old bell ringer? Is he stone deaf or gone mad? Is there not someone to arrest him?" I knew how useless it would be to try to find that someone, for those with the will to do so were in Europe, or in Newport, or up the Hudson, or in the Adirondacks. As I took my weary way up Broadway, I heard in every step on the pavement the 187
familiar melody, familiar words:—

"What land so favored of the skies,
And yet, what land so vile!"

Leaving Broadway I turned into a large "scoop joint" (saloon). In the corner where the free lunch was served a large brindle bull-dog was chained near a big stack of bread. I realized that I was on the Bowery. A little further up the street, just as I was passing a door-way, a man with a bundle came rolling down the stairs. From the sound of a voice above I knew he had been forcefully thrown out. He was about fifty years of age, almost helpless from the effects of alcohol or some other poison. Only slightly bruised, he regained his feet, but was hopelessly unable to gather his effects. His bundle had burst open and the contents were scattered about promiscuously. His helpless condition attracted the attention of the many passers-by and a group soon gathered to watch his futile efforts to regain his lost possessions. It was a sight too sad to be amusing. Suddenly a workingman stepped forward, gathered the belongings together, and fastened them securely. In the dull dazed face of the abandoned man there was a look of deepest gratitude. As his new friend had gathered up his belongings a small book with an inscription in gold letters fell from among them. As he held up the book I, too, could read the title: *The New Testament*. That 188
poor unfortunate impressed me as being as great as the greatest man that ever lived, *for he had tried*.

Through this great human funnel, the Bowery (and it is not the only one in New York through which pours the sin, the shame, the disease and the disgrace of this great city), I wandered on. Seeing a crowd gathered on the pavement in one place, I stopped and saw lying prone upon her face, a wretched creature whose skirt had fallen from her body. She lay there nude, defenseless, uncovered to the view of the morbid throng. The unfortunate, though helpless, was conscious of her shame, and was making futile efforts to hide her disgrace. Just then there happened along a good Samaritan, who, stepping through the crowd, took from his shoulders a blue cotton jumper and covered this wreck of womanhood. Turning to the gaping bystanders, he angrily heaped upon

them so scathing a rebuke that with flushed faces and hanging heads they stole away. He asked of some women who stood near by if they would shield the woman until the arrival of an ambulance. One of them kindly consented to do so. I turned away sick at heart for I knew the pathetic finish, that the only open door New York held for this unfortunate one was a prison door.

As I went along, I saw again Old Trinity with its stained glass windows, its old burying ground, 189
worth millions, where the dead have rested for two hundred years, and I thought: "After all, it was the Bowery that revealed to me to-day '*the golden rule of Christ*,' which alone can bring '*the golden rule of man*.'"

With the vanishing of the sunshine and shadows which all day long had been playing in and about Union Square—whose bits of green lawn, sparkling fountains, and many settees welcome the weary and heavy laden, for a little time at least, and invite rest,—came the myriad lights of the great city which follow the active day of toil and care. At evening I found myself resting there. I had taken a seat beside a white-haired, soft-spoken, slightly-bent man, clothed in a discolored suit, badly worn shoes and tattered hat,—a man who seemingly had received all the blows and hardships our tough old world can give. Indifferently I drew him casually into conversation. The information I gained was taken out of the crucible of a pathetic life, and it revealed a story which may be summed up in a few words: Youth, hope, health, success, love, happiness, reverses, crosses, trials, temptations, error, ruin, impaired health, old age, discouragement,—no, not entirely. He still had left a spark of courage. *He still believed in himself.* He spoke of the detriment of his physical weakness, caused by a State institution (I knew it was a prison) into which he was forced; of the prejudice against the man a little beyond middle life who was looking 190
for work; of the past that stood as a barrier between him and an ability to re-establish himself in society. Yet he hopefully added, "I have a job now at seven dollars a week and my board. I shall be able to get the decent clothes so essential in finding better work, with better pay." When he realized that I was apparently in a worse position than himself, for I seemed both workless and penniless, we talked of our mutual vicissitudes. He referred me to the Municipal Lodging House of New York, declaring he had found it both a refuge and a salvation at a time when it almost seemed to him that life meant utter abandonment, even to self-destruction.

I did not go to that beautiful home that night, but I stood instead in the "Bread Line" on the northwest corner of Broadway and Twelfth Street. It was ten o'clock, and although the bread was not to be given out to the starving poor of the city until midnight, a crowd had already begun to collect in front of Old Grace Church, the wealth of which is said to be almost fabulous. Extending up this street, long before the hour of distribution began, was a line in which I counted five hundred men. There were no women among them. There was no jest or laughter. They seemed as mute as "dumb driven cattle." Just at midnight, after the line had been standing several hours, two men appeared with the bread. There was a sudden rush across the street to be the first in line. A police rule seemed to be in force to the effect that no one was allowed to stand on that 191
side of the street until the hour arrived for giving the bread away. After this long wait, my share of this left-over bread was a piece weighing just four ounces. When I remembered that during the throes of that long and bitter winter this one bread line (New York has several) grew from five hundred to two thousand men, the blazing cross which I could see from the high church tower became "the handwriting on the wall."

Should you ask me why these men do not seek shelter in New York's Municipal Home, I could tell you in a few words. Notwithstanding the generous and hospitable character of the institution, it is usually crowded to overflowing.

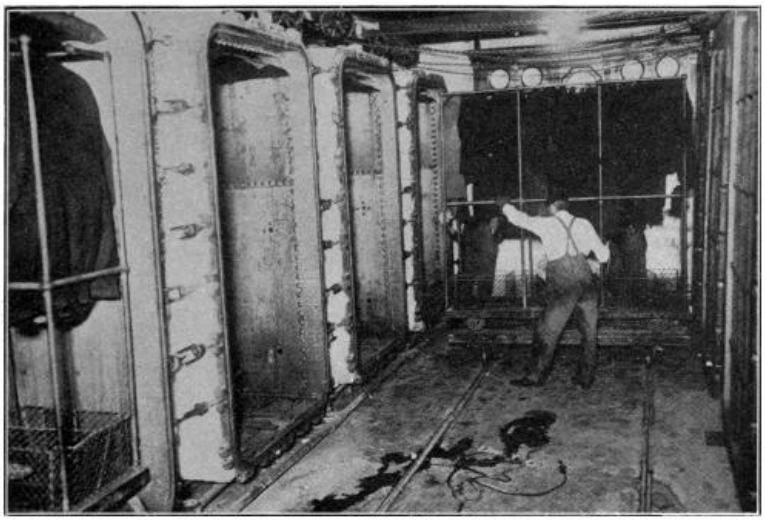
While studying the character and the aspirations of the honest unemployed in all parts of the country, I found in most of them the desire, the longing for country life. Even the hardened frequenter of saloons and other vicious places seemed anxious to change his environment. They all recognized this to be of great benefit in starting life anew, and in trying to become useful members of society. I found many had gone to the country. Many more desired to go up the Hudson River to work on the farms, in the fruit orchards and the open fields. I determined to follow them and see what it all meant.

So the following day found me again one of that army to whom society is inclined, in fact is fond of referring to, as "men who won't work,"—seeking an existence. I met a great many who, like 192
myself, were looking for work. But, unlike me (for I had money) some were starving, some were ill. Many were crippled from much walking, several showed me blisters on their ankles and feet as large as a twenty-five cent piece. I found work for one of my English tongue exceedingly difficult to obtain. At Tarrytown, I asked for work at an enormous estate with a national reputation. At this time they were employing three hundred men, all Italians. There was no work for me. They had all the help they needed. When I asked for the privilege of working for my dinner, the foreman looked austerely at me and answered, indirectly, "You understand if you did work here you would receive your pay but once a month."

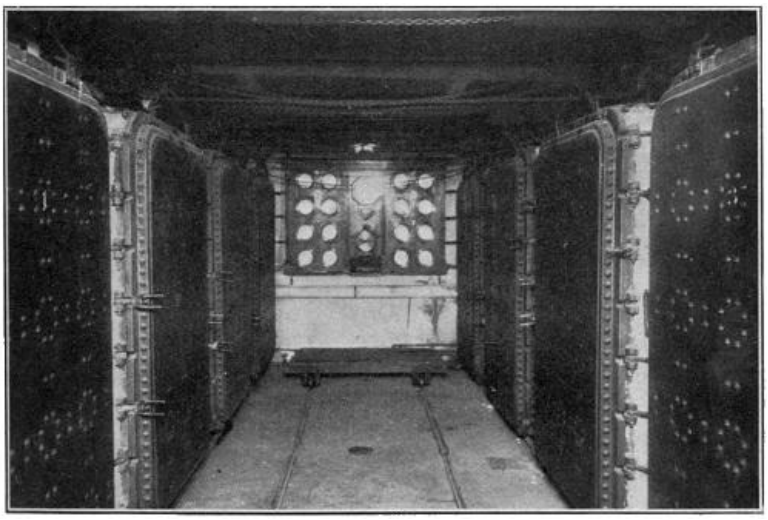
"What is the pay?" I asked.

"A dollar and seventy-five cents a day, and you board yourself."

Those Italian workmen were walking several miles a day to and from work for that wage. I heard among them numerous complaints. I wondered why. In the land of the Comorra, on the drive from Sorrento to Pompeii, I had seen these same men in harness, hitched to wagons, hauling loads of stone like beasts of burden.



MUNICIPAL Lodging House, New York City
Fumigating Chambers—Loading up



MUNICIPAL Lodging House, New York City
Fumigating Chambers—Sealed up

Someone told me if I wanted farm work I must travel further back in the country, which I did. I was not successful in finding it until the morning of the second day. Just over a stone wall I saw 193
five men at work picking cucumbers for pickles. A little way off stood a very large, beautiful farm house. I was right when I drew the conclusion that the owner was a wealthy old farmer. He was holding his farm at a fabulous sum, believing he would receive it from a certain land owner who would eventually buy at any price. Leaping the wall I confronted the farmer, who needed me exceedingly at one dollar a day and board,—I supposed for not more than ten hours' work, but asked no questions. I soon discovered that beside the old man, my field companions were the old man's son and their hired men. No one spoke. Noiselessly and silently we worked, carrying the pickles in baskets on our shoulders, as fast as we gathered them, into a shed, where we emptied them into barrels. It rained at intervals all day, but that made no difference. We worked on. The mud and wet ground soaked our shoes. The rough basket, in constant contact with my shoulder, wore a hole through my jumper, which was a serious consideration when I reflected on my day's pay.

At noon we were called to dinner. After standing what seemed an interminable time to a hungry man who for half a day had picked cucumbers out on the wet ground, beneath dripping trees, we were allowed to go in to dinner. In a rough outer room there was portioned out to each of the four hired men a bowl of tea, a tin plate containing vegetables and a small piece of meat. We 194
were fed, about as the dog was fed, except that we sat at a table. Not one of my three fellow-workers had yet spoken to me. Turning to the one on my right I smiled and made some off-hand remark about the tough meat, which just at that moment he seemed to be struggling with. He smiled back but made no reply. I looked across the table at the slim, black eyed, busy fellow opposite me and made some non-consequential remark. He grinned with a little more accent than my right hand man. I then spoke to the man on my left, who was an old man of three score years and ten. He had his face very close to his plate and did not raise his head. I then discovered that one of the men was a Hun, the other a Pole. Neither could speak or understand my language, and the old man, a Dutchman, was stone deaf. This was about the most convivial dinner party I had ever attended. The afternoon was about as jovial as the dinner, and was augmented by more showers and a big lot of pickles. Did you ever pick pickles? If not, don't do it, at least not for one dollar a day, unless you must. How your back aches from continual stooping! Your fingers, black, bruised, and sore from the tiny, prickly cucumber points, drive a fellow to saying things he would not dare to say before his dad.

At four o'clock the farmer left, to haul the pickles to the pickle factory. At five o'clock the Dutchman and the Pole went in to milk. These men were working by the month, each receiving fifteen dollars a month. On this farm many cows were milked. At six o'clock the son quit, which made little difference, as he spent most of his time in the shed. As he was leaving I said, "Is it time to quit?" He answered decidedly, "No, I'll tell you when to quit." And so the Austrian and I worked on. The son had mounted his motorcycle and flashed by us like a spark from a trolley. The Hun followed him with an intense look which seemed to say: "When I get my American farm I, too, shall have one." 195

It was getting dark, and still no call to stop work. If I had known only two words of Slavic it would have been a relief. But I did not. So I did the next best thing. I expressed my feelings by throwing my basket as far as I could send it across the field and started toward the house. The Hun looked amazed. As I drew near, far up in the house somewhere, to the accompaniment of a tinkling piano, one of the old farmer's daughters was singing in a voice absolutely devoid of tune, "I want to go to Heaven right away." I hoped she would. Just then the son rode up on his spinning wheel and asked, "What did you quit for?" I replied, "I came up for a lantern."

He then called the Hun. Our *carte du jour* for supper was a duplicate of the dinner, only it was stone cold. We plebs slept in an oppressive attic room. We were called at three A. M. to get up and go to milking. Not being a regular man, I supposed I was not included in the call, although I noticed the Hun responded. After my fellow-workers left I turned over for a much-needed, final rest, but just as I was dozing into sleep I heard the old farmer puffing up the stairs. 196

"Hey, you fellow," he called, "get up there and get out and help those fellers milk."

"All right," I responded. I did get up and out, but it was to the woodshed where my bundle lay, and while I was putting it together the old man passed hurriedly by the window again, headed for the garret stairs with the look of Cain on his face, to see why I still lingered. I heard the heavy tread on the stairs, as I was passing out across the lawn toward the nearest town. Yes, there was one dollar due me, but I sent word back to one of these, my proletaire brothers, that he could have it, and I suggested that it might be well spent toward buying a talking machine to be used while they dined at that bountiful, hilarious table, at the pickle farm.

CHAPTER XXI

New York State—The Open Fields

"Every man has something to sell if it is only his arms, and so has that property to dispose of."—Emerson.

Pickle picking had not proved profitable. Continuing my search I found that factory work was out of the question. At all the factories where I had applied the reply had been, invariably, "We have a hundred applicants for every vacancy." In one, it is true, I might have had work had I been a skillful hatter. But I wasn't. So I resolved to follow out my original intention of trying the fruit farms which lay on the west side of the river, beginning at Balmville, some thirty miles up the stream.

With this in view I crossed the Hudson. The coming of the night found me in densely-wooded, deeply-shaded intra-mural roadways, extending for miles, to which clung clambering vines bearing clusters of tiny fragrant flowers, and red, black and yellow berries. Here and there were intersecting drive-ways, the entrances to which were guarded by huge stone columns supporting massive gates, over which the summer had already begun to weave garlands of honeysuckle and eglantine.

I could see at times, far through the foliage, the shining light of the palaces. I could hear merry laughter and the sweet song of a singer with a wonderful voice singing a wonderful song. It was nearing midnight. I was growing very hungry and weary. I saw a light in the distance, near the road at the foot of a long hill. It was an inn. The light was in the bar-room. I entered. Two occupants, Italians (one behind the bar), were quietly conversing. Entering I asked the man behind the bar if he could give me supper and a bed, adding, "I have money." He looked at me curiously. I did not wonder at it for I was travel-worn. The bundle and stick I carried were covered with the dust of the highway.

In reply to my inquiry he answered, "I have no bed." Turning to his companion he said (in Italian), "He looks as though he had come a long way. I think he is from a prison. Let him sleep by the road. He will not suffer."

I looked straight at the man, saying, "I may be all that you say, but I am honest."

Slightly nonplussed he looked at me and grinned, saying, "Ah, you speak Italian!"

"I spent one winter on the blue bay of Naples," I answered, "and understand a little."

I had struck a sympathetic chord. He assured me that he told me the truth when he said he had no bed to give, but he invited me to a good supper. Greatly refreshed and not caring to sleep by the roadside, I continued my journey. I decided that I could reach West Point by daylight.

After I had traveled some distance, intuitively I became possessed of a feeling of depression. I felt that I was in a realm which demanded caution. A gargoyle on the roadside, until I saw what it really was, startled me nearly out of my senses. I heard the mournful baying of hounds in the distance. I was conscious of climbing a mountain. The wayside had become open, barren of trees, —its features mostly brush and rocks. I frequently passed large signs which I could not read from the center of the road, but becoming curious, I approached one of them and read: "The property of Sing Sing Prison of the State of New York. All trespassers are liable to be shot." I was on Bear Mountain. Fearful of the probability of being near to some headquarters, and that this warning might be carried out, I turned and went down in the deep woods below, where I rested for the remainder of the night. As I turned back I saw far below me on the silver river a night boat throwing a powerful search light on the dark shores of the stream.

When it was dawn I walked on. I could not but compare the humane expression of Bear Mountain, and the State of New York, to that little republic of Switzerland, whose labor colonies cannot be differentiated from the surrounding rural country. The traveler who enters or passes that way sees no mark of his erring brethren, no sign to tell the traveler he may be shot!

It was Sunday morning when I reached Newburgh, a city of thirty thousand people. I strolled up the hill to the low-roofed house where Washington and his wife lived from April 4, 1782, to August 18, 1783. It is now used as a museum for Washington relics. "This," I thought, "is no doubt of exceeding interest, and educational. I will go in." But being the Sabbath day, it was closed.

I had not heard from home or friends for a long time. I was getting hungry and had spent all of my money, but I knew there were letters and relief at the Post Office, so I made my way there. Being Sunday the Post Office was also closed. I did not wish to while away the time in a close, oppressive, ill-smelling back room of a saloon, or sit in the shadow somewhere on the street, even if the police did not interfere, but having a desire to read a good book, I hunted up the Public Library. That, too, was closed. In fact the only things I found open on this Lord's Day in Newburgh were the streets, the saloons, the churches and the jail.

During the week or ten days I was in the vicinity of Newburgh I read in the daily papers the story of three starving men who had been picked up by the police. Two I particularly recall. One was

found unconscious on the car tracks on which he had thrown himself, soaked to the skin, in a cold, terrific rain storm. The other was found eating swill from a garbage can in an alley. Both were thought to be *mentally unsound*. That is always the police report when these examples insult the intelligence of a city. Perhaps they were mentally unsound. Why not? Nothing will dethrone reason more quickly than starvation and neglect. *They were berry pickers*, the paper said.

The church bells were ringing. I looked down at my soiled appearance and thought, “If I only had an opportunity to renovate, to regenerate, I could attend divine services.” But there was no available place for the poor, the moneyless man or woman of Newburgh, to bathe but the river. I looked in my bundle and found a piece of washing soap. I would first wash my blue shirt, and while I bathed it could be drying in the sun. So I went to the river where many of Newburgh’s destitute and needy were already bathing, but the sewerage had so contaminated the water as to make it repulsive, and I felt that to bathe in there “the last man would be worse than the first.” Then I tried to overcome my prejudice against going to church just as I was. I could slip into a dark corner and scarcely be noticed. Being penniless I would of course be humiliated when the contribution plate was passed. I would, perhaps, be regarded as a dead-beat, but what of that? It would only be a moment. Finally I decided to go. I walked to one of Newburgh’s large churches, 202
up a cool and shady street. I was early. The silence of the lofty edifice, with costly, beautiful, memorial windows to those who had gone to their rest, gave me food for thought long before the service began. It was a strange coincidence that the scriptural reading included the following words: “For I was hungered, and ye gave me meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me in; naked and ye clothed me; I was sick, and ye visited me; I was in prison, and ye came unto me.” The text was, “*Go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor.*” I sat through the service undisturbed.

After a few days of rest I started out again to keep in touch with my unfortunate brothers from the highways and byways.

I went in search of work to the berry fields. Work is supposed to be the ready collateral for self-preservation and maintenance, but during a two-mile walk I stopped at the door of many beautiful and comfortable homes and asked for the privilege of working for even a piece of bread and a cup of coffee. To see the owner or lady of the house, was out of the question. I only came in contact with the servants, and in every instance I was peremptorily denied. One or two said, “I would give you a little if I could, but I am not allowed to do so.” The servant is the echo of the 203
house.

Finally, a little way in from the road, on a small beautiful lawn, I saw a sweet-faced, white-haired lady superintending a bright lad of sixteen who was making a flower bed. I entered and tried to make a polite salutation but it was something of a failure as my slouch hat had slipped down and stuck on my ear. However, I said:

"I will work an hour for you for a piece of bread and a cup of coffee."

The lady inquired with interest, “Would you work for an hour for a cup of coffee and a piece of bread? Well, if you will help this boy for an hour, I will give you a good breakfast.” I readily assented. The task finished, and the breakfast as well, the lady assured me there was a great deal of garden and other work to be done there. If I would wait until the return of Mr. —--, which would be soon, he would probably give me work as long as I wished to remain.

I had learned from the boy that the latter was a rich dominie of the neat little Episcopal chapel just at hand, which he owned, and that I was working at the rectory. He soon came. After a brief external examination he asked the question, “Why are you a hobo?”

I replied in one word, “Circumstances.”

Apparently satisfied, he said, “What wages do you want?” I explained that I understood garden 204
work, that I was a conscientious worker, and if I worked steadily ten long hours a day it ought to be worth one dollar a day and board. The gentleman thought not. He thought five dollars a week would be a square deal. The lady, near and interested, said that a man had come along the day before and offered to work for four dollars a week.

Having discovered I was a few days in advance of the berry picking season, after a moment’s reflection I told the gentleman I would try the garden work at his offer.

One half of the garden, a very large one, was clean and growing. The other half was choked with weeds, and in a very troublesome condition. I exceedingly enjoyed my garden work. When I was hired (although the house contained, I should judge, at least fifteen rooms) I was told that there was no place in the house for me to sleep. I met this by saying that I could sleep any place, so I was given two comforters and left to seek my own bed, which I found on a pallet of hay over the stable. However, I was very comfortable except for feeling the need of a pillow. In wakeful moments during the silent night I could hear the beautiful Arabian horse, John, champing his fragrant hay, and I would sometimes call down, "Hello, John! How are you?" Several times he answered with a low whinny, as much as to say, “All right. How are you?”

I dined with the cook and the work boy in the kitchen. We had all we could eat and it was good. 205
No one worked on the Sabbath but the old cook. We all went to church except her. The dominie asked me to attend. I slipped in on a rear seat. The sermon was on the building of character. The good lady, seeing me, came back and offered me a hymn book. A pillow offered with the

comforters would have held a greater meaning, but I am sure that the thoughtlessness of this kind lady was not intentional. I am sure I could have had the pillow if I had asked for it.

During my short stay at the Rectory many destitute men came to the door and asked for food. I noticed they were never turned away if they were willing to work an hour for it, but I noticed, also, that the man was asked to perform his work before he was fed. The good dominie and I often exchanged thoughts. He had a pleasing way of making his help feel that they were his equals. He may not have realized it, but unconsciously he was building character in a much more effective way than if he had put it into words.

I finally wished to leave. The dominie wanted me very much to remain. He said I was worth it, and he would give me the one dollar a day. The rains, I learned, were still delaying the fruit picking, so I decided to remain a while longer. When at last I left and was paid for my work, I said, “If I was worth at the rate of one dollar a day for these last few days, was I not worth the same for all my work?”

“Oh, but that was not our bargain,” he replied,—which, of course, was true.

One day in one of our brief talks (which turned on the hungry man at the door), I said, “Doctor, from a business point of view, I think you make a mistake in asking a man to work before he is fed. A man with a full stomach can do twice as much work as one with an empty stomach.”

“But the man may not keep his part of the contract,” he answered.

