

The Slaughter of the Innocents

When Jesus Christ came upon the earth, nearly two thousand years ago, to save all mankind, his mere coming seemed to interfere with the material interests of a few people of that period, notably King Herod, who promptly decided to dispose of this "interloper," and sent forth his soldiers with orders to slay all the children of two years old and under. Thus was consummated the most atrocious crime against innocent childhood ever committed up to that time. It has come down to us through all the ages in song and story, and master painters have pictured it on marvelous canvasses.

Today passing in review, as we look out through the windows of our comfortable homes in this great and happy land, are three and a half millions of helpless children, the innocent victims of the greatest war that has ever afflicted humanity. It matters not, as we gaze in the direction of these children, that our eyes must stretch across three thousands miles of ocean, we still can see them and we still can hear them, if we wish to do so; and we can not help hearing the tragic appeal in their voices and seeing their tiny arms stretched out to us, and their searching eyes looking into our souls, as they say, "Help us, or we perish." And if we fail to listen to this great call of three and a half millions of God's helpless children; if we close our eyes and ears to this great demand of duty, we will be just as guilty of the "slaughter of the innocents" as was Herod, nearly two thousand years ago.

In these lands, swept by death and filled with tragedies too deep for tears, a sum of human suffering is being written greater perhaps than for all ages gone by. The mind grows numb and the heart sick from a constant recital of tales of such tragedy as it is difficult to believe the twentieth century could hold.

And so, when we received the letter from Mr. Hoover printed on the opposite page, telling us that America must not allow hunger and cold to return to this mass of 3,500,000 helpless children our soul was stirred and the hot blood surged up in our heart. We felt it was our imperative duty to use all the power God has given us to aid this noble-hearted American in continuing the work of saving human lives to which he has devoted unsparingly, and at great personal sacrifice, his tremendous energy and administrative genius during the past six years, in which time he and his American colleagues have administered two billions of dollars of relief funds from all parts of the world with a total overhead expense of only three-eighths of one per cent, without any remuneration to the American directors. Now he asks us all to help save the children who are in imminent danger of starvation this coming winter.

There they are, in the midst of wrecked homes, and farms, and factories; in cities crowded with masses of refugees without sustaining food for children, through the destruction of live stock; seeds for planting, raw materials, tools, and machinery gone; great areas with everything burned, or looted, or smashed; vast unemployment for workers; no means of subsistence; a land of economic ruin, of mutilated life, and lingering death; and in the midst of it all—the little children.

In long lines they are waiting at the American food-kitchens. Will the food be there for them? Will they be turned away? There are no happy, healthy faces in those lines—not one. You have seen rags and barefooted children, but never so many little boys and girls literally dressed in tatters. Soon it will be very cold, and for those bare little feet and legs and arms there is nothing at home to put on.

Hollow faces and shrunken bodies are so common that their real condition does not become evident until we inquire more closely, and then we find that most of them are from one to five years back in their growth. Children of eight years old have not reached the normal size of two and a half. They are just learning to stand alone. Others almost as old can not yet stand on their feet. Their arms, and legs, and spines, and chests are twisted and warped. The flesh and skin are shriveled on their bones. It is surprising that life can still exist there. If they can have food they will gradually regain their health and strength, but with most of them it is a question of now or never. Starvation and tuberculosis will not wait.

In Poland alone a million five hundred thousand such children must be cared for. In Latvia

and Esthonia the people are living mostly on a diet made from potato-flour, oat-flour, and sawdust. In Czecho-Slovakia, in Hungary, in Austria, and in other countries of central and southeastern Europe, two millions more are in dire need of food; and who stops to ask regarding creed, or race, or nationality when a little child is starving? Children are just children the world over, and the great American heart is big enough to care for them all.

But the appeal now is not for all. The three and a half millions of children in immediate danger of starvation, if this organization fails, who must have food at once a fraction of the total number. The hungry children of those destitute countries have been examined by competent physicians, and only those whose wasted little bodies are reduced to the minimum weight, and whose endurance of hunger has reached the end which merges into actual starvation, are admitted to the American kitchens and given one meal a day. It is hard to turn away thousands of hungry boys and girls—to hear them ask, pleadingly, "Do I weigh too much?" "Am I not thin enough?" "Can't I come any more?" But this restricting of food to the extreme cases is compulsory, because there isn't enough for all.

And these neediest ones can not reach the kitchens through the cold winds and the snow barefooted and in the pitiful rags which form only a partial covering for their bodies. They must have clothes. Each outfit consists of one pair of warm woolen stockings, one pair of boots, and a little overcoat. This one meal a day, and these boots, stockings, and little coats can be supplied only if we give them. If we do not, the slaughter of the innocents by cold and starvation will be appalling.