“Then that is his disgrace and your misfortune. You have done your part. You have entertained the stranger in a humane way. By working him first is showing him your mistrust of him and that is demoralizing.”

I noticed after this little talk that the man who came to the door was always fed first.

CHAPTER XXII

The Laborer the Farmer's Greatest Asset

"Letting down buckets into empty wells and growing old with drawing nothing up."—Cowper.

Leaving the Rectory I found myself on the highway, seeking a fortune as a berry picker. I heard rumors that men had actually made a stake at the work,—that is, enough money (by rigid economy) to exist in the destructive slums of a great city during the freezing winter months when there is no work to be had.

The roads were lined with men and boys seeking work. The long drought had been exceedingly detrimental to the fruit. It was dwarfed and of inferior quality, which worked a hardship on the farmer as well as on the berry pickers. The farms and farm houses were exceptionally attractive, and seemed to abound with comforts. Many of them were homes of wealth and resembled country seats. The day was frightfully hot. There had been a terrific thunder storm the night before and I was obliged to seek shelter for the night with a number of others in a shed. It was a sleepless night for the rain came in and prevented us from even trying to rest on the bare ground.

As I walked along the new State road, I came to an inviting shady spot by the roadside, near a deep hedge. Almost overcome by the heat and weary from lack of rest and sleep, I lay down with my bundle for a pillow and was just falling asleep when I was suddenly aroused by a voice commanding me to move on. Looking up I saw I was being accosted by a big six-foot bully. In reply to my question, "Why?" he answered, "It makes no difference why, move on."

Looking the man unflinchingly in the eye, I said,

"But it does make a difference why, and I will pretty quickly find out why a man, simply because he is poor and wants to rest on the side of the State road, is denied that privilege."

The insolent swaggerer was nonplussed for the moment. I suppose he thought I was only a poor, starving berry picker or farm hand who, at his command, would cringingly creep on in the boiling sun, like a dog, to another shady spot.

"Who are you?" he then asked.

"I am a laborer looking for work," I replied, "but I am also an American. When I am insolently ordered to 'move on' on a public highway, I'll know the reason why if I have to go to Washington to find out. I know your actions have been tolerated in England and Europe for two thousand years. Since you ask me who I am, I am going to ask who you are."

"I am foreman of this estate," he answered. "This is the country estate of a very rich ex-United States Congressman, and the State road line runs within six feet of the hedge."

"Well, sir," I replied, "I humbly beg your pardon. It is a principle of mine never to ask or take something for nothing, unless it be to draw dividends on a few blocks of nine billion dollars of watered railroad stock. But say, if you would wall this little six-foot strip in, or put up a sign, 'No trespassing,' or 'Beware of the dog,' as others have done, neither your master nor yourself would have further cause to growl."

As I wandered on I overtook an honest-looking man who said he was on his way to a farm near Marlborough where he had worked for several summers and had always pulled out with enough money to carry him, in a way, through the winter. It would have been much nearer for him to have walked the railroad track, he said, but he was told in Newburgh that if he did so he was liable to be arrested by the West Shore Railroad Company. They had arrested a hundred and thirty-eight wandering men at Kingston the day before and put them in jail, and so he thought it best to follow the country road.

A little farther on, near some great elm trees, stood an old stone house. From the gilded signs and the many beer kegs in evidence, I saw at once it was another one of the roadside lamps of ruin. Many men seemed to have gathered in and about the place and without disturbance were resting beneath the trees. I joined them and just as I did so a farmer drove up in an automobile looking for help. Before he had spoken, I asked, "Do you want help?"

"Well, I should say so," he answered. "The farmers are all clamoring for men, and are wondering where the temporary farm hands are this year."

I suggested he might find a few of them in the Kingston jail. He said that because of the recent rains the fruit was ripening so rapidly that it was decaying on the vines for the need of being gathered. Considering that the earnings of the railroad company were augmented by the fruit shipments he granted that a little persuasive argument with the latter might be of help. But did I want work, and would I work for him? I certainly would.

"What do you pay?" I asked.

"A cent and a half a box for strawberries,—that is, if you will stay the season. If not, I will only pay one cent a box." The reason for this I found was that at the last gathering of a crop the fruit

is light and the pickers cannot make nearly as much as in the beginning, and becoming discouraged, will quit. No matter if the farmer receives ten or thirty cents a box for his fruit, the picker receives no better wage. 211

“You will board me, I suppose?”

“Oh, no, you board yourself. We have a good bunkhouse where you can sleep.”

“But I have no money. How will I get me something to eat?”

“I will pay you every night at the rate of one cent if you want it.”

“But I have no money at all. What will I do for supper and breakfast?”

“Tell any of the grocers in Middlehope that you are going to work for me and they will trust you. You can come to my place and sleep to-night, so that you can begin work in the morning.”

Passing on to the village, I asked one of the merchants if he would trust me for a bill of edibles until the following evening. He looked at me hesitatingly. He had been deceived and that made him cautious. When saying that I only wanted a little, he consented and gave me the following bill: bacon, five cents, bread, five cents, coffee, five cents, can of corn, ten cents, total twenty-five cents.

I found later that there have been (and are still) thousands of instances when these willing workers have been denied this confidence and have worked all day in the burning sun without supper, breakfast and dinner.

Reaching the farm I was not shown where to go to sleep. I was told to go to the bunkhouse. I found a number of men already there with an improvised stove of rock and available sticks for fuel. With the aid of my willing contemporaries I managed to prepare and eat my supper. There was a promiscuous pile of filthy blankets to choose from for a bed. I went to the stable for straw on which to spread them, and as I picked up one pair of blankets, a man who had been there for some time said, 212

“I wouldn’t use those blankets. A sick man occupied them last.”

“What was the matter with him?” I asked.

“I don’t know, but he was pretty sick.” Finally choosing a pair of blankets which had the appearance of being a degree more wholesome than the others (and with at least a clean reputation), we laid down. In a short time, we discovered the place was literally alive with night prowlers, which drove us all out under the trees. This was preferable as long as it continued dry and warm, but at two A. M. a rain storm forced us back into the shack.

The next day I put in ten long hours picking berries. When I checked up I had earned just 50 cents—just enough to pay my store bill and buy another meager day’s rations. I tried the cherries, the raspberries and the gooseberries, but could do no better. I discovered that the pickers, no matter how clever they might be, did not, or could not, average over fifty cents a day, which, if they had spent it all for food, would only have been sufficient to purchase about two-thirds as much as they would have eaten if they had had enough. For other farm work the pay was one dollar, or one and a quarter dollars per day without board. With a few exceptions board was given with the one dollar. It was extremely difficult to get other farm work in berry picking season. However, I myself was offered by an old farmer one dollar a day and board, to hoe corn. 213

The next day was Sunday. Could I work on Sunday? Being good Irish church people, they had been taught to remember the Sabbath day and keep it holy. The old gentleman hesitated slightly but yielded finally when I told him I needed the money. Then, too, I was in much better company working by myself in the field than sitting around the village. He would see what the old lady would say about it.

The old lady had been suffering with the toothache for the past two days and had tried everything from ice down her back to boiling water, when an old woman driving by suggested filling the cavity of the tooth with fine-cut tobacco. This she declared to be a never-failing cure. The old lady tried it, but had swallowed the tobacco, and no mortal, she declared, ever before passed through such a sickness and survived! Consequently life just then seemed very uncertain, and this caused, on her part, a deep reflection on the subject of being very good. But finally she thought it would be all right for me to hoe on the Sabbath day, providing I did my hoeing down in the woodlot, instead of in the open field on the hill. 214

It was pitiful to see these workers, after a hard day’s work, walk several miles to the village store with their few cents to buy their suppers, knowing that they must walk back before they could cook and eat it. Even though a man were not a drunkard, do you wonder that he would spend a portion of that day’s pitiful wage for stimulant to create enough force to get back to his camp? All of the country merchants had coffee, tea and sugar done up in five-cent packages ready to hand out. They had many customers for such quantities.

One day, during my short investigation among these, a man was found dead in a barn, where he had crawled to rest. Was it any wonder? He had in his possession only a few cents and a little package of groceries. Is it any marvel that another man was found dead, hanging in an orchard, or that another was killed by an automobile, in the darkness of the night? Seventy-five per cent of these workers were old men or men beyond middle life. They were men of all sorts of trades, as

well as the unskilled. A great many were physically infirm, which disabled them from following either their own trade or the more arduous work of the common laborer. 215

I heard during the time I was among these toilers, the wish expressed many times by them that they, too, could own a garden tract, a bit of land that they could cultivate, a place, however humble, that they could call home. No; men do not, as many will tell you, seek the open fields to *be* evil, but to *shun* evil.

There exists to-day in many of the villages, towns and cities of New York, the rule to grant to the police, marshal, or constable, as a perquisite to his office, money for every arrest he makes. In Milton I was told by one of its citizens that the fee was one dollar. Consequently they are on the lookout for poor, unfortunate workingmen. When they find one he is thrown into a dark hole of their city jail or lockup. In one of these villages, this wretched place of detention was partially filled with water when the men were put in. No matter how prosperous the aspect of his farm, the farmer will tell you of the vicissitudes he must continually encounter before his crop is gathered and sold, that many of the farms are carrying a heavy mortgage with an excessive rate of interest which they can not pay off, but can only succeed in living and paying the usury,—that he is at the mercy of the middle man (the commission man) and, above all else, what a time he has with his help, so hard to get, so unreliable when he does get it. If this is all true, do you 216 wonder at it? Why, the horse, the cow and the hogs on these farms are better treated than their help! The animal must be well fed, housed comfortably and kept in good health to be profitable. If these farmers would institute some kind of a recall which would rid them of the code of ethics now practiced among them, or which would force them to practice brotherly love, kindness and justice; if they would create a new religion that will abolish the death-dealing, demoralizing, destructive influences which exist among them now; if they will cease being thoughtless; if they will begin to think,—then the weather will have lost much of its terror. The mortgage will be more easily raised. The faults of the commission man may be overcome and the unpleasant specter of quantity and quality of help will vanish. *Labor is the corner-stone to the foundation of the edifice of prosperity.* It is left to the farmer to make his way easy, his burden light.

Yet some who live in palaces, and many bold charlatans of trade who use the name of philanthropy to guild their shady ways, will still cry, “Why don’t the out-of-work man help the farmer? Why don’t they go onto the land?” They certainly do not mean in the domain of the Hudson.

In talking with an editor, I once advanced the thought of the advantage of cultivating every acre of the ground from New York to Albany. The astonished editor replied, “Why, would you destroy 217 the scenery of our American Rhine?”

Destroy the scenery! I could not but ask, surprisedly, “What is more beautiful than a cultivated vineyard, or a farm supporting an American home?” But this was what the search light revealed. The great estates of the greatest financiers in the world; the palaces of wealthy brewers; the castles of whiskey distillers; monasteries of the Church of England; Roman Catholic convents; orphans’ homes, reformatories for white slaves, States prisons, criminal insane asylums; United States War Schools; government store-houses for high explosives; miles of unsightly brick-yards (of the Brick Trust); acres of decaying old frame shacks; ice-houses (of the Ice Trust;) signs, “Don’t trespass” and “Beware of the dog”—and hundreds of hungry, starving men.

CHAPTER XXIII

Albany—In the Midst of the Fight

"As long as any man exists there is some need of him. Let him fight for his own."—Emerson.

Between the hours of ten P. M. and midnight the next evening, I found myself (with another down-and-out worker) sitting in the smoking-room of the Albany depot. My momentary acquaintance was an Irishman. Presently another young fellow, whose appearance was indicative of having recently put off a good many meals, came in and sat down near us. The Irishman looked squarely and inquisitively at the new-comer (who was an Irish-American), and recognizing by some mutual instinct that he belonged to the army who must work and wander, abruptly said: "Who are you?"

"I am a tramp," the young fellow replied.

"Then, I suppose," continued the Irishman, "you have been in every State in the Union."

"Yes, every State," answered the young fellow. "Well," said the Irishman, "I'll bet you have never been in the state of matrimony."

"Yes," quickly answered the man, "*I have been in Utah, too*."

"How about the state of intoxication?"

"Do you mean the State of New York, or a personal experience with John Barleycorn? If you mean the latter, I can honestly say, I have never been drunk."

Thus we laughed and joked and then talked seriously for an extended time. These two men were on their way to the hop fields of New York for work. The younger of the two, when he had reached the age to fully comprehend, found himself in an Orphan Asylum. At fourteen he had been given to a farmer for whom he did the work of a man. When he was sixteen the family was broken up and the farm sold. He had been taught no trade and had received very little book knowledge. With the non-existence of this farm home, he became (to use the soubriquet of disrespect which is often put upon the forced migratory wage-slave) a floater.

There were only a few men in the smoking-room. Weary, almost beyond endurance, we lay down on the empty seats and fell asleep. Suddenly we were awakened by a depot official saying, "This is no lodging house." We were roughly asked many questions,—who we were, where we were going, whether we had a ticket or the price of a ticket. When our answers proved unsatisfactory we were violently thrust into the street. I wondered at the time why we were not jailed, but I soon learned that their local prisons were full, and that the fact that they knew we had no money was a good reason,—in fact our protection from arrest.

Undaunted, I stepped up to a policeman who was standing a little way off talking to a man, and asked him for Albany's Municipal Emergency Home. This officer, surprised at my question, hesitated to answer. The man to whom he was talking, said, "Go to the Baptist Home. Tell them you are penniless and they will take care of you. Here is my card. The address is on it."

We went to the home but found it closed and dark. To our ringing and knocking there was no response. I learned afterwards that even if the institution had been open, we would have found no welcome as it was house-cleaning time. We next sought out the Salvation Army. It was not house-cleaning time with them but the place was much darker, more securely sealed against the homeless, hopeless wayfarer, than the Baptist Home.

A man on the street gave the two hop pickers the price of a supper, a breakfast and a place to rest, and very soon I was curled down on the cushions of an early morning train, riding the velvet into Rochester.

When, on this early Fall morning, I reached Rochester it was again God's day of rest. A number of workingmen were grouped a little way down the street, and with assumed indifference I joined them. Their conversation was on the possibility of getting work. All of them seemed to be idle. There was no prospect in sight in the city, and they had decided to go into the apple orchards of the surrounding country. In response to my inquiry as to whether there was any public place where a fellow who was broke could get a meal with or without working for it, one of them replied, "I, too, am up against it, pal, or I would help you. The only place I have heard of is the Sunshine Rescue Mission on Front Street."

I walked toward the Mission and as I went I caught sounds of a drunken brawl in a saloon. A little farther on a "scarlet girl" with a sad face tapped on the window and smiled. Just as I reached Front Street the police wagon came hurriedly dashing down the street. Three stalwart members of the police force, on the pay roll of the city of Rochester, got out of the wagon when it stopped at the Mission. I thought I must be mistaken in the place and that it was a police station. But no, there was the sign: "Sunshine Rescue Mission." The officers entered. Brutally and roughly they brought out two men, thrust them into the wagon and took them off to the prison. They were scarcely out of sight before another policeman came down the street with another man whom he hurried into the Mission.

From the time I entered Rochester until I left, I saw evidences of a “vice trust,” the depravity of which could only be conjectured. I did not dare remain there for I trembled at the thought of a homeless man asking for aid in that institution of a “humane” Christian city. I hurriedly left Rochester for here more than any place that I had been in there seemed to be something “rotten in Denmark.”

CHAPTER XXIV

Cleveland—The Crime of Neglect

"A servant grafted in my serious trust And therefore negligent."—Shakespeare.

The midnight bell was striking. The great city of Cleveland was going to rest as I rode to my hotel. I, too, was soon resting,—but not sleeping. I was forming a resolution to become *absolutely indigent* for an extended time. My assumed destitution previously had been of very brief periods, always having money at my hotel or in my pockets for my immediate needs. "What," I reasoned, "does the man who at any moment can place his hand in his pocket and secure relief know of the real struggle of the penniless and homeless worker?"

I looked myself over. I was healthy, comparatively strong. I had no trade, yet was clever at many things. I was honest, sober, willing, industrious. So I entered, with an iron-clad resolve, into a mental contract, signing and sealing it, that I would go penniless to Memphis, Tenn., with a determination to secure work on the government works on the Mississippi river for the winter. 224
For I had discovered in my study from New York to Cleveland many moneyless men striving to reach these government works.

I would not steal, nor beat a railroad train, nor beg, but if forced to do so, I would ask succor from those institutions which stand, ostensibly, ready to help the needy. My itinerary, briefly given, would be, Cleveland to Cincinnati, Cincinnati to Louisville, Louisville to Memphis.

The next morning, after sending my baggage on to Memphis and paying my hotel bill, I was completely broke, and found myself on the streets of Cleveland, destitute, looking for work. I strolled up to the Public Square while I was considering the best course to pursue. I had pulled on my blue jeans over a pretty good business suit, for my investigation was to be of that class of toilers who must work with their hands as well as of the class that does those things we faultily regard as more polite work. Destitute, homeless, friendless, I must honorably reach the government works,—that was the point I had to keep ever in mind. My first thought was as a hopeful medium to find work,—the newspapers. Stepping up to a news-stand I asked for a paper, and thrust my hand deep down in my pocket for the price. Thus it was that it came to me forcibly for the first time that I was broke. I looked at the news-vender as he handed me the paper and said, "Never mind, old man, I have left my pocketbook at home." Then I remembered I had a 225
postage stamp and thought of offering that in exchange; but I remembered a long delayed letter which must be sent home, and so I kept the stamp. I thought of the many places where the newspapers were on file and the newspaper offices.

Just as I entered the Square, a man sitting on a bench reading a morning paper left abruptly, leaving the paper behind. I made a dash for it with a half dozen other jobless men. I was the lucky one, however. Hurriedly I sought the want columns. I scanned them carefully and made note of those things I knew I could do. I also made note of an "ad" reading: "Wanted, fifty supers at the Opera House. Apply at 10 A. M." Handing the paper to the other boys, I left quickly on my mission for work. The super's job I kept as a last resort, if all others failed. All others did fail. There were a great many idle men and boys in Cleveland at that time. I saw the importance of being early, for the answer invariably was, "The place is filled long ago." So ten o'clock found me at the stage door of the Opera House with several hundred others, hanging onto the hope of being a favored chosen one. I knew that if successful I could work here nights, and that they would probably pay the same price offered in Pittsburg. Through the day I could do something else. I would therefore earn quickly enough to buy a six-dollar ticket to Cincinnati and be well on 226
my journey to the government works, where, from all I had heard, I would be comfortably located for the winter, and in line for making a stake.

The manager soon appeared and began rapidly to choose his men. We discovered we were to be millionaire senators in a great political play. I noticed I was being intentionally shunned, and fearful of not being chosen, I remembered my good front beneath my workingman's garb. I stepped up to the man and said, "I have better clothes than these. I can make an appearance for the part," whereupon he immediately took me. Our pay was to be three dollars and a half for eight performances, covering a week,—a little less than forty-four cents a performance.

Although I had landed a job I was no better off so far as the immediate needs for existence went. So I saw that I must be active in order to cover the vacancy in some way. Already I was growing very hungry.

The first thing I did was to ask a man with a star for the Municipal Emergency Home. He looked at me with a contemptuous smile, and seemed to regard me as one just dropped out of Russia, China, or some other heathen country. At last he said: "There is nothing like that here. I never heard of such a thing. Did you?"

No one will ever know what it means to be really hungry until he is broke. There seemed no other 227
way for me to win a dinner other than to ask the various restaurants the privilege of working for it. Of the great number to which I applied, the answer was, "Nothing doing." At last the proprietress of one restaurant told me she wanted some one very badly for the noon hour rush to wipe dishes, and in return for the work would gladly give me my dinner. I readily accepted the

offer, and was soon installed in the small kitchen of a very large, cheap restaurant. I was obliged to stand near the dishwasher and his tubs, hemmed in by a very narrow space. In an instant the rush was on. Everything that was not nailed down or stuck to the wall was in the air. The busy boys would come in with a San Juan charge, literally firing the dishes into the big wash tub, and every time they did so I received a shower-bath. Now, I would not have objected to a sprinkle or two, but an immersion was a crime, and in my position I could neither retreat nor advance. The old lady appearing, I demanded a release, declaring our agreement was that I was to work for a meal and not a bath. She declared the hour was now nearly up, and then, too, I did not object as strenuously as I might have done, if, through the rain and the mist, I had not caught sight of rows of pies, cake, ice-cream and pudding. Also, perhaps as a panacea to my hurt feelings, the old lady (who had a bass voice and weighed about three hundred pounds) threatened to put a few of the reckless flunkies out of commission if they did not exercise more caution. 228

True to her word, the moment the hour was spent, I was asked to sit down to a banquet on the end of the cook's table, and the order issued to give me all the corned beef, cabbage and boiled potatoes I wanted. The pie, cake, ice-cream and pudding were not on the dishwiper's menu, at least not that day, but I was to have all I wanted of what was given me, and that meant a great deal. Regaining the street, I felt a strong desire for a bath, clothes and all. Again approaching another appendix to the correctional laws of Cleveland, I asked for the free public baths. "Gad," he said, as he eyed me closely, "how many baths do you take a day?" He then referred me to Cleveland's two public baths, which were so far out that he advised me decidedly to take a street car.

"And are they absolutely free?" I demanded.

"No, one will cost you five cents and the other two."

I went to the lake.

In my little bundle I carried a small mirror, a hairbrush, a piece of soap, a couple of white collars and a towel. Ye gods, what a bath that was! The water was four degrees below freezing. However, I soon had on the expression of the United States Senator whom I was to impersonate at the Opera House that night, who wouldn't buy a vote, no, not if he died for it, who could sit in the four o'clock Y. M. C. A. Sunday afternoon meeting with a face as long as a fiddle, and an 229
expression that to the thought of a jackpot would prove fatal. Not one of the elite in the great audience that night ever dreamed of the battle I had gone through that day in Cleveland for the privilege of sitting in that honored seat!

We were an exceedingly interesting group of millionaire senators, for three-fourths of us were broke. After our great act, I timidly approached the manager, and asked him if he would please advance me a quarter as I had no place to sleep nor the money to buy a place. No, he could not think of doing so. It was not their custom to pay until the last performance. An old "senator" of sixty-eight years who sat next to me, one of the many in the same plight I was in, was waiting to learn the result of my plea.

We then began to try to find a place to rest, for that we must have. Our act was not over until nearly ten-thirty o'clock, compelling us to be out late. My brother senator knew Cleveland better than I did and proposed going to the "charity" free lodging house where we could pay by sawing wood an hour or more the next morning. We made our way to the old rookery, which was in a hole down under the hill, but when we got there it was closed and dark.

I then proposed the police station or the jail. He looked at me in astonishment and said, "Do you 230
think I would go there? I'll tell you where we can go. I slept there the other night, and—well, it might have been worse. It is on the floor of the High Ball Saloon on St. Clair Street. There is no use to hurry, as we can't lie down until twelve o'clock." He then continued, "Let us find some newspapers to lie on." So as we walked towards our destination we searched the rubbish boxes on the street corners for paper with which to make a bed. Reaching the saloon, we stood about until midnight, at which time the lights were turned low and the side doors locked. Then we were allowed to lie down. We each had two newspapers which we spread under us.

After a moment I raised up and counted the little army of bedless men who were obliged to seek shelter there that night. There were just an even sixty lying upon the floor, and this number was augmented now and then by a late arrival drifting in. A number of men stood at the bar, or lunch stand, and caroused all night. One, verging on delirium tremens, had a prize fight with a stone post. While the place seemed clean and the floor clean for a great, cheap saloon, roaches by the hundred were scampering all about us, and the odor from a near-by toilet could scarcely be endured. In a calm moment of the revelers, just as I felt that I might drop into a doze (my poor, weary, old senator was sleeping through it all), a big Dutchman, whose bones probably ached from coming in contact with the hard floor, raised up and turned over. As he did so, he came 231
down on a little Irishman. Jumping up, he slapped the Dutchman in the face and a rough house was in order for an extended time. Occasionally a "cop" or a plain-clothes man came in and looked us over. For me to try to sleep was useless, and promptly at five o'clock the order was given "Every man up."

My political colleague and I strolled confidentially up an alley to the Public Square. Here was located a beautiful example of Cleveland's humanity to man in a small, yet seemingly perfect public lavatory. Every man, no matter how soiled or wretched, was given a towel and a piece of soap to cleanse himself, and often I heard someone say, "Tom Johnson's gift."

Food was the next essential to our good behavior and well-being. My associate member proposed we try the “Charity” Lodging House again, which we did. Yes, we could have breakfast if we would saw and split wood for an hour or more first. We would certainly do so. Imagine the state we were in from lack of food and sleep. And yet this homeless old gentleman—and he was a gentleman—was eager and willing. After splitting curly birch for over an hour, we were told to come to breakfast. They gave us weak barley soup, poor bread, and the same old “charity coffee.” The staying qualities of that breakfast were extremely fleeting, for by the time we had climbed the hill we were no better off in regard to having our hunger appeased than when we went in. As 232
we came out we noticed a sign which read, as I remember it, to this effect: “Persons coming here a second time must be expected to take orders from the city.” Not a very encouraging hope for the man who was broke and who was only earning three-fifty per week, which he would not get for six days.

Every day while in this city I found (aside from us senators) many men who had secured work or would have gone to work, but who could find no one to trust them. The boarding-house keepers had been imposed upon so many times by penniless people that they were cautious. The contractor or employer will never pay in advance, only at a stated time,—once a week, once in two weeks, or once a month. While there may be exceptions, through all my investigations in the larger cities of our country, I have never found any relief for the penniless worker in this time of need, either in public or private works. If he proves he is a fine worker he is valuable to his employer and he wants to keep him. But he does not know him. He may have unconquerable habits. It would never do to pay him his wage when the day is done. He might not return, so the employer hopes to hold him by offering him nothing, not even a word of inquiry as to his needs, or of encouragement. He forgets that he is an asset to the community, that whether working for the city or the individual, every laborer is just as worthy of respect and esteem as is the 233
privileged owner of Forest Hill.

What an appeal for Cleveland’s Emergency Home to fill this place of need!

Reader, I want you to keep steadily in mind that you are looking at *the man I describe*, not at me. I had multi-millionaire acquaintances in Cleveland who would have granted me any request I might have made. I held credentials on which any bank in that city would have honored my check without question. I could have stepped into the home of the exceedingly prominent lodge of which I was a member in good standing, and could have had my every wish granted. I knew if I fell ill or met with accident, to reveal my identity meant every care and comfort, the speedy coming of a loving wife, kind relatives and friends. And so, after all, while I might endure, I could only assume.

My aged “senator” friend left me, to walk a long way in search of someone he knew, who perhaps would make his burden light. I did not need to be told the feelings of the old gentleman as he wearily took his departure. I had started for the Public Square to rest, though momentarily, for there was a dinner which must be battled for. I passed a fruit store. There was an array of delicious fruit in front,—many baskets of rich, purple grapes, marked ten cents. I was sure I could have eaten at least one basket. They were not directly in front of the window. It would have been so easy to pick up a basket unseen and be quickly lost in the crowd. After all it *was* true, then, 234
that starving men and boys filched bottles of milk from doorsteps, a loaf of bread from the bakery, or a pie from a wagon!

I stepped directly in front of the window and looked at the apples and oranges. A woman inside seemed to have her eye on me,—I fancied suspiciously. Instantly she stepped out and picking up one each of the fairest of the apples and oranges offered them to me. I hesitatingly regarded her gift. “Take them,” she said, “God made them to be eaten.” I had had nothing to eat for eighteen hours except my “charity” bowl of barley soup and with it the warning not to come back. The city of Cleveland had nothing to offer. It remained for a poor woman to give me a portion of her small possessions.

I reached the Square. Broken, I dropped into a seat and was immediately lost in sleep, from which I was suddenly awakened by a sharp blow on the bottom of my feet, which, through the thin half-wornout soles, left a burning sting. Lifting my head, I saw a burly policeman who growled,

“Keep your eyes open. This Square is for wide-awake people.”

“It certainly is not for the city of Cleveland, then, in its care for its homeless,” I remarked.

Remembering I was in a “Golden Rule” city, I felt that I could safely reply to this august hint of the law, without fear of being “run in” or beaten into insensibility, as I had seen helpless men 235
treated in other cities for such presumption. He simply gave me a half comprehending look as he passed on. Now this officer was not the Chief of Police in that city. He was simply a subordinate, and a city of six hundred thousand people requires a large police force. Notwithstanding the spirit of the Chief of Police, or his high ideal of what a police department really stands for, his good aim and end will be miscarried continually by his hirelings, until the required qualifications of a policeman are based upon intelligence, good-will, good morals, good deeds, and not upon the fact that he helped carry his ward.

I saw, however, during my short stay in this city evidences of advancement in the character of their police system, which spoke volumes for Cleveland, even though the homeless and temporarily moneyless toiler, seeking work, found no help in the many considerations for labor.

With the feeling that closing one's eyes in the public park in Cleveland might mean life imprisonment or at least, for the second offense, a rap on the head instead of the feet, which might disqualify me for my seat in the "senate" that night, I forced myself to keep awake, and in order to do that I had to keep moving.

The agreement with myself was not to beg or steal. I was to be always "on the square." I decided to continue to look for work. The day before, in search of work, I had climbed many stairs, 236
entered stores, hotels, factories, even tried the City, all without success. I began to feel that perhaps I was too old, yet several of them had said, "Come again. There are always chances. We may be able to use you in a few days."

I realized I was weak from lack of sleep and nourishment. I must eat first. Just then I overheard one starving man say to another (the park was full of "wide-awake," starving men), "Jack, I have ten cents, let's have a couple of beers."

"Honest, Bill, I'd rather have a loaf of bread for my share."

"But you see," returned Bill, "you can get a scoop of beer as big as a toy balloon and a free lunch like a Christmas dinner for the price of a loaf of bread."

"All right, I'm with you," said Jack who then continued, "Another week like the one gone by, and want will have me in a home for incurables."

'Tis true I had forty-four cents due me for one day's "session" in the "senate." But what of that? It was not due until Saturday night at twelve o'clock. By that time hunger might drive a man to wreck, rob, murder or suicide, and there is no telling what a politician will do, even on a full stomach.

I then remembered hearing one "senator" telling another of a Catholic institution where he had received a hand-out for some work. I remembered the name of the place. I also remembered 237
hearing another say he had earned fifty cents that day beating carpets,—a job he secured from the Associated Charities.

I first made my way to the Romanist institution. A Sister with a sweet face framed in folds of black and white met me at the door. She looked kind enough to give me the institution, but she didn't. If she had, Cleveland would have had, from the way I was feeling just then, a Municipal Emergency Home about as quickly as one could change the sign. What she did give me was a job cleaning windows, for which I received a bowl of cold coffee and a piece of bread. As I waited I caught glimpses of delicious dishes of chicken, steaks, and other wholesome and dainty edibles. To the cook, a bright young Irish woman who had received orders to give me only what was before me, I said, as I looked at the bowl and bread, "Do these people believe in multiplying anything around here?"

"Yes."

"What?"

"Working hours."

"What do you do for something to eat when you get really hungry?"

"Well, you see, this is an institution what believes in fasting." We both laughed and this brought forth a Mother Superior followed by a Mother Inferior, whose faces were sour enough to start a pickle factory. I felt that I had committed some unpardonable offense and abbreviated my call by 238
taking a speedy departure.

Scarcely were we seated that night in the "senate" before the old "senator" told of the square meal he had that day and of a fine place he had found in a stable where we could sleep with the comfort befitting our distinguished station. He had not seen it, but knew where it was and how to find it. So after the session adjourned, we started for our newly-found shelter. It was now late in October. The nights were unusually cold in Cleveland for that time of year. After walking what seemed an interminable distance, the warm, bright street cars passing us frequently (the fare only three cents), we finally reached our shelter. It was not as we fancied it would be,—a large, fine barn, half filled with new-mown hay. It was an old, closed-in, empty shed, with two stalls and two mangers. We entered. By striking a few matches, we could see to gather up enough of the refuse in the stalls to lie on, by placing it in the narrow mangers. The "senator" took one and I the other. He suggested that I take off my coat and place it over my head and shoulders, saying that by so doing I would be much warmer than if I kept it on. I found this to be true. So exhausted and weary had we become that we were soon lost in profound sleep, from which I awoke at three o'clock, perishing with the cold. I crept over and felt of the old man. He was alive and sleeping soundly. I slipped out and walked the streets for an hour. By the time I was thoroughly warmed 239
the day had begun to break. Very soon I found myself again in "wide-awake" Square. I wasn't in the most amiable mood in the world. Far from it. I began to feel that I would like to stand on their city hall steps and tell the people of Cleveland what I thought of them. I slipped into that ideal little lavatory, and with the warm water, soap and clean towel, cleansed my hands and face until I felt refreshed. Then I thought of Tom Johnson, and the bitterness left my heart. I actually forgot for the moment that I was starving and fell to wondering whither God had taken him and what great work he was doing in that land to which he had gone.

I then left for the Labor Bureau of the Associated Charities. Perhaps I could get work with

enough pay in advance for a breakfast. On reaching there I found twenty men and boys standing outside, and after waiting an hour there seemed to be very little work to be had. Only a few were supplied. During my stay in Cleveland, as a test, I went every day to this place but never succeeded in getting work. This was the only place I had been able to find in Cleveland which even offered work to a man without money. I then tried for an hour to do something for a meal, but was unsuccessful. Going back to the Square I sat down and considered my contract and my feelings. I had agreed with myself to do nothing that would make me lose my self-respect, yet I must eat or forfeit my contract. I glanced down at my hand. There was the golden circle of love,—my wedding ring. Other starving men had been forced to pawn this priceless emblem of sweet memories. I remembered a penniless man whom I met in San Francisco, weak from the suffering caused by extreme want. He was an engraver by trade. Hoping against fate that each day would bring him an opportunity, he walked and searched for the place which he knew he could so ably fill. As we talked he told me a story from the book of his life; of a girl wife and a baby boy whom the Angel had taken. While he talked he glanced down and turned upon his finger a slender thread of gold. I saw that to this man, there lay in that circle of love, a sacred memory,—the blossoming of an honest workingman's home, attributes of which were truth, love, honor and eternal fidelity. The workingman's home,—without the intrusion of poverty—is the stronghold of a great and good citizen, *the steadfast guiding star of a great government*. 240

Speaking to me with that freedom born of the sympathy which binds one homeless man to another (and he was a man, ambitious, free from the bondage of any bad habit), he said, "I will have to pawn my ring to-day, but," with determined emphasis, "I will never lose it. Yet I am a little afraid of the pawnshop. Their rate of interest is theft, and the time for redemption limited to one month." 241

We then talked of New York City's Provident Loan Association, which is simply the poor man's depository, the interest only one per cent, a month, and the time one year. The city that is without this social good is the city that does not belong to the present day progress, and must savor of betrayal, of artifice, of ill-gotten gains. As I left him, I said, "Should you have to pawn your ring, look the matter up. Of course, San Francisco must have so worthy an organization."

Leaving the Square I found a pawnshop. Unlike the man in actual poverty, I had not the dread fear of losing the cherished momento. The pawnshop man scratched it, weighed it, raised his hand, shrugged his shoulders, and said, "I giff you vun dollar."

"But it cost ten," I said.

"Vell, all right, I giff you vun dollar."

There was no other way, I was helpless. So I replied, "All right, take it." He gave me the dollar and a pawn certificate demanding for the redemption of my ring a dollar and twenty-five cents if redeemed inside of thirty days. If redeemed within an hour, it made no difference.

I had already tested the institutions, religious and otherwise, which existed in Cleveland supposedly to shelter the destitute, and had been either locked out or turned back into the street. How big that dollar felt in my hand! I fancied it was a twenty-dollar gold piece. I did not dare let go of it. With my old "senator" friend in mind, I saw a sign which read, "Dinner twenty-five cents." I could not get into the place quickly enough. I left greatly refreshed, but only half satisfied. I found the old "senator," with whom I shared my fortune. He had been unsuccessful in finding a job. He did as I did, spent twenty-five cents for a meal and saved the other quarter for a bed. We were fixed for that night, at least. 242

The next morning I saw a prosperous looking young man, standing on a street corner. I don't know what prompted me to do so, but I stepped up to him and inquired, "Do you know where a fellow can get a job?"

"Yes," he replied. "Do what I am doing. I am taking subscriptions for a magazine and I am making two and three dollars a day, and it's dead easy."

He handed me a card on which was the address of the office. The agent told me he thought he had canvassers enough, but said, "You're an intelligent looking cuss, I think I will try you." He made the following proposition: "We offer five of our leading periodicals for twenty-five cents, providing the person will subscribe for four of them. These will come to him through the mail at twenty cents a month for one year. A collector comes every month for the twenty cents." The twenty-five cents paid down for the five magazines was to be my commission. That night I had just two dollars, and I think I was the happiest man in Cleveland. I had landed a job, and I fully realized that I could have done twice as much if I had not been weakened by lack of nourishment and exposure while seeking work. After drawing my salary as "senator" and working like a Trojan through the day, the next Sunday found me at the Big Four Station with just six dollars in my pocket. Five dollars and twenty-five cents I paid for a ticket to Cincinnati. Spending the balance for food while on the road, I landed in that city at midnight, *broke*. I had no money, but I possessed a wealth of knowledge in regard to the city of high standards on the shore of the Erie inland sea. 243

CHAPTER XXV

Cincinnati—Necessity's Brutal Chains

"There is no contending with necessity, and we should be very tender how we censure those who submit to it. It is one thing to be at liberty to do what we will and another thing to be tied up to do what we must."

I entered the depot and sank wearily into a seat. I felt pretty well and had a clear conscience. Had I not honorably paid my way from Cleveland to Cincinnati instead of trespassing on the property of a mighty railroad company? I found a place to sit down, dropped my head forward and was soon fast asleep. But the sleep was of short duration for in a few minutes I was rudely awakened by the depot policeman.

"Where are you going?" he said.

"Nowhere," I answered. "I have no money."

"Well, what are you doing here?"

"Can't you see? I am trying to sleep?"

"Have you a railroad ticket?"

"No."

"Well, you can't stay here."

"Have they a Free Municipal Emergency Home in this city?"

"No."

"Where would you have me go?"

"Some other place."

Knowing too well the result to the homeless, destitute wage-earner of disobedience to the scion of the law, I quickly left. To be absolutely alone on the streets of a great, strange city at midnight, penniless, without a friend or acquaintance, was nothing to me, a strong, well man. But to the homeless woman or girl, or the frail sick man or boy, my homelessness held a great meaning. Going a short way up the street, I saw a man standing on a corner, and from his dejected mien, I knew that he, like myself, was a down-and-out.

"Hello," I said.

"Hello," he answered.

"Where can a fellow that's broke find a 'flop?'"

"Explore me!"

"They have just driven me out of the Big Four."

"They have just kicked me out of the L. & N. I am going to Fountain Square. It is now one o'clock. There is a train that leaves at two-thirty from the L. & N. People are already going to the station. You can probably stay there unnoticed until the train leaves. I can't go back for they would know me, but keep your eyes open for bulls." And with this advice he pointed out the way.

I went, and unnoticed I slept an hour sitting on a station seat. When the train left, I was the only remaining individual in the waiting-room and, of course, very conspicuous. The hint of the law for decency and order at that station, came to me with the question, "Why didn't you take that train?"

"I did not want it."

"What are you doing here?"

"I have no other shelter."

With the deep, low-bred voice of an unfeeling brute, he emphatically said, "Beat it."

I, too, must now find Fountain Square. A switchman kindly pointed out the direction. As I walked up the street, I raised my eyes to see if the day was breaking, but I might have known better. Automobiles and hacks containing only men came down the street and stopped before the large, red-curtained houses, and from the sound of revelry, of jest, laughter and music, I realized that I was in the redlight district. A black slave standing in a dimly lighted entrance to a passage between two houses, said, "Hello, Honey, buy me a drink."

"Why, girl, I could not buy a postage stamp that was canceled."

"Why, what's the matter?"

“I’m broke. I haven’t even a place to sleep tonight.”

“Come here.”

I stepped up a little nearer to her.

“Is yo’ sho’ nuff broke?”

“I most assuredly am.”

“Whah yo’ from?”

“From Cleveland.”

“What’s de matter wid Cleveland? Cleveland all gone to—?” 247

“It was for me, at least during part of the time I was there.”

“And has yo’ honest nowhah er to sleep?”

She put her hand in her purse and offered me a quarter. “Take that. It will buy yo’ a bed.”

Glancing up, I saw or fancied I saw the light of dawn. “No, girl. See, the day is breaking,” and as I went on to the Square, I knew that I had seen in that poor, black slave girl an expression of human kindness that could not be found in the vocabulary of the Christian, intelligent, cultured city of Cincinnati. She had offered me, the homeless, penniless, out-of-work man, a shelter.

Girl, for you and your kind, and your race, in the great South, the day *is* dawning.

Fountain Square is a strip of concrete about fifty feet wide, extending for a block. In the center is a large, magnificent fountain. This Square was acquired by the city as a gift, with a perpetual proviso that it should always be a market-place. Otherwise the city would forfeit the grant. Consequently, on one side, as a retainer, is built a six by ten foot iron, pagoda-roofed structure, under which are several tiers of shelves on which, for a short time each year, flowers are placed and sold. On either side benches were placed, but when I reached the Square every available place seemed filled. The shelves in the flower stand were crowded with homeless, drooping, 248
broken human beings. The roof was a shelter from the frost. There were one hundred men in this Cincinnati “Free Municipal Emergency Home” that night. Nor was this even free, for frequently the police of this humane city raid the Square and drive all, to the last man, to prison. Exhaustion was beating me down, and there seemed no other alternative, so with palpitating heart lest I be singled out as a hopeless inebriate, thrown into jail and then onto the stone pile, I lay down on the frost-covered stone at the feet of my homeless companions and fell into a sleep. It was only for a short time, however, for the rousing up of the men on the bench awakened me and one said to me in a hoarse whisper, “For God’s sake, Jack, get up! Here comes a bull.” I quickly sprang to my feet.

As the men were leaving the Square I saw a number of them enter a dark alley, and asked where they were going. I was told the *Enquirer* posted the “want-ad” sheets of the paper at its back door an hour before daylight. A group of fifteen men and two young women were already there, striking matches and struggling to read the columns of “Help Wanted.” I finally succeeded in getting close enough to read them. There were a number of things I could do. I took the list and started out only to realize the absolute necessity of a breakfast. I tried several places to work for this essential reinforcement to health and strength, but failed. I thought over my effects again. No, I had nothing except my eyeglasses. After all they were only for fine print while reading. I 249
thought of the watchmaker in New York who was resting from going blind and of the boy I had met, who, without his glasses, was almost blind but who had pawned them for food; of another, a boy without vice and industrious, selling the gold filling from his teeth to help him over a rough place; of men I had seen, through want, pawn their underclothing. It was a simple thing for me to part with my glasses. I got twenty-five cents on them.

After breakfast I began a strenuous search for work and at last, after explaining that I could handle horses, and was sober and industrious, I was hired at twelve dollars a week to drive a milk wagon at F—--, a big milk depot. But they did not want me for three days and there was the rub. The manager of a large restaurant told me that if I would come at two o’clock the next morning and work from two until four he would give me my breakfast and a quarter of a dollar. I was exceedingly happy, for I, at least, was rich in prospects.

I went to the public bath and was absolutely refused a bath because I had not a nickel. The Salvation Army refused me assistance in any way, shape or manner. The Associated Charities had nothing to give away. They did not even have a bed in exchange for work. However they had meals in exchange for labor. By sawing wood for one or more hours they would give me a meal. I 250
knew what that meal would be, a decoction of stuff made mostly of water, and I said, “You must give a pretty good meal for one and a half hours’ labor at the hard work of sawing wood.” This seemed to touch the head of this Charity institution, for in an offended way he said:

“This is a Charity institution—not a Commercial one.”

The Y. M. C. A. refused me even a bath. I was beginning to get saucy and politely told the presiding officer of this commercial institution he had better take the word “Christian” out of their title. I was met with such violent anathemas that I felt I was in the wrong and speedily retired.

By this time circumstances were forcing my mental contract to assume an india-rubber character, like laws of justice and good books. There was a large religious convention in session in the city and if my contract would allow me to ask aid of those institutions which stand avowed to help a destitute workingman, and these gentlemen of the cloth posed as representatives of such heavenly safeguards against despair, I felt that I was justified (although it was against a city ordinance and, if caught, I would be imprisoned), at least in asking of these the price of a meal or a bed. So bringing into play a determined will and taking a stand at a convenient place where I was sure I would not be detected, I hesitatingly approached one saying, “Sir, would you kindly give an honest workingman the price of a meal?“ He replied, without stopping except to slap me cordially on the back. 251

"My dear boy, I have no money."

I then asked another, whose answer as he stopped for a brief instant was:

“My dear friend, I have no change.”

To this I replied, “I did not ask for change particularly. I am not hard to suit, at least just now. A dollar will go farther than a dime.”

He only smiled and hurried on. I was their dear boy and dear friend, but not precious enough to find a place in their hospitality. I could have rested again that night on the stones of Fountain Square, or suffered the insult and abuse of a Cincinnati prison, or have been forced into the hospital, or have ended the struggle in the Ohio river, for all that Cincinnati or at least these two satellites of this mighty convention cared.

The nights were extremely cold but the days were bright and warm in the sunshine. Too weary to undergo further the trial without rest, I crept away to the river bank, far enough away to be unmolested, away from suspicion and question. Here on the sun-warmed gravel, with my little bundle for a pillow, I fell into a sweet sleep and pleasant dreams, not of pearly gates and golden streets, but of snowy beds and sumptuous tables. I slept for a long while and when I awoke the sun was setting in some dense black clouds and the air had the chill of an approaching storm. Remembering that I had a job at two o’clock on the coming morning and the thought bringing a certain degree of comfort and cheer, I strolled into a large saloon, where there was a bright fire. Here I sat and talked to many workingmen who came that way. I read the many papers scattered about until the place closed, at midnight, when I was forced back to a bench in Fountain Square. Just as I arrived there a gust of wind and rain swirled through the streets and into the Square with a mad force. It was a harbinger of what was to follow. A few moments later there broke forth the most piercing equinoctial storm of wind, snow and rain that I had ever known. It lasted for three days. 252

I crept into the office of an all-night lodging house. When it was discovered that I did not want a bed and had no money I was requested to vacate. I thought of going at once to the restaurant where I was to work in the morning but I remembered the manager had told me not to come before two o’clock. Already wet from exposure I sought the shelter of the flower stand. Eight men ahead of me had taken refuge there, but they kindly allowed me to crowd in. While we were protected from the beating torrent of rain, we were thoroughly chilled and suffering intensely.