Among the more than two million men and women who will read this page there is not one—there can not be a single one—whose heart will not respond gladly and eagerly to the challenge of this great need. We are asked, you with us, to cooperate with Mr. Hoover in raising twenty-three million dollars to feed and clothe these children and save them from death this winter. It can be done. It shall be done! The Literary Digest knows its readers and the deep earnestness, the quick sympathy, the great-hearted generosity they always show when any real human need calls to them. You have never been called upon in vain. We are counting on you now with a great confidence. We know, also, how truly you represent the American spirit, which beats in the hearts of a hundred and three millions more in this big land of plenty, a spirit which leaps ready at every such call, and is never weary in well-doing. We are not a hermit nation, isolated from the world, when suffering and want cry out to us from anywhere under the sun. A great, a beautiful, and heart-sustaining hope supports these stricken people—America will come to their relief. For in the far places of the earth, where famine stalks, one name and one alone is synonymous with rescue and hope—and that name is America.

The small individual unit of ten dollars will provide the coat and boots and stockings and one meal a day for one child this winter. We urge our readers—we urge every one whose eyes are on these words—to give quickly as many of these units as possible, to buy for themselves that precious and priceless thing, the life of a little child—as many of them as they can, and every one will be a shining star in an eternal crown. It was the Divine Lover of little children, who came to earth as a little child, and who reigns now as the King of Glory, who said, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these, ye have done it unto me." He does not forget, nor fail to reward.

So deeply do we ourselves feel the urgency of this great need, knowing all the facts, that we should feel a heavy burden of guilt if we did not go beyond anything we have felt possible heretofore in order to save these innocent children from suffering and death. Therefore, The Literary Digest will start this fund with the sum of \$25,000 to feed and clothe twenty-five hundred little boys and girls this winter. What an inspiration it will be to all of us—what an inspiration and example to many thousands who may be uncertain how much to give—if in the very first week there shall be a great shower of checks for \$1,000, for \$5,000, for \$10,000, as well as a deluge of smaller amounts, to send the fund rolling on toward the necessary twenty-

three millions. Let us all see again what the father's heart is like in this great rich land of America. Let us have again a wondrous revelation of the heart of American motherhood. Let us have a great outpouring of love and helpfulness in the name of him who said "Feed my lambs!"

Make all checks payable to "The Literary Digest Child-Feeding Fund," and mail them direct to The Literary Digest. Every remittance will be acknowledged, and The Literary Digest will be responsible for every dollar contributed, to see that it goes, without one penny deducted, to the purpose for which it is given. Address Child-Feeding, The Literary Digest, 354—360 Fourth Avenue, New York.

TEXAS AND THE PRESIDENTIAL VOTE

More than 27,000,000 votes were cast in the recent presidential election, which means that more than 25 per cent of the country's entire population exercised the privilege of citizenship.

Had Texas voted on a parity with the rest of the country, her total would have been in the neighborhood of 1,150,000.

As a matter of fact, it was less than 500,000, or less than one-half of what it ought to have been.

This is a disgraceful, inexcusable showing. There is no explanation for it, except monumental indifference.

Even compared to certain southern states, where conditions are supposed to be similar, Texas gave a fine exhibition of lethargy.

Take North Carolina, for instance, which has a population but little more than one-half that of Texas. North Carolina actually polled a greater vote.

Kentucky polled almost twice as great a vote. Missouri polled more than twice as great a vote.

Oklahoma polled almost as great a vote, though her population is less than one-half that of Texas.

Maryland, with less than one-third the population of Texas, polled more than four-fifths as many votes.

What kind of an alibi can we produce for such a showing; what possible apology is there to make?—Houston Chronicle.

STRANGE, PASSING STRANGE

In the light of events, it seems passing strange that there was a time when the Democrats hoped, if not expected, to win the last election on the wet issue. More than that, the Republicans feared this. The resonant voice of the Governor of New Jersey, who at San Francisco voted his state as "wet," seems an echo from the Dark Ages.

The Republicans at Chicago did not dare be fish, flesh, or fowl or even passable red herring on this issue. The Democrats wanted to be wet and ejected Mr. Bryan as almost unclean, because so arid. Yet they took it out in longing, while hesitating to the point of inaction.

It reads like fiction that in that period New York, New Jersey, Illinois, Indiana, Massachusetts, and other states were reckoned as at least in the doubtful column because of unquenched thirst. Yet that was fact. It was believed that thousands upon thousands of men would drown all other issues in sloppy will and morals.

But Mr. Bryan was right and all the rest were wrong. He best knew the substantial character of the people. They may grieve and mentally rebel at prohibition, but they will not vote what is both immoral and economic folly. To this extent he was not a politician for a politician never has courage and seldom has that moral conscience which recognizes that he is not alone in its admirable possession. — Washington Herald

John B. Forgan, the big Chicago banker, rises to remark that the farmers ought to be as willing to take their losses as are other business men, a condition that he apparently does not think exists. His opinion would have more force with the farmers if he were to point out a few of the business men who have been taking any losses in proportion to those agriculture is asked to shoulder—or any considerable losses at all.

Secretary Houston's advice to congress was that because the rich had found a way to evade the payment of the surtaxes on their large income the way to do was to increase the taxes on the men of smaller incomes. Did it not occur to the secretary that it would be much more advisable to search out a way to prevent the ultra rich from dodging out from under?