After all, I was the favored one, for in a short time I would be in a big warm restaurant kitchen at work. It seemed an endless time before I found myself there with another man paring potatoes, and while we worked, he told me of the steamboat running from Cincinnati to Louisville, and of the opportunity many times for a man to work his way to the latter city,—a suggestion which I resolved, if possible, to profit by. Four o’clock soon came, and my breakfast was earned. It was not as I thought it would be,—a portion of all the good things that the restaurant afforded, and that I could eat against a week’s time of need. It was simply a twenty cent check for a breakfast at the lunch counter upstairs. I could have eaten four such meals without fear of any unpleasant results, but as he gave me the check he gave me my quarter also, saying, “We do not usually give more than a meal for the work, but I will make an exception this time, and as I told you, give you a quarter.” Why he did so, I have never been able to discover. That quarter meant a great deal to me, for I could spend it where I sought shelter, and feel a degree of independence and welcome. Don’t think for a moment the Y. M. C. A., the Salvation Army, or the Associated Charities got it! I was pretty sure, however, to save ten cents of it for a bed at the Union Mission on the levee. On going there I asked for the gift of a bed, and was decidedly refused. I was told it was not a Christian institution which gave gifts to the needy, but absolutely a business proposition with them. Whether that be true or not, I admired them for their honesty. This Mission was near the steamboat landing. 253

On the following morning I applied for the privilege of working my way to Louisville. I could do so, but the only work offered was that of roustabout, loading and unloading heavy freight before leaving and while en route. I would receive no pay for my work, unless I signed to return, or make a round trip. The deck passage was a dollar and a half. The next morning, with two white and twenty black men, associate workers, I was off for Louisville. 254

Life, in recent years, had not inured me to such arduous work. I think I could have stood the work more successfully than my trial in New York if I had not been weakened by starvation, but at the test of carrying a heavy barrel, box, or bundle, I could not stand firm and wavered as I walked, which frightened me. I realized that I must desist. I made an appeal to the boat officer to carry me to Louisville on the promise that I would pay as soon as I had earned the money. I was a

weather-beaten hobo, and of course, not to be trusted, but my request was granted, providing I would leave my little bundle as a pledge that I would fulfil my promise.

As I was leaving the boat at Louisville, I stood with my little blue jeans bundle in my hand. The purser was there to see that I turned it over to the negro porter. The porter had an austere cruel expression, but instantly, as we stepped back to deposit it in the porter's locker, his face turned to a glow of kindness and he handed me back the bundle, saying, "Hit the plank. Put it under your coat. You will not be noticed." In that little package were all my earthly possessions. It meant a great deal to me. So taking the bundle I slipped away. I was again homeless on the streets of another great city, looking for work.

CHAPTER XXVI

Louisville and the South

"Kindness is wisdom. There is none in life but needs it and may learn."

Shortly after my arrival in Louisville, Kentucky, true to the promise I made myself in Cleveland, I sent the Navigation Company the cash due them for my passage. I felt exceedingly happy that it could not be said of me that I had stolen my journey.

In Louisville, as in every other city of the Union I have visited, I found it very hard work to get employment. I found the white man working for the same wage as the black man, the black man working for just one-third of what he ought to have been paid. This is true all through the South. I found the white men greatly embittered against the black men and declaring that the negroes kept wages down by being willing to work for far less than the white workers. This was not true. The negroes were just as restless as the white men because of the small pay for labor. If the black workers were willing, or seemed willing, to work for less pay than the white workers, it was because they were forced to do so to keep from starving.

As the night came down I was forced to seek shelter at an Associated Charities lodging house, in front of which was an open surface sewer, so vile that it was nauseating, the disease-breeding odor penetrating the dormitory all through the night. I was met so gruffly that I felt as if I had offended someone by my application for shelter even though I was given to understand that I was expected to saw five barrels of wood for it. I asked for the privilege of washing my hands and face; for a sheet of paper and an envelope that I might write a letter home; for something to read, and a place to read it. All these little benefits, which meant just then so much to me and which cost nothing, were bluntly denied. I was told to go out in the rear yard among stacks of rubbish, where it was cold and damp, until the time arrived for offering the hospitality of the place. Before going to bed I was obliged to take a shower bath, which I thoroughly enjoyed, but which was spoiled by a small, dirty, rough towel to dry myself with. The bed, filthy, wretched and uncomfortable, I could scarcely have endured had I not been so bruised and weary.

The usual charity breakfast dope of water soup, water coffee, and coarse bread was given, for which I worked three hours. Edgeless tools made the work extremely difficult. Many of the men worked half a day for the night's shelter. I would have enjoyed the exhilarating work on the wood for an hour if I had been given a breakfast. Any man would who was able, and who wanted to keep his self-respect. I left the place embittered. I felt that I had been robbed, as others did who were forced into it, but it was a shelter.

The needs of another night were near at hand, and I had a half-day left in which to look for work. I passed a fine restaurant where I noticed the windows needed polishing up a bit. I stepped inside and asked the privilege of cleaning them for a meal. My wish was granted. For my hour's work I was given a delicious, wholesome meal and twenty-five cents besides. I felt like doing a great deal for myself and something for others. I was in luck.

After many trials I found work in a business place at five dollars per week and board, for seven days in the week. I was to begin the next morning. From exposure on the deck of the steamer I had contracted a severe cold which settled into neuralgia, and one of my teeth was aching beyond endurance. My twenty-five cents, which I was saving for a bed, I was now obliged to spend in having the distracting molar extracted. The first dentist to whom I described my pain and possessions, refused to pull the tooth for less than fifty cents, but the next man did it, and I was soon on the street feeling actually happy,—but my bed money was gone.

I could not have returned to the Charity lodging house even if I had cared to, as I was obliged to be at work at seven in the morning. As it was now growing cold and dark, I was told by another "under-dog" of the Hope Rescue Mission. I followed his suggestion by going there. Entering, I registered my name, and discovered that my presence at the evening meeting was demanded before I was eligible for a bed. I attended the meeting and discovered that one must experience a change of heart before he is actually certain of shelter, for the leader of this heavenly mansion said in his address, "You fellers need not think you can come here and make a big spiel, and get a bed unless you mean what you say." Immediately after the service of song and praise, we were shown to bed. The door of this "heavenly refuge" was locked at ten o'clock for the night, and going to bed at this hour was compulsory.

As we entered, the light, which was so dim that we could scarcely distinguish one cot from the other, and which hid the filth in which we were to rest, was in a moment turned out and all was darkness. Without undressing, I fell upon my bunk exhausted and was soon sound asleep, but at some unknown hour in the night I awakened. Notwithstanding my precaution in not undressing I realized that I was covered with vermin. The filthy odor of sewer gas pervaded the place and poisoned every breath of air we breathed. My first impulse was to get out of the place, but where would I go? To go out onto the street at this time of the night would probably mean arrest. I slid down from my bunk to the floor and forced myself to remain there until we were called at daylight.

All of these houses where a pretense is made of caring, perhaps, for “angels unawares,” are run with the greatest saving of expense. They usually have a number of physically weak dependents who volunteer their services for an existence. While we were lined up in a room next to the eating place, we had prayer. As all the guests did not feel inclined to kneel, one of the religious attaches who seemed to regard it a religious duty to uphold the spirit of the institution demanded,

“What is the matter with you fellows, can’t you kneel?”

This demand caused some back talk and probably would have ended in a rough house if at that moment the names of the worthy for breakfast had not been called. The breakfast consisted of luke-warm brown water, called coffee, and coarse bread, lacking in quality and quantity. A number of the men received nothing, and as we sat down before this prepared infusion of warm water, one of the volunteers looked straight at me and angrily said,

“Say, can’t you ask the blessing?”

Before I could, with resentment, ask what for, a man opposite looked at the fellow and said:

“Gwan, I’ll put a lump on your thinker in a minute. Can’t you see this feller ain’t no mission stiff?” 261

It was now six o’clock. I had just one hour before going to work. I realized that the annoyances I had contracted at this Rescue Hope Mission, which each moment seemed to increase with startling force and demand immediate action, must be gotten rid of. There was but one way open and that was the river. While hurriedly going there, I searched for some sort of vessel adequate to “boil up” with. Luckily I found a five gallon Standard Oil can, and reaching a secluded spot with available waste at hand for a fire, I hastily “boiled up.” I also took a bath in the icy waters of the Ohio. Using my jeans for underclothing, and rolling in a bundle my now-purified wet garments, which in the rear of the business house where I had been engaged I hung on some boxes to dry, I entered, serene and smiling and started to work just as the clock struck seven.

After working twelve long hours, which included time to eat two meals, I asked the manager if he would kindly advance me the seventy-one cents due for my day’s work.

“No, it is impossible,” he said. “It is not our custom. We pay only when the week’s work is done. If you have no place to sleep that is your affair, not ours.”

The reason the employer will not pay by the day is the same here as elsewhere,—because all 262
working men are regarded as drinkers and they are fearful of losing the worker. I realized that I could not work without rest. Louisville offered such a privilege to no one without money, although I had become one of her army of toilers.

I strolled down to the river thinking of my objective point, the government works below Memphis, which would afford me both shelter and food. I decided to reach there as soon as possible. The steamer, *Lucille Knowland*, running between Louisville and Evansville, was then loading freight and was scheduled to leave the next day at two P. M. Approaching a pompous, uniformed officer I asked if there was an opportunity for a man to work his way to Evansville. “I don’t know,” he replied, “Ask the cook.” I left at once for the kitchen where I found a large, robust colored man,—the man I was looking for. In reply to my inquiry for the privilege of working my passage he kindly answered, “I think so, Jack. Come around at one o’clock to-morrow and see me.”

Going up the street I met another unlucky, a young man twenty-five years of age, a cabinet finisher by trade. We exchanged stories of woe, and unconsciously entered into a partnership of ideas for a resting place that night. While we sat on the stringer of a coal chute, a poor unfortunate victim of alcohol came drifting near. Overhearing our plans, he stopped and told us
of a barber who was down and out when he first came to Louisville, and that he never refused an 263
honest, homeless man the privilege of sleeping in a room in the rear of his shop. We followed the dissipated fellow’s advice. After asking the barber for a night’s resting place, he showed us the room. There were only a few old quilts on the floor, to be sure, but the place was very clean and a good shelter. When we awoke the next morning, the first words with which my companion greeted me were, “When I dropped to sleep last night, I almost wished I would never wake up. To-day is as yesterday,—the same uncertain struggle.” Then he whistled a little and hopefully said, “But I may get work to-day.”

We parted, and I never saw him again. I left for my place of work. At one o’clock sharp I was on hand at the kitchen on the *Lucille Knowland*. The big cook took me and I was soon busily preparing vegetables for my passage.

My day and a half of work I donated to the establishment I had just left. I have thought of writing them that they might use it as an advancement to some homeless man for a place to sleep for a week until he could draw his five dollars for seven days’ work twelve hours a day.

Just before the boat left, a negro boy, the second cook, appeared on the scene and I discovered that John Ray (that was the head cook’s name) was not taking me because he needed me, but
simply because he wanted to help me. When night came he spoke to one of the officers who gave 264
me as fine a state room as there was in the officers’ cabin. I fell asleep, but at midnight I was suddenly awakened by a black face thrust in at the door and a voice excitedly crying, “Get up! The boat is on fire!” In another instant I was out. I saw the darkies, with trousers in one hand and shoes in the other, scared speechless, skidding to the fore part of the boat. There was a fire down in the hold, but it was quickly extinguished without disturbing a passenger, and we of the crew

were simply called to fight fire if necessary. I returned to my berth. It was the first time for many a night that I had enjoyed the comforts of a bed. I slept unruffled and refreshingly until morning.

The second morning we were in Evansville, and as I left John Ray I took him by the hand and said, “John Ray, if I ever get to Heaven I will surely find you there, for Heaven is made up of hearts like yours!”

In Evansville I got work with the hope of being able to save my railroad fare to Memphis but the pay was so meager I could scarcely exist. On the return of the man whose place I was temporarily filling, I found myself, one Sunday the last of October, almost broke and a long way from Memphis. As I was walking that day I met a young carpenter standing on a corner with all he possessed on this earth in a suitcase, and moneyless. He told me briefly his situation. He was 265
married,—had a beautiful wife and a little golden-haired baby girl. But his wife—Ah, well, why go into details! *Circumstances* made a tramp of him. That was enough. It was the old story of poverty, fatal to the American home. He was unable to get work in Evansville and was going on to Birmingham, Alabama, where he was sure of employment. He had spent the past night in an office chair, with the permission of the night clerk of a hotel. Several times he had dropped asleep and been awakened (although he was not on the street) by the police with insulting inquiries. I discovered that we were of the same mind in many things. He did not want to beat or steal from the railroad by riding a blind or a box car. Both of us wanted to work our way, if possible. He decided to peddle or pawn his suit case and clothes. Not being able to sell them, he was obliged to let a second-hand dealer have them for two dollars. Their value was fully thirty-five.

We were directed two miles out of town to a place called Howe, where we might be able to catch a local freight, but we were disappointed in an opportunity to work for our passage. There was the great Ohio river, spanned by a ponderous iron bridge, miles long, which must be crossed, and as no one was allowed to walk this bridge, our only alternative was to steal a ride. Many trains passing through Howe were obliged to slow up and soon we were safely ensconced in a side-door 266
Pullman and swinging far out on the mighty trestle of iron which arched the stream. I had broken my contract. We soon discovered that we were in a car which had been in a wreck and was probably on its way to the shops. The ponderous sides and great heavy roof were held up and in place temporarily by two-by-fours. After we crossed the bridge, the train seemingly attained a never-ending mile-a-minute speed, over cross roads, switches and springing piles. The roof and sides of the huge car would bend down and groan and tremble and swerve. We were positive that the next instant we would be crushed to death, from which there seemed absolutely no retreat. To have leaped from the fast-moving train among the rocks which lined the right of way, would have been fatal. So having nothing else to hang to, we hung to each other. This was the only available car. A submarine boat or an aeroplane was a life preserver compared to our vehicle. But a shrill, sharp whistle, coming at that time, was music. We were actually stopping. The train pulled out and left us at a water-tank, happy in our release. We might have been in Kansas for all we knew, but looking up and across the fields we saw a big house with a huge sign, “Whiskey Distillery.” We knew we were still in Kentucky.

A track man told us all trains stopped there, which was encouraging. It was now late in the day 267
and there would be no more trains until morning. The track man told us of an inn not far away. We went there and spent the night.

The next morning we found ourselves waiting at the track, broke, except that I had a nickel and the carpenter a dime. Soon a train swung into sight, and not having time to ask permission to work our way, we quickly boarded an empty gondola. It was a mixed train and we discovered that it was a freight which was very late. Immediately at the first station, we did not wait for the train crew to hunt us out and probably shovel us off, but leaping out, we ran ahead. Scarcely before either the crew or ourselves knew it, we were helping to carry sacks of oats, and what not, from a car into the station. The conductor looked at us curiously. When the work at that point was done, he said, “Come on back, boys, and ride in the caboose. No use of you fellers sitting out there in the cold.” When dinner time came, the train crew shared with us their dinners, and so we worked along with hand and heart, laughing and singing, until ten o’clock found us in Princeton, Kentucky.

While sitting in the depot, with no place to sleep, one of the station employees, kindly inclined and suspecting our position, said, “Boys, if you think of trying to spend the night here you had better not try it, for you are liable to be picked up. They arrested a bunch of out-of-work men here just the other night.” We then crept up into the railroad yards, to a cheap, all-night lunch 268
place where the owner kindly allowed us to lie down in a dark corner until morning. Then my pal decided to take another and a quicker route to Birmingham than the one I had planned, which was to go by way of Paducah. So we separated, he to find his desired train, I to find mine. I was told by a switchman that by walking out about a mile to the signal-tower I could catch a freight. What I did catch was a ponderous coal train, and mounting a gondola which was loaded with fine nut coal heaped up very high in the center, I was soon off.

Custom had not filled me, as yet, with courage sufficient to ride the bumpers between the cars where the slightest accident meant instant death. I crawled on top of the coal and into a small vacuum in one corner which was caused by heaping the coal high in the center. I felt very comfortably fixed and everything worked smoothly up the long steep grade we were climbing until we began to descend. When we commenced plunging like a cyclone through woods and fields, down hills and hollows, I saw that the coal was fast shifting down, seeking its level and

crowding me out of my pocket. I finally reached a point where I was hanging on to the corner of the car by my fingers and toes and feeling every moment that I would be dashed to the earth, for my strength was almost gone. Then we began to slow down.

"I Finally Reached a Point Where I Was Hanging on to the Corner of the Car by My Fingers and Toes"

"I Would Have Continued to Ride on the Top as Less Dangerous, if I had not been brutally forced on to the rods"

When we reached the end of a thirty-mile run we stopped for water. I had about decided to walk 269
to Memphis, but just then an old darkey came along with a span of mules hitched to the running gears of a wagon, who was going five miles on my way. I asked could I ride. "Sho' nuff, sho' nuff," was the answer, and we were soon astride the reach, exchanging black and white thoughts. Everything was serenely pleasant. The old darkey had just been praising his mules for the virtue of being reliable when an automobile hove into sight, coming directly toward us. Those mules jumped straight up in the air, plunged past the automobile, and with the swiftness of a scared wolf ran down the road to the first turn to the right, which they took in spite of the old darkey. In turning they tipped the skeleton of the wagon to such a degree that we were both spilled by the roadside. Luckily the earth was deep and soft, and we escaped injury except a few bruises, but it was a sudden parting of the ways. I caught a last glimpse of the old negro at the brow of the hill, on the run after the mules, just as I reached the railroad track, quite content to try walking again for awhile.

I kept near to my beaten path, the railroad, and was told that five miles beyond was a point where all trains stopped. I discovered I could not walk much further. I was lame and sore and my shoes were worn out. I had now become, in the eyes of both the railroad and myself, a hardened criminal and could steal a ride without self-imputation. After walking what seemed to me a very 270
long way I found myself exhausted. Having eaten nothing since the noon before, that which I had then being given me from the dinner pail of the railroad man, I felt the need of food. Seeing a large Kentucky farm house crowning a hill not far away, I approached it.

Sitting on the wide piazza, in struggling rays of sunlight which played through golden autumn leaves and vines festooned with an aftermath of purple blossoms, sat an elderly gentleman whose very mien seemed bubbling over with good nature. Beside him sat his motherly-looking wife.

"Will you give me the privilege of working for something to eat?" I asked.

"Ma, can you give this hungry man something to eat?" But Ma was already up and half way to the kitchen. They gave me all I could eat and a nicely tied-up lunch, as they said, "for a time of need."

When I had eaten I asked,

“Now what can I do for you?”

“I have nothing for you to do. You are very welcome. We are always glad to help a tired man. No one is ever turned away from the door of old Colonel Chandler’s.” Then, in response to a question of mine, he replied, “No; Ma, there, is the Christian side of the house. With me *it is just a spiritual law*, I guess.”

I caught a train of empty flat stone cars. Lying prone on one of these I rode five miles. We stopped. It was the terminal for that train, and a stopping place for all trains. I waited. In a short time another freight pulled in. From an empty box car came a familiar voice, “Hello!” 271

I sought the voice and found it was my pal, the carpenter, who had not succeeded in going his way and so had decided to come mine. He was famished from hunger. The lunch from Colonel Chandler’s was already needed to raise a man from the dust. “The time of need” had come. The night was upon us, and we were yet twenty-two miles from Paducah. We were suffering intensely from the cold, and while we waited for a relief train we built a fire by the track. No sooner had we done so than from out of the darkness somewhere we were joined by three other destitute men, bound our way.

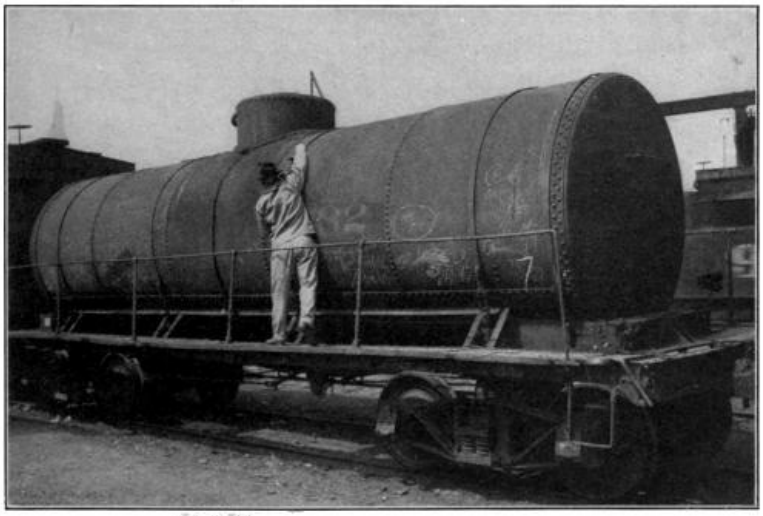
Immediately a train came in sight. It was made up mostly of oil tanks and the only possible way to ride, except on the rods and brake beams, was to lie flat down under one of the huge oil tanks and hang on. But it had rained somewhere and the rain had frozen as it fell. The train was covered with ice. The three other men took the advantage offered, regardless of all danger, but my pal and I, both novices, had not the courage, and as one of the men swung on, cognizant of our fear, he called out,

“Oh, come on. You can’t beat a train and be an old woman.” 272

I began to realize the physical courage necessary in the make-up and character of the man obliged to work and wander, to beat a railroad, braving dangers which from 1901 to 1905, inclusive, killed twenty-three thousand, nine hundred trespassers, and injured twenty-five thousand, two hundred and thirty-six, and each year shows no decrease. In this wonderful example of physical courage in these migratory workers, worthy of our deepest concern, we cannot help but catch the spirit of a greater courage in other workingmen—of one who freed four million slaves; of one who, nearly two thousand years ago, dared to enter the temple and cast out the thieves and the money-changers.

We had not long to wait. A moment later my companion and I were hidden in a box car of a following train. After an hour’s ride in the darkness, we found ourselves seeking in a strange city (Paducah, Kentucky), a place of rest. As we passed through the yards we saw a policeman striking matches or throwing bulls’ eyes into empty cars, looking for such men as we were.

Riding a Standard Oil Car



"After Becoming Almost Helpless from Numbness by Coming in Contact with the Frozen Steel Shelf of the Car I Stood Up and Clung to the Tank Shielding My Face from the Storm"

Aimlessly we wandered into the city. Just as the clock in the city hall tower was striking the hour of nine, we passed a window on which was lettered, "Charity Club Rest Room." The name looked good to us and we went in. A pleasant woman in charge told us she could not do anything then, 273
but gave us a note to the police station, telling us that Captain Doran had a few beds for homeless men, and that we might also try the Salvation Army, telling us how to find it. We felt that it would be preferable to the jail, and after another two-mile walk we found the Army headquarters. We shouted, called, whistled, and even rattled the doors, but no response. That cry in the night was a familiar one to them. It had become common and the bruised in Paducah could go elsewhere—so far as they were concerned. Retracing our steps, we sought Police Headquarters. There was no other way. Our little note from the Charity Rest Room engendered a feeling of security, and we felt that, though helpless, we would not be committed to prison and the chain gang. The captain had no beds, but we were told to go into the police court room and lie on the benches. Broken, famished, exhausted, we lay down on the three-slat benches and were soon lost in a profound slumber from which we were only once disturbed when the chief of city detectives came in and turned on the lights, exercising what we supposed was his prerogative, and obliged us to tell him our pedigrees from Adam down. But we, undoubtedly, looked all right to him, for we were left to our rest until the sweepers came at five o'clock. The slats were cutting and hard. I awoke several times and in my wakeful moments heard the carpenter murmur the name of a little golden-haired baby girl, away up in a northern Indiana home. We left, 274
unmolested. My pal was staked to a breakfast by a brother craftsman and told where he could find work in a nearby town. I cut wood for a good woman for half an hour with a stone hammer, for one of the best breakfasts cooked that morning in Paducah. She was the wife of a man who was employed in the railroad shops. Here the carpenter and I parted, not to meet again. He never learned my identity.

I preferred river travel, if possible, and applied to the steamer *Dick Fowler* for the privilege of working my way to Cairo, but was emphatically refused. The boat was due to leave. Deck fare was seventy-five cents, which I did not have. But I noticed a man,—apparently a business man of Paducah, who wore a fraternity badge of an order to which I belonged, in conference with the Captain. I showed my color in good standing and asked the loan of seventy-five cents. He gave me a dollar. Again I had broken my contract,—at least I had begged a loan.

Reaching Cairo, I walked a mile to a point where without difficulty I could catch a freight on the I. C., bound south. But this freight train ran no farther than Fulton, a town a hundred and forty miles from Memphis. It was nine o'clock when I reached there, and was exceptionally cold for that time of the year. I still had the remaining quarter of my dollar. Although the demands of 275
hunger were strong and I was so broken for rest, I decided in favor of a bed. I was told where I could find one for that price. It was a clean, comfortable, soft bed. In an instant I was lost in deep slumber and my aches and pains were being cured, my cares forgotten. Work even for breakfast was not to be had in Fulton, at least in all the places I had tried. I perhaps could stand it until reaching Memphis if I could get away quickly. Going out to a point where all trains would slow up, I found two negroes, waiting with the same object in view. Seated on the ground by a camp fire they were actually eating breakfast, consisting of some late corn, pretty old and tough, yet full of milk, which they had plucked from a nearby field and roasted on the bright coals. The moment I joined them, one inquired,

"Yo'all had breakfast?"

To my negative answer, he said, "Hep yo'sef, man." They had salt, and there and at that time it was the most refreshing green corn ever roasted. It satisfied me. I was ready to continue the battle.

The weather grew colder. It began to spit snow. Presently a mixed freight train hove in sight and my black friends made a dash for the forward cars. I chose what seemed to be an empty gondola

about midway of the train, but it proved to be about two-thirds full of Portland cement. After the train started the brakeman came back over the train and seeing me, asked, “Where are you going?” 276

“To Memphis.”

“Got any money?”

“No.”

“Well, you’ll have to see the flagman then.”

“All right, at the first stop.”

“No, you will have to do it now.”

“I am not used to walking mixed freight trains in motion. I can’t do it.”

“Yes, you can too.”

“You go to the devil.”

He passed on. I would not have run that train for ten thousand dollars. When we got full under way, I almost wished I had tried to do so for the ever-increasing wind caught the cement and hurled it into clouds of dust which enveloped me in a dense, fine powder, filling my eyes, nose, mouth and ears. Several times I was positive my respiration had ceased. It was with no small degree of joy, therefore, that I hailed the first stop. Whooping, coughing, sneezing, I got out of there and crept into an empty box car a little farther back. I congratulated myself on this shelter and good luck, when the flagman, who was on the lookout for me, stuck his head in the door saying, “Hello, old timer. Where are you going?” I thought I was a novice, and here I was being hailed as an old timer. My head swelled as big as a Superintendent of the Pullman Company. 277

“I am going to Memphis if God and this traincrew will let me.”

“Have you any money?”

“No.”

“Have you a card?”

“No.”

“Well, you can’t ride this train.”

The train was moving. “Let me ride to the next stop.”

“Well, if you do, you will get off in the woods.”

Half believing he meant it I leaped from the train. I did not have long to wait, for very soon another mixed train came thundering along. As it slacked up, the only advantage offered was another of the Standard Oil tank cars. However, it was not covered with ice. I crawled in under the huge tank, lay flat down on my belly, and hung on to the rods. As yet I had only made about twelve miles. As we sped on, I felt relieved that we were cutting down the miles. At the first stop, a voice greeted me.

“Hello.” It was one of my negro friends. He also had been ditched from the first train and had caught this one. His black pal was lost in the scuffle somewhere, and we did not see him again. Just as the negro spoke to me the conductor and brakeman came rushing up to the car. Just ahead of our tank car, was a carload of valuable horses. After looking them over, as they turned 278 to go back, the conductor spied us, and with stress, shaded with oratory of brilliant hue, he ordered us off. Because the train was moving, however, he did not wait to see if we obeyed.

At the next stop, I leaped from my position and began looking over the horses. Three of them were down. I immediately ran to the side of the right of way and getting a long reed began to prod them up. The darkey, seeing the crew coming, hid on the opposite side of the train. The conductor coming up said, “That’s right. I wish you would keep your eye on those horses into Memphis,” and I knew I was secure for a ride.

“Where is that nigger?” asked the conductor with emphasis.

“I don’t know,” was all I said. But I did know that he would be on the train as soon as it started, and he was. At the next stop, I said to him, “Get a rod and help me with the horses.” This he did. There were four of them down, but before the conductor could get to us, we had them all up. He saw us at work and called from two car-lengths away,

“Are they all right, boys?”

“All right,” we answered back. It was “boys” now, and I knew that the black, too, was safe.

At nine o’clock, having been joined by three more white men, we finally rolled into Memphis.

CHAPTER XXVII

Memphis—A City's Fault and a Nation's Wrong

"Society must necessarily look at these things because they are created by it."—Hugo.

On my arrival in Memphis I was greeted by a severe storm. Although chilled and almost starving my first desire was to secure my baggage, which I had sent on from Cleveland, and go to a hotel. But there were the conditions of the homeless and needy of Memphis to be studied. Under what more convincing and truthful conditions could I find need in Memphis for the erection and maintenance of a Municipal Emergency Home? So with renewed determination I decided to learn of what Memphis had to offer to the homeless, hungry worker.

My brisk walk from the railroad yards to the heart of the city warmed my thoroughly-numbed body. I realized that I must have food. I was at my goal. Here was a chance to work for the government. I expected to be shipped on the first boat. I know my personal appearance was decidedly against me as I entered Memphis. Soiled, black, unshaven, unwashed, I felt certain of arrest if seen by the police. Entering several hotels I asked work for a meal, but was promptly denied. The good things glowed in the dining-room windows. People seated at tables were eating all and everything they wanted. Outside on the street, well-dressed people hurried on to their homes. Must I beg, after all? No. Here, too, it was against the city ordinance as well as against my contract. I decided to try one more place. I entered one of the largest restaurants and approaching the manager, I said,

"I am hungry. Can I do something for you for a little to eat?"

He looked me squarely in the eye with a merry twinkle in his own and said,

"You look like the devil. Just drop in on a coal special?"

"No, a Standard Oil," I answered.

"Go back there," pointing toward the kitchen, "wash up, get some supper. My silver man has not shown up yet. If he does not, help them out in there."

What a feast that supper, for which I worked half an hour! What the black cook did not give me was not in the restaurant. The silver man came, and I was again on the street. I was growing so weary and felt the need of sleep, but with a clean face and clean hands, and a brush up, I had the courage to ask a policeman where I could get a free bed. He replied,

"In the jungles, or the jail. But I advise you not to go to the jail unless you have to."

At last, because forced to do so, I applied at the Y. M. C. A. They could not think of giving a bath, meal or bed to a homeless man in their beautiful palace, but gave me a ticket to the Gospel Union Mission on Front Street. This was an old building partly destroyed by fire, which had been condemned by the city,—a place fairly reeking with filth, sewer gas, and vermin. The Y. M. C. A. of Memphis would have committed a more Christian act to have literally kicked me into the street or turned me over to the police. But what did they care? I had been gotten rid of and was no longer a concern of theirs.

The old man at the Mission was reluctant to give me a bed for the night even with an order from the Y. M. C. A. He would so much, rather have had the ten cents. He told me I would have to saw wood the next morning for the privilege of sleeping there, which I did. Water was an unknown quantity, at least as far as a bath went, and no food was offered. The horrible experience I went through at the Hope Rescue Mission of Louisville did not exceed my experience in this awful place.

In the morning I hurried to the Post Office expecting letters and money, but the letters had been delayed. I knew absolutely no one in Memphis. I went to the office of the government works to see about my shipment. The boat would not leave until the following day so I was forced to spend another night in Memphis. As there was no other place, I was obliged to spend that night in the jungles,—the dense woods and willows which line the river bank. I had to do this if I wished to see what it meant to be destitute in Memphis. I made my way to the jungle. I was not alone. There were six other destitute men there. Four of these men were skilled craftsmen, all were Americans. The other two were unskilled laborers, one a German, the other a Swede. During the wakeful moments of that long, cold night I learned from each of these men that the reasons for his being there were just and honorable. All of the men were on their way to work. None of them were over thirty years of age. Two were not yet twenty-one. They called each other "Pal." Four of the men had already received transportation on the steamboat *Kate Adams*, to leave on the next day for Walnut Bend, where they were to labor on the government works riprapping the river banks with willows. They were to receive a dollar and twenty-five cents a day with board if they remained over a week on the job. If not, they were to receive but one dollar a day for ten hours' work. The German and the Swede were on their way to a railroad camp where work awaited them. Because they had no transportation they were compelled to work or beat their way to their destination. Two of these men had just money enough for a meager breakfast. It was a question in their minds whether to go without the breakfast or a bed. They decided to deny themselves the

latter. The others were penniless and had to win their breakfasts in some way or continue to starve. They were all comfortably clothed. The Swede's suit seemed a particularly good one, but in the approaching daylight it was discovered that, while lying too near the fire, he had burned out one side of his coat and one trouser leg. Noticing this he remarked, "Well, boys I must sneak out of town unseen, in a hurry, for if the police see me now they will arrest me without question." He and others expressed a fear that I also felt all through that awful night—the fear of the Memphis police. I decided to postpone my study of the government works.

A week later I met one of the "pals." He told me the food down on the government works was good, for coarse food, and there was plenty of it, but the sleeping accommodations were extremely bad. "I would have stayed," he said, "although the work was such that I wore out clothes faster than my wages would replace them, but the water made me ill. Then, too, I saw a man drowned. After that I didn't care to stay."

Explaining the tragedy, he said, "You see it was this way. We were working with the willows from 284
a barge in the river. The boy lost his balance and fell into the stream. The treacherous current instantly swept him from the barge. He tried to swim back. God! I never saw such a trial of strength for life. With the strong Indian overstroke, the muscles stood out on his arms and neck like cords of rope, wrought to such a tension it seemed as if the slightest blow would have snapped them like glass. But the look of anguish on his face! If I could only forget that! Almost exhausted, and seeing that his efforts to reach the barge were in vain, he turned to swim down stream and toward the shore, but a whirlpool caught him. For an instant he raised his calloused hands above his head, and then—all was over. No sooner had he disappeared than the boss demanded, with a violent oath, 'Bring on the willows.'"

"Were there no means of rescue provided for such an emergency?" I asked in horror.

His answer was nothing but the mention of the existence of so much red tape that a boat could not be provided which might possibly have saved that young man's life.

The man was so visibly affected while relating the incident that I was led to inquire the cause. He replied, as he abruptly left me,

"He was our pal that night in the jungles—my pal."

After hearing of this tragedy, I definitely decided not to go at all to the government works. 285

So filled was I with the obvious neglect by the city of Memphis of its toilers, I decided to tell the people of that city something of their thoughtlessness towards their homeless and needy workers, for whom they failed to provide food and shelter. So I called on the mayor and other influential citizens, telling them of my experiences and appealing to them to make a Municipal Emergency Home possible. All were in hearty sympathy with me. On invitation I met the City Club, an organization made up of the progressive business men of the city. Following my appeal to them, a Municipal Emergency Home Committee was appointed.

Leaving Memphis I went on to Birmingham, Alabama, that wonderfully active city, which because of its industries calls thousands of workingmen annually within its gate. My first effort here for the worker without the dime was to try to get medical treatment. Finding the dispensary closed at nine A. M., I was told it was open only one hour in the day, from twelve to one o'clock. The same conditions existed here in regard to the private charities as existed in other cities. Late in the afternoon I met a bricklayer, who told me in a casual way that a few weeks before, he had reached Birmingham, broke, and had been taken care of in a "speak easy" near the Louisville and Nashville Depot, which is filled with evil men and women. I had given him the impression that I 286
was down and out. "They'll treat you right there," he said. "It is the only place I know of. Go there." Then he added, "I'll bet you're hungry," and as he left he offered me a quarter.

Later in the evening, while I stood on a downtown corner, a well-dressed, intelligent-looking man slapped me on the shoulder and said,

"Beg pardon. Are you a railroad man?"

"In a way," I replied.

"Can you direct me to the round-house?"

"No. What is the matter, want a place to sleep?"

"That is just it. Here is my union card. I happened to hit town broke. Don't know a soul, and don't know any of the boys. I know I could spend the night at the round-house, if I could find it."

Even here the jail denied shelter and the Salvation Army had nothing to offer a penniless man. I felt my going to Birmingham was at an opportune time as the Alabama Federation of Women's Clubs was in convention, and a beautiful, gracious lady, their State President, Mrs. Ferris Columan, kindly granted me a hearing. When I left I was conscious of the fact that I left a thought which would be carried to a great many of the kind hearts of Alabama.

I went on down to Mobile, then to New Orleans. Wherever I went, all through the South, I heard 287
the cry in the night of cruel abuse and neglect of the wage-slave just as I heard it all through the North. I saw the blood drops of the peon, the broken, bruised and lacerated bodies of human beings leased from the prison to the convict camp. I heard the unceasing cry of woe from stone walls and iron bars, the mad shrieks from dungeon cells and torture chambers and the terror-

striking bay of the bloodhound.

While what I have written of will remain an incurable wound, when I carried the message of progress, of justice and love, a plea for an institution for labor, for health, and for brotherly care, into the labor councils, the progressive Business Men’s Union, composed of three hundred citizens, and the Women’s Clubs (especially the Era Club), the intense interest shown by all of these for the oppressed heralds an illumined page in history and bespeaks a glorious victory for the South.

CHAPTER XXVIII

HOUSTON—THE CHURCH AND THE CITY'S SIN AGAINST SOCIETY

"Do no wrong, do no violence to the stranger."—JEREMIAH, *22: 3.*

The weather was bright and cold when I reached Texas. As I walked the streets of Houston I noticed that the police glanced at me suspiciously. Several of them, by their looks, seemed to be weighing my worth. After my arrival in this city, from morning until night I walked its streets in search of work, until compelled by the shadows of the night to seek a free place to rest.

During all my earnest endeavors that day the only opportunity for work came from a labor solicitor offering me a dollar a day and board to work ten hours a day in the woods.

"How do they feed you?" I asked.

"As good as in any camp." (I knew all that meant.)

"What are the sleeping accommodations like?"

"Well, it is a new camp, and, of course, they are not the best."

"What is the fare to the camp?"

"Five dollars."

"Do you pay the fare there?"

"No, but we advance it to you and take it out of your pay."

"Is my pay assured when my work is done?"

"Oh, yes. You will be working for a mighty big corporation of Chicago, worth millions of dollars."

"But when I reach there I am five dollars in debt to you. Suppose that I did not want to stay, or that I couldn't stand the work, or that I might be taken ill, or that there should be some reasons why I could not work, my only bond is my body, what then?"

A Sick and Homeless Boy with His Dog on Guard. He is Sleeping on a Bed of Refuse Thrown from a Stable, with an Old Man Lying near Him

His face flushed. "I suppose I could run away if I had the strength," I continued, "and if I did, what then?" The already flushed face turned scarlet.

"My friend," I said, "for a mere pittance and a subsistence that you cannot recommend, you would make of me and these other destitute laborers a peon with all the wicked evils of that slavery. Being a workingman yourself is the only excuse to be given you for filling the position as solicitor for human lives."

After several futile efforts to secure work on the following day, I was advised by all institutions which stood supposedly to help the destitute in Houston to the "Star of Hope Mission." It was after ten o'clock when I arrived there and as I entered I noticed several exceedingly well-groomed, well-dressed and well-fed men who looked as though they were getting about six square meals a day. Innocent of who they were and why they were there, I stepped up to an attendant at the desk, saying, "Would you give a man who is broke a bed?" Absolutely and purposely ignoring me, the man, in a gloating voice and obtrusive manner, turned to one of these men in evidence, who proved to be one William Kessler, Chief of City Detectives, and said, "Here is a man who wants us to give him a free bed."

Immediately this officer, within “this temple of peace, love and hope,” began one of those brutal, harsh inquisitions for which the police forces of our nation are well-known and which they seem to think is their prerogative. Such an illegal examination, brutally conducted, covers the helpless and innocent with the awful shadow of fear fathered by the suspicion of cruel abuse, and the victims of such gross assault, in their loneliness, beyond all help, are forced to appear guilty of something when they are not.

This “guardian of the peace” of Houston, in a most overbearing manner asked me:

“Where are you from?”

“From New York,” I replied.

“What do you do for a living?” 291

“I work,” was my answer.

“What kind of work do you do?”

“I do any kind of work I can get to do to make an honest living,” I answered.

At this point of our conversation I turned my back to leave him, when he loudly called to a subordinate and said,

“Arrest that man.”

Instantly a rough hand was upon my shoulder. I demanded of the man, “Why do you arrest me? I have done no wrong.” But my appeal for release was absolutely ignored.

I resolved not to reveal my identity to anyone, and was taken half a block down the street, where a patrol wagon was waiting, in which were seated seven other unfortunate, homeless men like myself. Remember, the patrol wagon was waiting for me a half block away from the “Star of Hope Mission”! Why? Because it was so much more respectable than to have it waiting for the victims of the Mission in front of its door.

After I had been forced into the wagon, while it passed the bright street lamps I studied the faces of my unlucky companions in crime. All these young fellows were between the ages of eighteen and thirty-three and were skilled workers. As I looked upon them I immediately recognized one of them as a young fellow to whom I had spoken that afternoon while looking for work. He, also, 292 was in the same condition that I was in, stranded and homeless. He told me the police, that very day, ordered him out of town but because of his ill health he was unable to walk. He also said that he was afraid to risk going into the railroad yards to get a freight, as the police were liable to arrest him, so as the night was very cold, fearing with his poor health that it might be fatal if he should sleep outdoors, he finally decided to go to the “Star of Hope Mission,” where, as a sick man, instead of being given relief and shelter, he was thrown into prison.

Arriving at the jail, we were immediately searched. While the night captain took my record, I told him that I was there, not because of having committed any crime, or as a political critic, but simply to study the conditions of the unemployed in the city; to study the chances of an honest workingman, temporarily out of work and without means to get the necessaries of life in Houston. Having never heard of me, the Captain gave me an audible smile of suspicion and ordered me thrown into the bull-pen, a dungeon of almost utter darkness.

The docket of the Houston City Jail for the night of November 28, 1910, has the names of eight victims of the “Star of Hope Mission,” including myself. They were all run in by the Mission because they were unfortunate enough to be without a night’s resting-place, and had appealed to 293 this so-called Christian institution, maintained supposedly for the express purpose of sheltering homeless boys and men.

While in jail I interviewed most of my fellow victims, and learned that not one of them had ever been in jail before. The torture of their humility was clear to me, for while speaking to them, they continually reverted to kind parents and a loving home. We were all sitting or lying down on the stone floor, as there was no other accommodation. While all of them were gloomily silent, I remarked:

“Well, cheer up boys, this is not so bad. It might be worse.”

One of them quickly answered, “You’re right, Mister. I hope they won’t let us out until morning for I have no place to go.”

Then I said, “Supposing we were in a condemned prisoner’s cell and were to be put to death to-morrow,” and one of them quickly replied, “I wouldn’t care if we were for I have nothing to live for anyway.”

During this interval of imprisonment a local newspaper man who learned of my being in the bull-pen, came at once to the dungeon and called me. I sprang to the steel barred door of this Houston hell, into which the “Star of Hope,” aided by the Houston police force, had thrown us, and said, “Here. What will you?”

The rays of a dim light revealed my face to the reporter, who asked me, “Are you Edwin A. 294 Brown?” At the same time he pulled out of his pocket a New Orleans newspaper which had published a short time before a counterfeit presentment. While glancing at the likeness, he

remarked, “You are the man all right.” “When did you get into town? We have been looking for you for a week.” I replied, “I got into town this morning and into jail this evening.” (The New Orleans paper stated that I was going to Houston.)

“Don’t worry. We’ll have you out of here in a few minutes.”

True to his word I was soon a free man and on my way with the journalist to the office of the Houston *Post*. After the interview, I left for my hotel, where, after the luxury of a refreshing bath, on a soft, snowy bed, I lay down to rest but not to sleep for while my body rested, my thoughts were back in that wicked cell with those of my countrymen who saw no future and to whom life held no meaning. Not until the dawn of another glorious Texas day, a symbol of the light glowing in the great hearts of the good people of Houston and of Texas, did I fall asleep.

The next morning the Houston *Post* carried a startling story on the arrest of the victims of the “Star of Hope Mission,” supplemented by the interview I had given, portraying Houston’s care for its homeless unemployed. The startling exposures made by the Houston press on existing conditions were followed by my talk before the Conference of State Charities then in session, and brought forth a volume of articles in the various local papers, teeming with apologies for the inexcusable conduct of the “Star of Hope Mission” and the police system of that city.

CHAPTER XXIX

San Antonio—Whose Very Name is Music

296

"If mankind showed half as much love to each other as when one dies or goes away, what a different world this would be."—Auerbach.

I carried away in memory from San Antonio two pictures,—one of a beautiful, quaint old city, rich in historical lore; a city of winter sunshine, palms and flowers which make it truly "a stranger's haven"; a picture of welcome and a spirit of kindness even to the homeless unemployed of which I caught glimpses during my brief sojourn in that city, though covered by thoughtlessness for their care of them.

The other picture is of the fifty destitute, homeless men I came in contact with during the few days I spent in San Antonio. I found all but two anxious and looking for work. These two, like many a rich man's son I know, impressed me that they would die before they would work. They seemed to have lost all self-respect and had no compunction in begging a meal or a bed. One was a drinker and the other had a mad passion for reading anything and everything, yet even from 297
these I frequently heard the expression, "I wish I had a job."

There are, of course, the regulars, chained by habits of vice, on whom the police can put their hands at any time. I know them at a moment's glance. It was not these poor unfortunates I came to San Antonio to study, but the itinerant workers who are lured from their dull towns to new and undeveloped centers of activity, believing work and high wages await them.

It was Saturday morning. While strolling down West Commerce Street, I met a young man in overalls, with jumper tucked under one arm. I greeted him:

"Hello, Jack! Can you tell a fellow where he can find a job?"

He looked at me with a laughing twinkle in his eye and answered, "I have nothing like that up my sleeve. I wish I had, and if I could, I would share it with you, pal. I am dead broke, too, and," he continued, "this is my birthday. I am twenty-one to-day. God, but I feel wretched and dirty! I slept in a freight car last night in the I. & G. N. yards but it was a broken rest. The floor was hard and I was as cold as the devil, and then, too, a fellow can't sleep much when he is fearful that at any moment a railroad or a city bull is going to put his hand upon him."

I then asked if he had yet breakfasted, and he answered, "No. I have not eaten since yesterday 298
morning."

Making a trivial excuse, confessing I possessed a little money, we went to breakfast. As we sat down I picked up the morning paper, and he said at once, "Look at the want ads." The only thing offered that morning was by a man in the Riverside Building who wanted ten grubbers.

"Let's look it up," I said.

"All right," he replied. "I can grub, and I'll do anything."

We left for the place. The man was paying ten dollars an acre to men to grub his land, but the agent believed the work was all done. From the manner of the official in charge we fancied we were not of the right color or kind of men for the work.

As we came out of the Riverside Building the young man said, "I would give a thousand dollars if I had it, for a bath and a shave."

"Why don't you go to the public bath?" I asked.

I wish all San Antonio could have seen the look of anticipated pleasure on that boy's face when he asked eagerly, "Where is it?" and the look of disappointment which replaced it when I said, "They haven't any here. But," I said, "you can get a free shave at the barber's college." He went there at once and got his shave.

When he came out of the barber's college, I said, "Let's go to the Y. M. C. A. They, perhaps, will give us a free bath."

"Where is that?" he asked. "It is a rich man's club, isn't it? I don't believe they want hoboes like 299
us there."

I answered, "No; it is a 'Christian institution,' and they are supposed to stand for just this very thing—to help young men who want to help themselves."

We went to the Y. M. C. A. and when we reached the foot of the stairs I said to my companion, "You go up and ask them."

"No," he said, "I can't do it. Why, it cut me even to ask for a free shave where I knew they wanted me."

I then said, "Let us go up together."

Shyly he followed. I approached the attendant at the desk and asked for a free bath. At first he

told me decidedly that their baths were for members only. Then he asked me if I was a member of any organization. I replied I was not, and as I turned to leave he said, “I will make an exception this time, but it is not our custom. Do you want one or two?”

I said, “But one. This young man with me wants it.”

The attendant gave him a towel and the young man went to his bath. But we were given to understand, in a decisive manner, that we were not welcome and not wanted. *The bath thus given my companion was the first gratuity ever granted me, in all my wanderings, by the Y. M. C. A.*

The first remark the young man made after coming from the bath was, “I feel so good, I think I could go without eating for a week.” 300

Turning to me abruptly he said, “I tell you, Jack, I can’t beg or steal, and I’m not going hungry or bedless another day.”

I suggested the Associated Charities. “They might possibly help us.”

“That would be begging, wouldn’t it? Besides, that place is for sick men, isn’t it? I am not sick. No! I am going into the navy. Let us go over to the Post Office, to the United States Marine Office, and see what they have to offer.”

Although he was a young man, a graduate of the grammar school, a perfect type of physical manhood, straight as a poplar, five feet eleven inches in height and weighing a hundred and eighty pounds, he could not get in, and was referred to Fort Sam Houston for enlistment. As we left he said, “I am going to ask the first soldier I see about going in. He probably will give me twenty-five cents for a meal and tell me to keep out of the goldarn place.” He continued, though, in a decided manner, “I am going into the army,—not because I want to, but because there seems to be no other immediate opportunity offered.”

And so we parted, he to enter the army, I to be left alone with my thoughts.

Two-thirds of our army to-day is made up of boys who are forced into it. It is the volunteer who makes a good soldier, but these boys are not volunteers—with them it is compulsory. Monday morning I went to the army post to see if the boy had done what he said he was going to do. I found him there a soldier, giving three of the best years of his life for sixteen dollars a month, instead of receiving the privilege of labor by being temporarily cared for in a Municipal Emergency Home until he could help himself. 301

And, now, I will portray briefly the story of “The young man with the hoe,” who made his way into southern Texas. He was penniless, and was arrested on the Frisco line because he was discovered riding a freight train. He told me how he was given thirty days in a Texas convict camp, and how they nearly killed him there for being charged with trespassing on the property of the railroad company. I somehow felt that the convict camp had almost killed the best within him, for he remarked as we were strolling down the street toward our destination, “I have a nice gun on me. I think I will pawn it, because if a fellow has a gun on him and has nothing to eat nor any place to sleep he is liable to do something he will be sorry for.” He took his gun into a pawnshop and left it there for thirty-five cents.

These are but two incidents showing how badly this city needs a Municipal Emergency Home. There are two-score others that sadden me as I think of them. What a beautiful thing it would be for San Antonio to be one of the first cities in the South to build a home! 302

Leaving San Antonio on my way to Dallas, I stopped for a short time in Austin where the Texas Legislature was in session.

During my investigations I have never seen a public notice, in the press or elsewhere, guiding a destitute person to the Associated Charities or publicly offering aid, until I came to Austin. Here I saw just one such notice. It was not at the depot nor at any employment office nor at the emergency hospital, nor at the prison door. It was plastered up in the office of a first-class hotel which at that time was headquarters for the assembled lawmakers of the State of Texas. Well, perhaps, that body of estimable gentlemen did need a little charity.

The spirit of power, energy and enterprise has been breathed into the city of Dallas, with all its youth, strength and progress. There is not an old-fashioned thing about her. She fairly flows with the present. The things most in evidence in this city are new thoughts, new ways, new things. Realizing the spirit of the era, her badge of honor, her insignia should be “Just Now,” covering two meanings. *Just* (in the spirit of justice) “disposed to render to each man his due”; *Now,* “in the least possible time.”

When I told the people of Dallas that their beautiful public library of fifteen thousand volumes could afford to have on file for public use only one daily paper and that I had seen a dozen men and boys waiting their turn to read the “want ads”; that the Salvation Army had turned many back into the street because they had no money; that a private employment office was robbing men and boys; that I had found a sixteen-year-old, starving boy in the city forced to beg or steal, who declared that the Associated Charities of New York had shipped seventeen of them from the Orphan Asylums through to Dallas and turned them adrift in the western country and that the Salvation Army absolutely refused to give them aid; of a mother with five little children, one a babe in arms, who spent thirty-six hours in a vacant, old storeroom which was absolutely barren, 303

while the husband looked for work; of the suffering of the many toilers in Dallas walking the streets all night, seeking shelter under death-dealing conditions, and that none of these seemed to know that there was in existence such a thing as organized charity in Dallas, and that many of them, even had they known it, would have taken the chances of starvation rather than to have asked alms, no matter how kindly disposed Dallas charity organizations might be toward them,—they listened with deep interest.

Houston, San Antonio and Dallas received my counsel, not in the spirit of criticism, but as a message holding a great truth, a message containing facts which must be regarded in acts that will reward themselves twofold in the still newer Houston, San Antonio and Dallas,—cities which every day are stirring into new industrial activity the northern hills of the “Lone Star” State.

CHAPTER XXX

Milwaukee—Will the Philosophy of Socialism End Poverty?

"Politics rests on necessary foundations, and cannot be treated with levity."—Emerson.

Following Christmas day, December 26, 1911, just at the beginning of the most bitterly cold winter weather our country had known for a great many years, I went to Milwaukee. The city was in the last few months of a Socialist Administration. I wanted to see what it meant to the working classes and especially to that class I was deeply interested in,— the homeless workingman, and at times the destitute, homeless workingman. There were three of our important cities, which, because of their national prominence in social progress, I felt would add a climax to my investigations: "Socialist" Milwaukee; "The Golden Rule" City of Toledo; and "Spotless" Detroit.

It was twenty degrees below zero when I arrived at Milwaukee and this extremely cold weather heralded the speedy gathering of the ice crop. In this city there were four thousand unemployed homeless men, fully one-fourth of them destitute, begging, thieving, sleeping on the floors of the cheaper saloons, seeking all of those available places that would possibly keep aflame the spark of life, in addition to those finding shelter in the Milwaukee Rescue Mission.

In three days the ice crop was made and in four days' time thirty-five hundred of these men were on the ice. The five hundred who did not go were too old, physically weak, or had not sufficient clothing. Many of those who did go, in the condition they were in, froze their faces, ears, hands and feet and from exposure were forced into the hospitals and some into their graves. The wages paid by the ice company was a dollar and seventy-five cents per day, from which the worker paid five dollars per week for board. It is not necessary to refer again to the days of work. For many reasons, the laborer is forced to lose time during the week,—yet the board must be paid.

The weather continued extremely cold for many weeks. I found the Milwaukee Rescue Mission incomplete and inadequate. In this bitter cold I was denied admission to the institution by reason of its being overcrowded, and, also, because its doors were locked at ten-thirty P. M.

Late one afternoon I entered its waiting-room, a long narrow room, near the entrance. It was filled to suffocation with homeless men. I, with many others, was denied the privilege of working for shelter and food. Too many had already applied. I was not to be denied a bountiful five- or ten-cent meal providing I had the price. I heard an old man of sixty-five abused and denied a second cup of coffee. Divine worship, however, was free and while I waited in the packed room for that hour I read these inscriptions on the wall:

"Any man caught in the Act, will have cause to wish he hadn't done it."

"Even a moderate drinker will be denied lodging."

"Whenever you smoke a cigarette, you may say, 'Nearer my God to Thee.'"

"Keep your I's on the spotter for he is watching you."

Smoking was absolutely forbidden, yet no smoking-room provided.

Spitting on the floor was breaking a castiron rule, yet not a cuspidor was provided for that use.

The hour for worship came and on the instant the lights were suddenly turned out. As we stumbled over the benches and chairs, as well as over one another trying to get out, a man told us emphatically "to go in to worship [in a very large audience room, which had stood empty while we were packed in the small one] or get out." The religion or the mode of worship of many of these men was not after their way, but that made no difference. As the thermometer registered twenty-two degrees below zero that night, it was not a very comfortable experience for the half-clothed men who were forced to walk the streets in search of other shelter.

I followed them out to see where they went, and just as I was leaving I recalled the last motto I had read before the darkness was forced upon us:

"No law but love, no creed but Christ."

Most of the men who sought other shelter went to the saloons and by the big red-hot stoves kept from perishing. Others went to the tramway station or the depots, or the offices of the cheap lodging houses.

In one of the Milwaukee daily papers January 2, 1912, I read: "The first man to be sent to the house of correction this year was John L—--, sentenced in the District Court yesterday to a term of ninety days. He was begging on Grand Avenue, Sunday night."

The spirit shown in the Milwaukee Rescue Mission, as revealed to me, was not Christian. The heart of the superintendent of this institution may be in the right place—I did not meet the gentleman—but the hearts of his subordinates (at least those I came in contact with), and the spirit of the institution were not. I heard men in the Police Court of Milwaukee beg of the Judge to be sent to the House of Correction as a relief from suffering during the bitter cold winter.

This, my exposition of the condition of the unemployed homeless of Milwaukee, should not be

regarded as a criticism on Socialism, although the latter failed in its care and treatment of their unemployed. There are many excuses to offer. An old, rotten political and social system, four thousand years old, could not be reconstructed in a moment's time. Bound by City and State Charters and a netted tangle of City and State laws, it was impossible for the administration to carry out the fundamental principles of Socialism. That brief Socialist administration was more one of theory than of practical interest, although the Fire and Police Departments were not out of control of the administration except in matters of salary. The good intent of the policies of the administration are reflected in many permissive bills which went to the Legislature, in most cases to remain. Among them are bills providing for:

Men dealing in ice;

Unequivocal right to construct Municipal Lodging Houses and Tenements;

Public Comfort Stations;

An act through to build parks.

A municipal lighting plant was planned at this time and municipal markets. The unified press was against this administration, which taking all in all, it would not be fair to regard as a comprehensive example of Socialism, though I may well add that during it taxes were not raised. At that time Milwaukee had the lowest tax rate of any large American city.

CHAPTER XXXI

Toledo—The "Golden Rule" City

"One of the common people (as Lincoln once humorously said) God must have loved because he made so many."—Brand Whitlock.

Among the things that I found in the "Golden Rule City" of Toledo were these:

Four National banks, fourteen State banks, savings banks and trust companies, whose combined resources were over sixty millions.

A splendid McKinley Monument built by popular subscription which was completed in one day.

A three hundred and fifty thousand dollar Y. M. C. A.

A two hundred and twenty-five thousand dollar Y. W. C. A.

A one hundred thousand dollar Newsboys' Building. (How essential is the conservation of the Newsboy! When he is no longer small enough to be a newsboy and must do the work of an able-bodied man, what then?)

A four hundred thousand dollar Marble Art Museum. (The cost given does not include the value of the collection.)

Finest Municipal golf course in the world.

A Municipal Zoölogical Garden which is a wonder, the animals being housed, fed and sheltered at great cost.

Toledo has also an old ramshackle of a building, which ought to be condemned, called again by that pretty name which has become so popular with federated charities, "The Wayfarer's Lodge." I made one attempt to stop there but it was closed. Its closing hour was eight-thirty P. M. But I caught its spirit, which was a little worse than the Milwaukee Rescue Mission to the homeless man, when I was politely, or rather impolitely, given to understand that in that most bitter cold weather even, I was not welcome to warm myself by the old stove. I was told by a starving boy that the food given for one and a half or two hours' work was the usual three different concoctions of water, and to look at the old inadequate den from the exterior was enough. This wretched place accommodates only fifty men, when every night during that bitter winter there were from three to five hundred on the streets of Toledo who had no place to lay their heads.

Just across the Maumee river, in East Toledo, is an old frame police station where I found a hundred and twenty-five men trying to sleep nightly on the floor. A little way from there, fifty were sleeping on the floor of a Mission, with newspapers for beds. Each lodger was taxed five cents for that privilege.

In this "Golden Rule City," I found many men who had served time in the jails for the crime of poverty. I was told by a citizen at the time of my visit that three hundred men from one of their prisons were compelled to put up ice for the city of Toledo, receiving no recompense for their work but a cell and prison fare,—slavery more damnable than ever cursed the South. These were then pushed out on to the world again to become mendicants and criminals. Facts calling for prison reform as told in romances carry a great weight for good, but enforced reform is what is demanded of us to-day. Let us not be slow to act.

I have told of the many things I found in "The Golden Rule City of Opportunities." Let me tell of a few things I did *not* find,—things which might give an opportunity to those who come and are willing and must work:

- Municipal Emergency Home.
- Emergency Hospital.
- Convalescent Hospital.
- Public Bath.
- Municipal Laundry.
- Municipal work for the unemployed at standard wages.
- Public Lavatories.
- Public Comfort Stations.

It may not be the fault of the progressive people of Toledo that they have not these beatitudes. Like Milwaukee, they too may be bound by a knotty web of State and City laws, which must be overcome before the people can really testify in action to what they really profess.

CHAPTER XXXII

Spotless Detroit

314

"How many things shudder beneath the mighty breath of night."—Hugo.

In the midst of the desperate winter of 1911 and '12 I passed a week among the homeless of Detroit. During my brief stay, there appeared in one of the daily papers the following notice, and a number of similar ones:

"Charles Heague, thirty-six, no home, was picked up in the street after midnight by Patrolmen Wagner and Coats. Both hands were frozen."

As in other cities, during the five long months of winter there is in Detroit a vast army of out-of-work, homeless, starving men.

Detroit has many benevolent and charitable institutions, which, no doubt, are doing a great deal of good. But the ones I came in contact with were imperfect and do not serve their purpose. The McGregor Mission, which shelters thousands of homeless men annually, is one of the best, if not the best, in our nation. The spirit of kindness in evidence was remarkable with but few exceptions, of which the most important was that its doors were closed at ten P. M. Also I saw 315
twenty men and boys, early one Sunday morning, driven out of this Mission when the mercury was far below zero, and not allowed to return for two hours. Being Sunday, the saloons and other places of business, as well as the other Missions, were closed. These half-clad men were forced to remain on the streets. Their suffering was pitiful.

The McGregor Mission was decidedly inadequate for the vast army of homeless workers in Detroit at that time. Here, also, men were seeking every available place to sleep and many, for doing so, were thrust into jail. The most noticeable feature of the incompleteness of this institution was the lack of a department for women.

One of the most startling examples of maladjustment in Detroit was the Michigan Free Employment Bureau, located in an old decaying building, with window lights broken out of both door and window-sash. The floor being much below the level of the ground, each comer carried in the snow and filth, which soon melted into an icy slush. Think of it! Two hundred homeless men, willing to work for a mere pittance, for an existence, crowded into a congested room—which did not hold nearly all of the applicants—many of them with broken shoes and sockless feet standing in ice water for hours while they waited and hoped!

As a contrast to this object lesson, let me relate another. The following Sunday afternoon I 316
mingled with an audience of two thousand people listening to a religious agitator who declared he *must* raise four thousand dollars at once for a Mission,—a Mission which after a service of song and prayer let starving, homeless men freeze to death on the street!

In thirty minutes he raised thirty-five hundred dollars. On another afternoon a man, with pathetic words and appealing pictures, was soliciting money for the lepers in India. To my question, "Are not these unfortunates subjects of the British Crown, and being so are there no appropriations made for their care by the English government?" the speaker answered, "Yes; but so little, it is very inefficient." It was then brought to his mind that Great Britain had recently spent several million pounds to crown a king and that this being the case, was it not rather inconsistent of them to ask people of other nations to help care for their sick? To which the gentleman could only reply by suggesting a harmony of opinion!

One of Detroit's daily papers misquoted me by saying: "I found scores of mental defectives among the homeless workers roaming the streets of Detroit." Only two actually came under my notice who could properly be classed as mentally unbalanced. But after all I had seen, I fell to wondering if there were not a slight degree of mental deficiency in the minds of those who contribute to visionary institutions—which may perhaps have their good qualities—and to foreign 317
lands, while at our very door, day after day, we hear the cry of the suffering, toiling American citizens who need our gifts.

With my visit to "Spotless" Detroit, my wanderings ceased. To-day I sit in my own home. In the closet of my study hangs a suit of wornout jeans. A pair of coarse, badly-worn shoes lie on the floor. On a hook hangs a tattered hat which I may never wear again. These things hold for me a thousand sermons and a philosophy which if it could but be revealed would be as deep and beautiful as any that has ever been spoken. My arduous trials are over, but my work is not done. As long as an opportunity presents itself, as long as the breath of life is within me, I shall lift my voice in behalf of the oppressed, and our cry against laws and customs that decree damnation, against hells and influences which block progress toward a divine destiny, until our beloved Stars and Stripes, the emblem of liberty, peace and justice, which by greed, lust of gold and false ambitions have been so cruelly and pitilessly destroyed, shall speak again of union,—of union in our States, in the brotherhood of man, in the golden rule of Christ, in the love of God.

CHAPTER XXXIII
CONCLUSION

"The greatest city is that which has the greatest men and women. If it be a few ragged huts, it is still the greatest city in the world."—WALT WHITMAN.

As I put aside my pen in this my appeal for the Wandering Citizen, I see on my study table many letters, filled with questions. The following are the most frequently asked:

"Is not drink the principal cause of destitution?"

"Is the American police system brutal toward the homeless out-of-work man?"

"What of the impostor at the Municipal Emergency Home?"

Drink is not the primal cause of poverty. The first and all-important cause is industrial conditions. But the traffic in alcohol is the most powerful ally of our plutocratic industrial system—in perpetuating poverty.

Despondent men drink for relief from self-consciousness, starving men for stimulation, while circumstances, fate, or the vicissitudes of life prompt many to resort to drink.

The man who works ten hours a day on a meager midday lunch of bread and cheese, must drink to beat out the day, and when the day is done, do you wonder that he seeks a stimulant? The comfortable, well-to-do, honest middle class drink but little, and if at all, very moderately. The world's main consumers of alcohol are—the very poor for forgetfulness, the idle rich for pleasure. Broken hearts are found both in the palace and hovel.

The saloon, that dissolvent of self-respect, character and chastity, mocking the intelligence of every community, leaving its trace and putting a brand of shame upon this our boasted enlightened era, we may not believe in as an institution. And yet, this same saloon is a refuge meaning as much to the wandering, homeless wage-earner, as did, in the old days, the shelter of the good monks to the storm-lost wanderer of the Alps, and until each city is honorable enough to give to the homeless poor man something in place of the saloon, it certainly ought not to be mean enough to take from him that agent of life-saving sustenance. One of the most brilliant newspaper writers that I met in my crusade told me that while down-and-out in Portland, Oregon, he lived for one week on what he snatched from the free lunch counter. In many places they have forced from the saloon the free lunch, the rest chairs, the tables and papers. They demand that they close at midnight or earlier, and all day Sunday. Take notice, where they are doing this, they are not opening their churches very fast as a substitute, and even if they did, there is very little to sustain life in a plaster-of-paris image or a stained-glass window.

The saloon, with its shelter, its warmth, and its free lunch, saving the life of the half-clad perishing man, holds a very strong argument for its existence. If the mayor of a city has not the power to create and provide clean, wholesome, public benefits for the wage-earner in time of need (who has a civic right), we should certainly *demand* that the saloon keeper be *forced* to serve free lunch, and keep his door open three hundred and sixty-five days in the year, and twenty-four hours every day, for it is a degree more respectable to sleep in a saloon than in a jail. The first saloon keeper to throw a man *out*, should be the first to be thrown *out* of business. Keep the saloons until every city is honorable and humane enough in its strife for civic beauty to create public privileges, adequate Municipal Emergency Homes, public drinking fountains and comfort stations. Then, with a clear conscience, we may legislate the enormous profit off of the impure concoctions, and when this is done, the dragon will have been given at least one effectual blow.

"Waiting to Crawl into a Cellar for a Free Bed, Unfed, Unwashed —Fully Clothed They Spend the Night on Board Bunks, Crowded in Like Animals"

“Is the American police system brutal toward the out-of-work man?”

The declaration of the radical Agnostic street speaker, that there was only one miracle he believed in, and that was “that St. Patrick drove all the snakes and toads out of Ireland, and that they came to America, got into politics and on to the police force,” is an unjust dogma, for in my observation every nationality represented on the police force is of the same character in administering the official duty and in taking advantage of the trust put in them where they are made a political adjunct to a municipality. 321

The policeman is the same as other men. He is a workingman, and like all men, he loves, he hates, he has his home, his social and business interests. He is of the community and should stand for the welfare of that community, and should never be allowed to divorce himself from the trust placed upon him by the common rights of all the people.

What greater examples of the virtues of character can we find anywhere than in the police? Their courage is noticeable. They will not hesitate to rush into danger, into fire, riot, water, to save lives and property. And over this character of courage is ever present the element of kindness toward the little child, the old and infirm, and often of the proffered dime to the homeless man. And yet he is an Ishmaelite—“his hand is against every man, and every man’s hand is against him,” which is a destructive condition.

The *Police System taken as a whole* throughout our country is extremely brutal toward the out-of-work, homeless man. There are but few exceptions. This is largely because when a man is chosen for that position, for political reasons, he pledges himself, not so much to keep the peace and the law of the community, as to enforce the law of the political machine and vice trust of that city. And if the helpless, homeless man, defenseless because of poverty, is not shot or clubbed to death (which makes a perquisite for the coroner), he is often railroaded, by the testimony of one policeman, into the county jail where it costs five cents a day to keep him, while the sheriff and chief of police will receive of the tax-payers’ money thirty cents a day for his care. The capacity of these jails is from one to two hundred souls. So it can be plainly seen that it is much to the interests of these officeholders to keep them filled. The remedy? Simply divorce at once the police departments from politics, and under civil service examination, put intelligent, qualified men on the force. This is not only to serve honestly the community but your fellow citizen, the policeman, as well. It is not serving vicious private interests, which grant to the police a license to be dishonest, to shoot down or club to death homeless men on the street—which not infrequently results in the finding of policemen shot to death in vicious retaliation, supposedly always by a criminal. Then abuse will cease. As an example, I know of no better policed city than Boston. Study these men closely. Their spirit is kindliness. Though they may be armed as a protection from the drink-crazed, there is no evidence of gun or club. They are not seen drinking in the saloons. They do not meet you with rum-befouled breaths as in most cities, but with a *welcoming* face and a clear eye. Here the unfortunate is given kindly consideration. In return, the Boston public seems to co-operate in helping the police. The secret of this valued quality of the police of Boston lies in the fact that the police are indirectly appointed by the Governor of the State,—that is, the Governor appoints the Police Commissioner, and he in turn chooses his officers, *after they have passed a satisfactory civil service examination* at the State House. Such police officials should not receive the sobriquet of “bull” or “cop,” but that of “officer” and “gentleman.” 322 323

The American citizen who chances to be a police officer is not brutal by choice, but by command of the system which forces him to be brutal. In municipalities where police brutality is their shame, the change can only come through the elector and the tax-payer. A well regulated city is one founded on the human rights of all the people, and a well regulated police is the strong right arm of a good city government.

“What of the impostor at the Municipal Emergency Home?”

Study teaches us that the out-of-work men who are so from choice, those that are mentally and physically normal, among the migratory workers, are exceedingly rare. If we hesitate at a Municipal Emergency Home and let ninety worthy men suffer or perish because ten out of the hundred are unworthy, why not close our public libraries, our hospitals, our parks, in fact, every public benevolence, lest some unworthy ones creep in? 324

We strive to weed out the impostor in many communities by throwing all idle men in prison, and when they cannot be used as a graft, and become an expense, or the awakened humane spirit of the city demands that they shall no longer commit this outrage, they are often run out of town. Or, after they have been humiliated by arrest, they are hauled in the police wagons to the outskirts of the city with a prison threat not to return, and turned destitute onto the next community. But this clearance test will not stand the light of constitutional liberty. Though our missions and churches are filled with many grand good people, the crucial treatment of the wage-earner is the underlying reason for the crumbling of our Christian faith. The Carpenter of Nazareth never questioned the man in need who came to learn of Him. To heal him, that was the predominant thought of His mind.

Are we, all of us, quite sure that we have not, during some period of our lives, appeared true and genuine when false? Let us not forget that the highest conception of a citizen of a Christian city is not what a man was yesterday, but what he is to-day, and what he is going to be to-morrow, and what we are going to help him to be. 325

There is an eternal law that what is good and true for us individually is good and true for us collectively. Let us be self-reliant. To take the attitude that history *does* and *must* repeat itself is the attitude of cowards.

“The reason of idleness and crime is the deferring of our hopes; whilst we are waiting we beguile the time with jokes, with sleep, with eating and with crime.” This was Rome under the rule of its monarchical aristocracy of the Third, Fourth and Fifth Centuries. Under this aristocracy, greed for position, fame, and avarice for great wealth, was unparalleled.

To satisfy this greed, they built great monuments. They drew upon the entire country for labor to achieve their selfish aim and end. They not only lured the country’s populace by pomp and glittering gayety, but big business controlled the land for speculation and selfish pleasure, forcing the people into urban centers. Even the smaller cities built amphitheaters and “civic centers” larger than the population. Then the gluttons of big business discovered that basilicas, monuments for supposedly great men, triumphal arches, marvelous fountains and temples of myth were a poor relief for the oppressed wageearner. When too late, they reluctantly offered 326
their watered charity in free baths, free coffee and free soup, but the decadence of the grandeur of the eternal city had already begun. The working wage slave of the ancient Romans, so marvelously clever in his many crafts, was looked upon as being but little better than the animal which hauled the stone. There was no recognition of equality between the classes, nor consequently equal sharing of profits of production, or the creation of any public government institutions as a privilege of labor by the right of toil, to care for the bodily needs of the normal and healthy man who might need such an institution. The monarchical aristocracy of the Roman Empire did not believe in those things. But our political and industrial interests in this country are awakening to the fact that the foundation of all business is food, shelter and clothing, and that the honest demands of the people for the essentials of life shall be met and honestly distributed. They are recognizing that a reserve of unemployed labor is necessary to the progress of our industries and the promotion of our civilization, and the necessity of conserving that unemployed force.

We recognize that we are builders and that we are going to have a great name—not of the Third, Fourth and Fifth Century, but of this, the Twentieth Century, *our century,*—that we have already conquered sea and sky, and have put the “girdle ’round the earth in forty minutes.” 327

But every marvelous achievement, every boasted cry of liberty to make us free, will never make us great, until we learn that our ruling power *must* be God’s law of right and love.

CHAPTER XXXIV

VISIONS

"Where there is no vision the people perish." —PROVERBS, *29:18.*

During my social study I was asked by the president of a Charity Board to become an employee of the city Board of Charity and Corrections in a Western city. The Board consisted of three members. The president was a young Presbyterian minister who was just beginning to catch, through the mist of tradition, the light of new things. The other two members of the Board were women, one the daughter of a corporation lawyer, a young lady of large, kind heart, who for some time was connected with the United Charities of Chicago and who seemed to believe in their ancient system of charity in meeting the problem of destitution. The other was an estimable Jewish lady who had some decided opinions in regard to comfortable jails for honest, homeless, shelterless women and girls. Considering the services of these estimable people on the Board, gratuitous criticism would be unfair and much praise is due them for their conscientious work and the initiative taken in many effectual reforms which to them will be a lasting monument.

After six weeks' service I was found fault with by the Board, but the only charge against me was that I was a *visionist*. It was rather singular though that this charge should come on the day following my visit to the County Poor Farm, the story of that visit being told in one of the local papers the following day. I could not deny that I was not guilty, for the press had exposed me, not only as a visionist who saw things, but as one who told things. In fact I had been seeing and telling things for six weeks. There seemed to be "the rub." I was *not* a politician.

And so I was dismissed "broke" as far as the city Charity Board was concerned, as a very pleasing vision I failed to see was my six weeks' salary. But this can readily be accounted for as the city at this writing was "broke" and I was forced to be content with a postponement. With me, to meet postponement gracefully had become a virtue, for I had long since learned to postpone such a non-consequential thing as a meal a good many times, but I think I never missed any.

Ah, the visions of that six weeks, I can assure you, were not visions of angels ascending and descending ladders! The first was that of an old rookery building, with a ten cent tin sign on which was written "City Board of Charities," directly opposite the city jail, where all day long, and all night long, men and women either directly or indirectly, for the crime of poverty, were being forced behind its iron bars, and walls of stone.

It was obvious that the first thought of both beggar and criminal, or the supposed criminal forced to come that way, was charity and correction, one at the door of the alms station and the other at the door of the police station. But he who has been shoulder to shoulder with the victims of these two municipal institutions and has read through the pleading, parched lips and tear-stained faces of the victims of both these places, has learned an immutable lesson and can not refrain from crying out for a better and a greater social life. One who observes will quickly see throughout our nation how closely allied—in all their phases—are Charity and Prisons and Missions. While the church is lifting one thousand out of the gutter, society, by a destructive social system and evil influences, is pushing ten thousand in. Charity keeps many from actually starving to death, yet the ever-increasing number of our needy is even "greater than man can number." What is the price we pay?

My practical work with this board was that of investigator, that is, I was sent out to see if the applicant for aid were really worthy, to see that the Charity Board was not being robbed by dishonest mendicants. Charity organizations seemed to be not so much concerned with the relief of the helpless as with protecting the well-to-do from imposition on the part of those who claim they are in distress. I was given approximately eighty questions to ask. I was expected to follow up these questions—many of them questions of reference—for the purpose of ascertaining whether the applicants for aid were really telling the truth. I rebelled a little at first at the thought of conducting this third degree inquisition. It was even repulsive for me to enter the door of the humblest home and state I was from the Charity Board. I would so much rather have said that I was from the city Department of Public Service for Labor.

From my first day, however, I continued to see visions,—not visions of great numbers, not of saints, but of thousands of workingmen's vacant homes, deserted for lack of work due to the inability of these workingmen to earn a living. I saw the truth most forcibly revealed that again the foundation of all business was a comfortable existence and an opportunity to earn those comforts and the right of existence by labor, and that people must have that privilege or be forced to go where it *can* be had. I saw many of those who remained struggling to tide themselves over, hoping for a better day. Many were helpless for lack of means to get away, and had therefore become dependents of the State and city.

I saw nearly all of our attempted factories in ruins, and four thousand workingmen driven from the city by the smelter trust; and then came again the glowing vision of sixty million pounds of wool, and an enormous production of cotton, grown annually in a radius of five hundred miles around our very doors. This raw material was being shipped two thousand miles to be worked into the most essential commodities. Every day we were walking over the finest glass sand in the world, yet we were denied the benefit of that most needful and profitable industry. I knew we

dwelt in the heart of the leather producing district of the nation and yet no shoe factories. These are but a few of the raw materials in the region of the Rocky Mountain Western States. One who has made a study of industrial economics knows too well why the State of Colorado has (to speak comparatively) but seven people to the square mile. He well knows one reason to be the protective associations which protect *big business* instead of protecting the people,—forever crying down co-operative industry which is for the good of all.

In the homes of these asking alms which I visited, I saw the fearful destroying effect on character of the wolf as he peered through broken pane, and the cracks and crannies of door and wall. I saw the humiliating tears and flushed faces of those who for the first time were forced to beg. It was exactly like those of my associates who for the first time had been thrust into prison. It needed but a glance to tell me whether they had received “charity” before, for there is always the 333
spirit of being hardened to the “disgrace,” just as there is in the manner in which the prisoner treats the situation if he has previously “done time.”

Little children it is said will tell the truth when men and women lie. I saw the father and mother, with the hope of making an impressive plea, lest they fail to obtain the needed food and fuel, prevaricate in replying to my many questions, or perhaps remain non-committal, but often the little child at hand, conscious of the practiced deceit of the parent, would speak the truth. Then would follow the austere look of reproof from the parent or a sudden banishing from the room. The cheerless house, the starving home was sowing the seed of crime. I was a destroying angel. I was blackmailing my helpless victims into dishonesty just as the plain-clothes man or uniformed police blackmail the poor white slave of the Red-light District and the homeless, out-of-work man of the street.

In my daily investigations I saw the dipsomaniac pleading for help, yet this city offered no asylum for such as he except the city and county jail. I saw the poor tubercular victim clinging to the thread of life, dying from malnutrition, who, perhaps, could have gained his health under different circumstances. I saw hundreds of strong, hardy men demanding, by the divine right of living, the necessities of life. I saw the mother suffering from privation, who saw no future, and 334
was without hope, whose soul and body throbbed with the life of the unborn babe, whose demand was greater than the single life of man,—the demand for the divine right of motherhood. And again I saw a vision,—a general view of the private and public institutions, both benevolent and correctional, which were in the city and which were crowded to overflowing because of poverty. Then came my fatal vision,—my visit to the Poor Farm.

The greatest city of the State is usually the fountain head, the output camp for the entire State. When the unfortunate become homeless, helpless and needy, they drift to the capital. The burden of the indigent of the entire State is thus put upon that particular city and county. I saw a great number turned away from the Poor House door because of its already congested condition, who were then obliged to exploit the community in other ways for the right of existence. I saw in the tubercular ward twenty-five men in all stages of the disease, and yet, *not one a native of the State*. Some had been in the State only three weeks. They represented every part of our country. There was absolutely no provision made by this city, county, or State for the indigent, tubercular woman or girl. I had already heard continually in the homes of the needy the appealing cry of the poor who suffer and wait, hoping against hope for life and health, asking in one mighty, smothered sob for a National Tubercular Sanitarium, an institution which every State west of the 335
Mississippi River should have.

In the blind ward of this traditional place for those who have missed their aim (pioneers many of them, who hewed the logs and held the plow and blazed the trails from ’59 to ’85), I saw twenty blind, thirteen of whom were rendered blind by mine accidents, looking forward in the darkness, ever in the darkness, for a home that has not the stigma of charity, the infamy of a Poor House. Looking forward for the home which is theirs by inheritance, and *every one a native of the State* to which Winfield Scott Stratton, the multi-millionaire mining-man and philanthropist, left *ten million dollars* to build and support ten years ago! He left it in the hands of three exceedingly wealthy trusted friends to carry out his wishes who dwell and live in palaces amidst beautiful surroundings, and as yet no home has been built, and meanwhile the burying-ground of that final retreat, the Poor House, becomes ever increasingly dotted with the new-made graves. Monies belonging to these helpless, pioneer citizens who earned it by the right of enduring hardships and toil, money belonging to the hard-working people of the State, and to men still in the harness, this money is denied while the people at large are overburdened with taxation for the support of monarchical, handed-down institutions,—a burden from which they can get no relief. This vision of truth thrown upon the canvas of progress and humanity is forcibly applicable to every Western 336
State, in its appeal for an intelligent and humane conservation of its citizens and most particularly the wage-earning citizen. And although these few pages can only hint at the truth revealed, they speak for National governmental action in placing our people on the lands and the erection of national institutions for our sufferers of the white plague. For co-operative industries of equity by and for the people; for governmental ownership of all public utilities and State institutions for our unfortunate, looking toward the dawn of that glad, new day the light which is beginning to glow through the press of this country. In Denver and many of the other Western cities there is a movement for a better and a greater West. Already in the new vision for the State of Colorado they have taken the citizen from behind stone walls and iron bars. The cities are creating municipal labor for the temporarily out-of-work man, which hand in hand with Municipal Emergency Homes is just to tide over the rough place. Imperfect and incomplete as its experimental beginning may be, who can deny the awakening of a perfect aim toward a perfect

end? There is no wall of prejudice or selfishness, of ambition or unnatural greed, which can be built that will overcome these arguments. These needs must be met and shall be. No government can stand that is not founded on God’s governing laws of humanity.

APPENDIX

339

Municipal Emergency Homes vs. Charitable Lodging Houses

In the hope that the story contained in these pages shall not have been recorded in vain, the author begs to offer a few suggestions in regard to Municipal Emergency Homes. Unless rightly built and rightly conducted they may prove worse than useless. That the need is great none can deny, and the institution should be strictly for the purpose of filling that need. The suggestions contained in the following paragraphs may solve some of the perplexities which confront the city wishing to build an institution such as the situation demands.

THE FIRST STEP.

In every State of the Union, the Legislature should pass a bill giving cities the right, under home rule, to erect and maintain a Municipal Emergency Home. Every city ought to pass an ordinance for the creation and maintenance of such Municipal Emergency Homes, and the budget of the 340
city should contain an appropriation for its maintenance, based on the same reasons on which the appropriation is granted for running the Health Department, Police Department, or any other Department of the Municipal Government.

The ordinance to be passed by the city council ought to create and develop a system that will give protection and opportunity to every honest wandering citizen while sojourning, in search of work, in the community.

In the cities of New York and Boston, an appropriation is made from the public treasury for the care and maintenance of their Municipal Emergency Homes. In Chicago a special budget is created and added to the appropriation of the Police Department. It should properly have been added to the Health Department.

THINGS TO AVOID.

A Municipal Emergency Home should not be designed to be a money-making institution, but merely to provide shelter and food for men and women who appear *temporarily* destitute. If it should appear that those demanding shelter in the Municipal Emergency Home should be afflicted with any physical illness, it should be the duty of its superintendent to transfer such individuals to a hospital ward, which may be a part of the Municipal Emergency Home, or to the city or county hospital where each man or woman may be thoroughly cured of any illness which 341
has put them into destitute circumstances or is unfitting them to perform any kind of labor to make existence possible. The mind of the community is being educated to see that the adjustment of individuals to a suitable environment must be quickly but scientifically attempted. If unfit they must, if possible, be made fit. The idea seems to be dawning that permanent unfitness must be met with permanent adjustment.

A PROTECTION TO SOCIETY.

For the present, the Municipal Emergency Home stands, or rather should stand, on the one hand as a link in the chain of governmental institutions, not only as a public policy and agency which supports the individual who either fails in life or is compelled to be one in the ranks of destitute men because of economic conditions, but as an institution wherein one may receive temporary relief under the rights of citizenship. On the other hand, it should stand for the protection of society from the degradations, annoyances and misdemeanors of the individual who would thus be a burden upon his fellows and upon society as a whole. In other words, the Municipal Emergency Home should be one maintained and conducted *strictly by the municipality* as a governmental institution. It should be the tiding-over place for the man or the woman without a job, a refuge to satisfy immediate needs, a hospital in certain cases of sickness, an asylum in case 342
of destitution.

ESSENTIALS TO SUCCESS.

The author believes that there are two factors essential to the success of a Municipal Emergency Home; first, the co-operation of all public departments in the city government, and second, the cooperation of the public itself. When because of politics it has been found difficult to introduce improvements and progressive ideas in a municipality for relieving the temporarily distressed, it has become the custom to recommend religious or private charities for the management of relief-granting institutions. But no one can question the success and the need of a Municipal Emergency Home who is willing to investigate the wonderful success of the New York Municipal Lodging House and the Buffalo Municipal Lodging House. These are conducted strictly under city and County supervision and management. As such results as have been obtained in New York and Buffalo, and which may come into existence in any large city, under public management, why should other cities question the popularity and success of a Municipal Emergency Home under such management or doubt its advantages over those mismanaged by religious and private charity, the latter not infrequently run for profit?

USE OF APPROPRIATION.

The people of our cities may expect, and should forcibly demand from its public officials, that the money expended in municipal “charities” should be well adapted, elastic in its application, based upon wise, scientific conclusions, and on a thorough exhaustive experimentation.

It is safe to say that New York stands in the front rank as the worst governed city in America. But when such a city creates an appropriation from its public treasury for the maintenance and management of a Municipal Emergency Home, there can be no reason to doubt the wisdom or the success of the experimentation of municipal charities. In fact, we ought not to speak of municipal charity, but rather to say that the city appropriates such money from tax-payers as has been earned by those who are temporarily destitute,—that those housed in such municipal institutions are but receiving assistance as an interest on their past earnings. A Municipal Emergency Home should not be considered as a charitable institution, but as an institution offering the right to every toiler to receive the hospitality of his fellowmen in time of need.

CO-OPERATION OF THE PUBLIC.

If the so-called influential and responsible people of every city would use half the effort they now use in subscribing, managing and advertising private charitable institutions to create a public sentiment so that the city would establish a Municipal Emergency Home with the most modern features, and if they then would continue in an advisory and co-operative relation to it, the writer does not hesitate to express his belief that the advantages, every time, would be on the side of a Municipal Emergency Home or, as a matter of fact, on any other so-called charitable institution managed by the community itself as a governmental function and in a co-operative capacity.

The destitute man or woman who is compelled to apply for temporary relief at a Municipal Emergency Home comes immediately into the care of the city and may be turned at once to the protective treatment of which many stand in need.

RELATION TO THE HEALTH DEPARTMENT.

It is well to bear in mind the fact that a scientifically managed Municipal Emergency Home not only raises the standard of other lodging houses in the city, but to make its influence most effective, the co-operation of the Health Department is absolutely necessary. In fact, the most humane, the most scientific and in all respects the most desirable way to manage a Municipal Emergency Home is through the direct management and supervision of the city Health Department,—never under that of the Police Department. The institution deals with human beings who are out of adjustment to the community. The homeless, wandering citizen should not be considered as a derelict, a human monster, a criminal, a vagrant and what not, to be hounded to death by the brutal police system.

PRIVATE INSTITUTIONS AND THE HEALTH DEPARTMENT.

All religious, charitable and private lodging houses also should be under a rigid inspection of the Health Department of the city, lest they may become dangerous competitors to a Municipal Emergency Home by undoing the work accomplished by this exemplary institution. Because they can be maintained at a low standard of cleanliness and order, they are sought by the tired, weary, homeless workingman, that is,—when he has the money! No city should ever countenance an uninspected sheltering place where human beings are forced to congregate, where those harbored, in many instances, communicate disease to the country boy, seeking a job, and teach him lessons in mendicancy, vice and crime.

CO-OPERATION OF THE CITY.

All public departments, especially the Health Department, Public Works, Legal Department, Labor Department, should co-operate with the Municipal Emergency Home. The Health Department should look after the physical welfare of the city’s guests, the Department of Public Works should aid by giving all able-bodied, willing workers plenty of work on all municipal undertakings, and by paying them the prevailing scale of union wages in the respective industries. The Legal Department should care for and protect against the private exploitation of the homeless men and women, and above all else, shield them from the undue interference of the police.

EDUCATION OF THE PUBLIC.

As to the co-operation of the great public itself, honest investigators must find the overwhelming advantages in every respect on the side of municipal management. If a city maintains and manages a modern Municipal Emergency Home, charitably-inclined private doners can be cheerfully advised to leave the entire problem to the city. Thus the great many charitable and quasi-charitable institutions that have failed to give relief where relief was most needed will fail to find support. This is exactly the purpose of all municipal and governmental undertakings,—firmly and scientifically to undertake the management of all public affairs, taking it out of the hands of superficial private organizations whose inadequate system, instead of doing good to the

needy, does much moral harm.

It is most desirable that the great public be *aroused and educated* to see that the homeless, wandering citizen needs special treatment,—that he must, if necessary, be the object of expert, 347
scientifically-trained solicitude, and that the public must provide that scientific service. When the public can be so educated, all applicants for shelter, food, or work (whether they come from the so-called "tramp," "bum," or "hobo," at the back door, or from the man on the street who begs a dime, or from the Salvation Army representative on the street corner, or from others who promiscuously ask donations for so-called "Lodging Houses") may safely be referred to the Municipal Emergency Home where the expert work of the community is being done, and the task of uplifting humanity and of elevating the community itself is being carried forward in the right way.

THE PROBLEM IN OTHER COUNTRIES.

It is quite remarkable that the Poor Law in England had its origin in an attempt to meet the problems of the homeless, wandering wage-earner. Yet there, as here, the homeless are rather on the increase, because of unjust social and industrial conditions.

Nicholl quotes the following, purely utilitarian statement:

> "The usual restraints which are sufficient for the well-fed, are often useless in checking the demands of the hungry stomachs.... Under such circumstances, it might be considered cheaper to fill empty stomachs to the point of ready obedience than to compel starving wretches to respect the roast-beef of their more industrious neighbors. It might be expedient, from a mere economical point of view, to supply gratuitously the wants of able-bodied persons, if it could be done without creating crowds of additional applicants."

This rudimentary economic advice has not been intelligently understood either in England or in 348
our country. The people of our cities still look on while a group of men eat the cold roast beef of their more fortunate neighbors—calmly look on and take no action.

Eminent scholars and authorities on economic, industrial and legal questions have well said, many times, that repressive measures and antagonistic treatment are never sufficient and never will be. Educational, constructive, scientific work alone will prevail. The religious and charitable organizations and societies may ask for police control and supervision, and for the repression of vagrancy in our cities, but the homeless and wandering wage-earners will be fed, because we have a Christ-given, common humanity.

A WOMAN'S QUESTION.

It has been said that the "tramp" question, the question of the homeless, hungry, wandering wage-earner is a woman's question. It is. But what made it such? It has been made a woman's question by the indifference and ignorance of our communities which have made no provisions for men and boys, women and girls, who are hungry and homeless.

Women as well as men have represented the conscience of our communities in a poor fashion, in a most dangerous fashion, in a criminal fashion, for they have created just about as many 349
"tramps" with their petty little charities, as the man who gives dimes on the street for a night's shelter. The women should know, the men too, that at the back doors or on the streets we cannot do the right thing. We can give only inadequate relief. We can only push a human being down the stairs of manhood to the level of a parasite.

THE HISTORICAL VIEW.

Let us look at the matter historically. We find that the mendicant of the Middle Ages stood in much the same relation to the community as the modern "tramp," the homeless, wandering wage-earner. One existed, and the other exists, because of a certain sentimentality which permits one group of persons to live on the industry of another group. The community giving, in the mediæval days, was centered in the monastery, and since the time of Henry VIII the State has assumed that function. The monastery cared for the mediæval tramp. Let the Modern Twentieth Century State of Civilization (if such we may call our time) care for and cure his descendant, the homeless, wandering wage-earner, just as it takes care of the other needs of the people in the respective communities.

To be logical, every American city should maintain a Municipal Emergency Home for the wandering citizen, the homeless wage-earner, in order to complete the system of governmental institutions and agencies dealing with the needs of a modern complex society. 350

THE LEGAL ASPECT.

Rightfully, and *legally*, in America, the so-called Overseers of the Poor, the Boards of Charities and Corrections, are required to relieve the homeless and destitute at their discretion. In many cities they are fulfilling this duty toward the men temporarily destitute and homeless by graciously permitting them to be sheltered at the insanitary, degrading police stations, to be fed with water concoctions, to sleep in a dark vermin-infested corner from which they are ordered to move on in the morning. Perhaps this is acting according to their discretion, but the result shows that it is unwise to put power into the hands of private individuals who not only know not the evil

they increase but who could scarcely do otherwise if they knew.

Historically, every modern city should maintain a Municipal Emergency Home. Logically, it ought to do it. Legally, it must do it. Let it no longer be a woman's or a man's question, but our question, the cities' question. Let us all say that there must, nay, there shall be in every community for the homeless, wandering wage-earner, a decent, modern, sanitary shelter, a fitting meal, a place where the community can give individual, discriminating, scientific treatment, where there is an opportunity to get suitable work to make a decent living possible. 351

THE MORAL DUTY.

Let everybody then make it his duty to appeal to the civic pride of the women and men of the community. Let the people of the city instruct its Mayor and City Council, or else themselves elect a man or a woman to supervise the management and maintenance of a Municipal Emergency Home of integrity, of resource, a place of sagacious and scientific training. Then, and not until then, will the women of our cities be able to shut their doors, the men their pockets, and point with pride to the Municipal Emergency Home, which in every American city is as necessary and as fundamental an institution as a hospital itself. In fact it is a human psychological hospital, an economic betterment provider, within the gates and welcome arch of every city.

The name of the institution is significant,—*Municipal Emergency Home*. As the gate of the public system of institutions it should stand, always open and ready to receive the homeless, wandering wage-earner who may claim its hospitality. From it, he or she may go forth to renumerative industry, to economic, social and industrial betterment which is for the benefit of all humanity.

WHAT A TWENTIETH CENTURY MUNICIPAL EMERGENCY HOME SHOULD BE 352

In the following pages, the author wishes to give in detail the chief aims, objects and principles upon which a model Twentieth Century Municipal Emergency Home should be maintained:

I. It should provide, *free* under humane and sanitary conditions, food, lodging and bath, with definite direction for such immediate relief as is needed for any man or boy, woman or girl, or even families, stranded in the city where located, as well as for the convalescent from the hospital. It should be able to give employment to able-bodied men and boys, women and girls, provide them with the necessaries of life, and make it possible for them to be economically independent of the future. This should be *the chief aim, object and principle* upon which the maintenance of a model Twentieth Century Municipal Emergency Home is based.

All consideration of causes, all efforts toward the enforcement of law or reform in legislation, are secondary to this first duty of providing a humane clearing-house for a scientific, systematic and 353 intelligent distribution of the industrial, economic and social human waste, which gathers and disperses from season to season in the urban centers of America and tends constantly to fester into idleness, vice and crime. While the demands of this human clearing-house will be no small charge upon the respective municipalities, the Municipal Emergency Home will be primarily an institution of social service, collecting and regulating the entire human resource of the city for the mutual benefit of the community or those that serve it and of the individual that is served.

This idea of connecting, in the most direct fashion possible, the social strength of a community with the individual weakness of the stranded man or boy, woman or girl, will be the first purpose of a Twentieth Century Municipal Emergency Home. To further this end its location should be easily accessible to the lodging house district of the city. That the building should be sanitary and fireproof, the food wholesome and nourishing, the beds comfortable and clean, one man to a bed, not "double deckers," are matters of course. An isolation ward for special cases such as men suffering from inebriety, insanity, venereal disorders, etc., is a prime requisite.

A system of registration by the card system ought to be in use, each card giving at a glance the significant facts such as name, age, birthplace, occupation, physical condition, reference, 354 residence, nearest relative or friend, number of lodgings, disposition of the case, etc. This card should be filled out by the applicant himself, in order that the visitor may not be humiliated by an inquisition of a jail- or charity-like character. The registration clerk should be a man of good judgment, a man of honor, and with psychological training whose actions should always be guided by firm but just and human motives. Thorough physical investigation of each applicant, and the investigation of the capabilities of each applicant, should be in all cases intelligently conducted.

Every visitor's clothing, including hat and shoes, should be thoroughly fumigated each night. All visitors should be required to bathe nightly and only shower baths should be used.

A comprehensive physical examination of each visitor *should be made* by competent examiners under the direction of a physician of the Health Department of the city. All necessary operations, supplies for simple medicaments, eye-glasses, crutches, bandages, trusses, in fact every accoutrement and further treatment, if necessary for the health and comfort of the visitor, should be supplied *free*. An entry of the actual physical conditions of each visitor should be made on his registration card after the first examination, and any change therefrom noted thereon as it may occur from time to time. All cases of infectious or chronic contagious diseases of a virulent nature 355 should be sent at once to the isolation ward. The accuracy and care of this department is of

immediate importance to the health of the entire community and *absolutely essential* to the effective and successful administration of the Home.

Each visitor should be provided with an absolutely clean nightshirt and a pair of slippers. The dormitories should be in all cases comfortable and quiet, talking, reading and smoking therein strictly prohibited.

The morning call ought to be given in time to permit each visitor to dress for breakfast and to be sent to employment if he or she is able, in time for the day's work. The visitors desiring to find work in the town where the Municipal Emergency Home is located should form in line and pass the superintendent for distribution in accordance with the facts of each case, clearly stated on each record card, as to the physical condition, abilities and desires of each applicant for work. This is the crux of the ministry and the administration of a Twentieth Century Municipal Emergency Home. Clear-sighted, humane, resourceful, definite, resolute action is now demanded, and unless this demand is met with scientific exactness, with intelligent systematic application, the whole service fails.

The superintendent will have before him the record card of every visitor containing his original story, the report of his physical condition, occupation, and such further important facts as may 356
have been discovered in the course of his relations with the Home. Immediately at hand will be the employment resources for that day, the name and address of every labor union headquarters, every benevolent association, every dispensary and hospital, city and business directories, railroad and factory directories with the names and addresses of the respective superintendents under whose jurisdiction the employment of help may come. Thus the superintendent will be capable of intelligent co-operation with all agencies, public and private, that may minister to the varying needs of the stranded men and boys, women and girls whom he is to distribute and start on their way to independent, economic usefulness in the community.

Men and women of all ages, nationalities, occupations, misfortunes, face the superintendent and must be dealt with definitely, but wisely, after a rapid comprehension of the visitor's needs, his card record, and the resources at command. No higher test can be made of human judgment, courage, right feeling, resource and common sense.

It is at this crucial point in the administration of a Municipal Emergency Home that one feature of the model home stands out with commanding significance. This is the *Employment Bureau*. Daily opportunity for paid employment is the right arm of the most effective distribution, and the only genuine work test. Whether this can be assured or not in any given city, no one can say until 357
it has been fairly applied and tried. When the employment resources of any city are thoroughly organized, if there still be men in any considerable number, able and willing to work, who cannot be given paid employment and who must suffer enforced idleness for any considerable length of time, then and not until then, will we know that the present industrial order has absolutely broken down. After all paid employment has been thoroughly taken advantage of, coming as it does from private resources, the respective municipalities should immediately put to work all able-bodied, willing wage-earners on municipal work of all kinds for which the city should pay them a decent, living wage, or rather the prevailing scale of union wages in the respective trades.

There is an increasing number of people in this country—quiet, hard-working, hard-thinking, plain folk who are determined to know the facts of our present-day industrial and social system, and while enjoying the fruits of this present order, are determined to defend it against assaults. They also purpose to strive mightily in righting whatever wrongs may be proven to exist. The Municipal Emergency Home will help to supply these people with the real knowledge of conditions in the underworld, where millions of honest, able-bodied men and women are forced to spend their lives in enforced economic idleness and uselessness.

One of the most significant indications of the power of the Municipal Emergency Home is the 358
length and depth of its searching influence. Its hooks will reach clear down to the bottom of the human sewerage, in the dark channels of life, altogether unknown to the "other half" of our human society. Without disparaging the splendid work of other helping agencies in the respective communities, it cannot be denied that their influence, their hooks of help, hang too high to catch many worthy persons among the vast army of wandering citizens who are in direst need. The "Hang-out," the "Barrel-house," and the "Free-flops" receive many times more human drift than Charity Bureaus, Missions and Workingmen's Homes. This is seen to be inevitable when the conditions are rightly understood.

Humankind is but just beginning to understand and appreciate the everlasting truth of that great clause of Agur's perfect prayer: "Feed me with food convenient for me," and of one of the greatest sayings in the Gospel of the Kingdom: "For I was hungered and ye gave me meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me in; naked and ye clothed me."

The stranded man or boy, woman or girl needs food, shelter and a straightforward, resourceful meeting of the issues of his or her human life *first*. After that, if you possess sincerity, faith and 359
clear vision, it may be your privilege to speak to him or her, with controlling power, of the ministry and message of the *Son of Man*.

The sympathetic reader may well ask: "How will stranded men and boys, women and girls, learn of the existence of a Municipal Emergency Home, and what will impel the unfortunate woman or girl to accept its altruistic, humane but vigorous hospitality?"

The answer is easy. It has already been discovered that one of the chief sanctions, one of the

main objects for municipal direction of such work is *being a municipal enterprise*, a part of the city administration, a wing of its manifold governmental functions, it challenges most effectively the co-operation of all public authorities. The very first step therefore in this mandatory municipal co-operation will be the closing of the police stations, these degrading and unsanitary hells of our barbaric age, to the itinerant or local toilers who have been either “run in” by the police or forced to find shelter for the night, and provision for the supply of all such applicants with tickets of admission and directions to the Municipal Emergency Home. This will partly relieve the police stations of our cities of one of their most disagreeable duties, rendered in the past without any adequate means and under conditions that befouled not only the stations but which degraded the needy visitors, thereby encouraging vagrancy, crime and vice, creating 360
disease and, in many cases, causing untimely deaths.

The second answer to the question is that every policeman will be required to carry a supply of Municipal Emergency Home tickets in his pocket to give to all persons discovered in need, and to those found begging. These must be accompanied by a warning that he or she must not beg, because of the consequences, and that the city will take care of their monetary necessities. No police officer should be allowed to interfere or endanger the liberty of any such temporarily destitute people. All railroad stations should have, in a conspicuous place, an advertisement of the Home, calling the stranded wayfarer’s attention to its existence and location. Such notices will prove a blessing to them and a saving to the community. All newspapers should co-operate with the city authorities in printing in the “want ads” column the fact of the existence of such a Municipal Emergency Home, its location and the possible positions that may be filled by applying to the superintendent.

A most important step should be to provide every homeless man or boy, woman or girl who may have been discharged from the house of correction, from the penitentiaries, hospitals or other institutions, with the hospitality of the Municipal Emergency Home, thereby pledging the support 361
and good faith of the city to secure him food, shelter, an opportunity for honest employment, or the right, for a period, while enjoying the hospitality of the city, to look about for such labor as he or she may prefer.

No one who lays any claim to enlightened opinion upon subjects of this character believes any longer that arrest and incarceration in a penal or corrective institution is a final answer to the social obligations of the community in behalf of the so-called casual vagrant, the wandering citizen, the itinerant wage-worker, or petty criminal, as they are miscalled. It may be true, perhaps, that a three or six months’ imprisonment is the only present available means for “straightening up a drunk” or getting some “evil spirit” out of a young man’s heart. But at its best it is a very dangerous medicine, and surely when society leaves a man or boy, woman or girl at the prison gate, after a jail sentence of greater or less duration, and tells him or her to shift, each for himself or herself as best they may, it is simply an invitation and an encouragement to vagrancy, vice, crime and immorality.

The last important step in this mandatory municipal co-operation should be a direct attack upon the “barrel-houses,” “free-flops,” and “hang-outs,” certain cheap lodgings and Missions. To continue a campaign against vagrancy by an indiscriminate raiding of such resorts has proven to be a miserable failure. If there is no other free, accessible and serviceable place for the homeless 362
and indigent man, boy, woman or girl, they will simply find another center, and the last may be worse than the first. On the other hand, having understood and provided for the actual needs of the temporarily unemployed homeless, we have cut off the base of evil supplies of “the mendicant army” through the use of tickets to a modern Municipal Emergency Home, and the co-operation of all other municipal departments and the great public. Then, and not until then, can a modern Christian community strike effectively the final blow against these recruiting stations of vice, immorality, crime and disease.

An intelligent, scientific, systematic and centralized campaign of publicity must be *ceaselessly* carried on for this Free Home. Free tickets of direction and admission must be constantly distributed through fraternal and charitable societies, labor unions, institutions, hotels, business offices, churches, clubs, housewives, railroad conductors, brakemen, and other officials and citizens. As soon as it is generally known that every applicant, without exception, is absolutely certain of wholesome food and sanitary shelter *free*, with such help next morning as his need demands, the cooperation of the humane public will be immediate and constant. In this campaign for publicity the daily press, through news items and editorial comment, should be the most 363
powerful ally for the extension of the service to the needy.

Two vitally important considerations of administration now claim our attention. One is the matter of an arbitrary limitation upon the number of nights one of these unfortunate, homeless, wandering wage-earners may remain and enjoy the hospitality of the city. The other is the question of the so-called work-test, so much asked for by charitable organizations.

This, the greatest of all problems confronting the Municipal Emergency Home, we must face courageously in the endeavor to demonstrate its practicability to social service. Either in the name of Christian Brotherhood, sympathy for unfortunate humanity, or other high and holy sentiments, men are given to “cant.” So they exploit the institution, or in the name of preventing pauperization, preserving, a man’s self-respect, a business administration, and other like high sounding terms, the institution subtly exploits its charges. This much seems certain: The arbitrary, *lump* method of dealing with men is always and everywhere wrong and inhuman.

A model Municipal Emergency Home *should not have an arbitrary time limit* on the extension of

its hospitality to the needy. The injustice of such limitation is manifest in instances such as that of a visitor suffering from a bruise, wound, broken arm, injured leg,—of one who is awaiting money 364
from friends, or transportation home, or to a place where employment is offered, or for the coming of the first pay-day after being re-established in industry. Neither should any Municipal Emergency Home have that inhuman, wasteful, robbing work test. To argue or reason that because one hundred or more men and boys lined up in front of a desk at five o'clock in the morning are alike because of the fact of having received a night's shelter and two meals and that, therefore, each alike should do three hours' work on a wood pile, or in the city streets, is to say the least, not only unscientific, but inhuman exploitation. In every such group there will be found not only a wide difference in resources and needs, but a wider difference in men. In such a group will be capable, earnest, sober and willing workingmen displaced by industrial depression, disturbances or inventions; all classes of casual laborers, between jobs; boys seeking their fortunes; victims of child labor; disabled, sick and aged industrial and social waste; beats, and frequently strays from the higher walks of professional criminals. All these challenge intelligent and resourceful discrimination. Surely the true interest of the community as well as that of the unfortunate, wandering citizen, is best served by at once sending men, able and willing to work, to paid employment; separating the boys of tender ages from this human drift, and starting them 365
home or to steady, profitable employment for the security of their future; directing the sick, infirm or aged to such institutions as will best minister to their needs.

The writer's personal experiences and observations of the lump work test in operation, as he saw it in the various religious and charitable lodging houses throughout the country, seem to justify the following statement:

First. The worthy, average visitor to a Municipal Emergency Home will work diligently. Those chained by habits of vice will shirk. The crippled, sick and aged will simply "mark time." This results in the most fit man in the group being exploited for the benefit of the least fit, and in putting upon the backs of those members of the community least able to bear this burden, part of the charitable charge for the incompetent and unworthy.

Second. There seems to be little foundation for the idea that a lump work test conserves a man's self-respect. On the contrary the conditions of its application are such as must always be more or less degrading, and it invariably operates to hold together the good and bad elements of a group, to the inevitable injury of the good.

Third. Where the lump work test involves some financial benefit for the institution, the best of 366
superintendents become less eager to re-establish his most fruitful, most capable, willing-to-work visitors in paid industry.

Fourth. As an indication of character, the work test is almost valueless. Men of ordinary sense see through the thin disguise of the claim that it helps to preserve their self-respect, and recognize its true lineaments as a subtle exploitation that deprives them of the opportunity of getting paid employment for that day, or as a penal service to prevent their frequent return.

Fifth. The quick deterioration of even fairly good workmen through getting used to a low standard of living by charitable contributions that lessen the economic pressure and seem to offer escape from the legitimate costs of life, is apparent to every thoughtful observer. Hard times, and an empty stomach, make it easy to submit to the kindly exploitation of a "Flop-house" wood-yard. The loss of self-respect is forgotten in relief from the necessity of trying to play a man's part in the industrial order, until the man that was an independent, capable, willing, but unfortunate wage earner is transformed into a half-parasite,—an individual of a special character, a man whose face is familiar only to charity workers, and to the charitably-inclined public.

Summing up the effect of these two arbitrary lump restrictions it seems that they operate always to the injury of the service and are tolerated for one of three reasons. The first is that they 367
provide some check upon the number and return of the visitors. The second is that they provide a subtle means of exploiting helpless men for the financial benefit of the institutions, and the third, that the institution thereby escapes the obligations of discriminating and effective distribution.

Mr. Raymond Robins, the first superintendent of the Chicago Municipal Lodging House, in substantiation of the above argument says:

> "It may be well to say that the Chicago Municipal Lodging House began operations with both restrictions in force. A three nights' limit and three hours' work daily from each able-bodied lodger were required by the rules. Experience and observation of the results of the enforcement of these restrictions in Chicago and other cities convinced the administration that they were *cruel and unjust*. The substitution of an employment bureau, effective co-operation with other charitable and correctional agencies, and daily discriminating distribution, have enabled the Chicago Municipal Lodging House to abolish both restrictions entirely. Not only has this substitution not resulted in overcrowding the house or increasing the number of human parasites that seek its hospitality, but, on the contrary, the proportion of the worthy men has steadily risen under the new régime. The 'Chicago System' provides food, lodging, baths and distribution for a maximum of two hundred lodgers daily at an annual cost to the municipality of ten thousand dollars."

In conclusion, let it be understood that the keyword for the successful administration of a model Municipal Emergency Home is co-operation,—co-operation in the interior management, co-operation in all external relations, co-operation with all existing agencies for human service, co-operation for the creation of new ones when found to be necessary from time to time; co- 368
operation with all other sister cities and States in creating a body of approved information and legislation upon the broadest principles of humanity, for the service of helping the wandering

citizen, the unemployed masses, of removing the causes, of bettering conditions and of correcting wrongs throughout the world.

Standing as the collective social action of the whole people for meeting honestly and scientifically the communal obligation to the outcast, wandering, unemployed wage-earner, the homeless man and woman, without special regard for race or class or sect, serving no private scheme, or ulterior motive, the Twentieth Century Municipal Emergency Home will be a potent witness to the practical expression in municipal administrations of that awakening social conscience which is the growing hope for righteousness in all the nations of the earth.

Following are suggestions for the printed cards to be used both as advertisement and admission tickets for the needy:

I

369

THIS TICKET IS GOOD FOR
LODGING, FOOD AND BATH AT THE
MUNICIPAL EMERGENCY HOME
(Location)

_____ _____
SUPT. ASST. SUPT.

TELEPHONE_____

(Reverse side)

The City of —— is maintaining a Municipal Emergency Home for the benefit of all wandering citizens, homeless and indigent men and boys, women and girls in this City. Lodging, food, a bath and other necessaries of life are being provided *free* to every applicant. Those seeking work are given employment. The crippled, injured, old or infirm are sent each morning to hospitals, dispensaries or homes. Each applicant receives the personal attention of the superintendent, and upon personal investigation his or her case is disposed of upon the facts so determined alone. Employment is given to suit the applicants and only able-bodied people will be sent to work. All loyal citizens of the City of —— are earnestly requested to refer needy, homeless fellow-men to the Municipal Emergency Home by means of this ticket.

BY AUTHORITY OF ———

II

370

GET YOUR HELP
FROM THE
MUNICIPAL EMERGENCY HOME
(Location)

SKILLED AND UNSKILLED LABOR CAN BE OBTAINED
WITHOUT CHARGE TO EMPLOYER OR EMPLOYEE

CARE TAKEN TO SUPPLY SITUATIONS WITH
COMPETENT MEN

_____ _____
ASST. SUPT. SUPT.

TELEPHONE_____

In conclusion, I refer to New York's Municipal Emergency Home, as a guide for the technical plans which too can be improved upon, and are being improved upon as we understand this great subject more clearly.

THE END

Footnotes

[A] The author asks forbearance for the direct personalities contained in the Introductory, which has nothing to do with the writer's appeal, and it is simply given as a reply to many inquiries.

[B] See worker's letter in the Portland story, Chapter xv.

Transcriber’s Note

The table below describes the various issues encountered in the preparation of this text. Where there are other instances of a misspelled word, it is assumed to be a printer’s error, and was corrected. Other dubious cases are merely noted here. Hyphenated words are given as printed. Where the hyphenation occurred at a line break, it was removed if there were other unhyphenated instances.

The spelling of “Pittsburgh” in Chapter XI varies. Historically, The final ‘h’ has come and gone, removed and restored by Post Office fiat. By the time of the publication of this text, it had been restored for good, but it seems the ‘h’-less spelling still had some currency.

The word ‘lantine’ on p. 115 is most likely a corruption of ‘latrine’, but has been allowed to stand.

p. 40	itiner[e/a]nt	Corrected.
p. 54	repellant	*sic.*
p. 92	floatsam	*sic.*
p. 115	lantine	*sic.* ‘latrine’?
p. 116	forgetfullness	*sic.*
p. 119	accom[m]odate	Added.
p. 123	itinerate	*sic.*
p. 138	occur[r]ence	Added.
p. 146	and get my pay.[”]	Added.
p. 150	not[h]ing	Added.
p. 151	[pealing] potatoes	*sic.*
p. 161	accom[m]odate	Added.
p. 163	Tacoma [Woman’s] Club	*sic.*
p. 178	Diety	*sic* Deity.
p. 211	vil[l]age	Added.
p. 228	approach[i]ng	Added.
p. 245	[“flop”/‘flop?’”]	Nested quotes.
p. 256	Lou[si/is]ville	Transposed.
p. 273	Pa[c/d]ucah	Corrected.
p. 331	ap[p]licants	Added.
	exist[a/e]nce	Both corrected.
p. 346	don[e/o]rs	Corrected.

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