

TO PREVENT POVERTY

Bolton Hall Points Out the Best Way to Prevent Poverty and to Relieve the Poor

(Written for Henry George Edition of The Independent.)

It can be shown that in many cases, instead of preventing pauperism and reckless waste, organized charity has increased it. Charity is a palliative designed to sustain "things as they are" in our social institutions, for, on account of the last resort furnished by charity, men are induced to endure the conditions in which they find themselves. The time is past when, as Professor Warner has said, "Charity was a method of saving one's soul, a sort of fire insurance against the contingencies of the future life." This it is to be feared is only because we have ceased to believe in the fire. It is now insurance of another kind—insurance against social tornadoes. But for charity, men would long ago have swept away the order of things as it now exists. That is the only logical excuse for the socialistic state aid to charities; for no real distinction can be shown between giving free corn and amusements; free education, and free surgical help, or free shelter. What would be the effect upon the people of our great cities, if, on some bitter morning, fifty people should be found frozen to death on the Park benches? The public would be shocked out of tolerating "the blessings of things as they are;" yet many of the poor of this great city go where they had almost better be frozen to death, to police lodging houses which may save the body, but destroy the soul.

There are fields which charity now occupies which ought to be left vacant. I speak of such as attract to the cities a large number who, if left in the country, would support themselves well. They come to the city assured that if they find nothing to do, there are at least plenty of places where they can get shelter. After the panic of 1873, the citizens' relief committee appointed ex-Mayor Hewitt, Rev. John Hall, and other gentlemen in whom the public had confidence to see what should be done to relieve the distress in the city. After a full investigation they decided that the best thing to do was to leave the matter alone, because special efforts would create as much distress as they relieved by attracting to the city those who might make out a living in the country.

We have made no progress in the radical relief of poverty for eighteen hundred years; we have not fewer poor people; we have not less distress.

Nor do most of our efforts even tend to lessen distress or pauperism. Model tenement houses increase the crowding about them, because, holding fewer tenants than the buildings they supplant, they take up as much room; and in addition their superior character increases the land value and raises rent or attracts more inhabitants to the district. Free or cheap feeding interferes with small restaurants and caterers, and does not in the long run furnish as economical or as good a food supply. But worse than all this: where there are two men competing for one job the man who will work the cheapest will get the job, and the man who can live the cheapest will work the cheapest, so that the more we supply charitable "aid of wages" whether by housing, feeding, clothing, or even amusing the workman, the more we reduce his wages. That this factor is indirect makes it none the less powerful. We do the same thing directly and consciously in our charitable institutions by making garments at prices with which the independent worker cannot possibly compete and live in decency, the loss coming out of the pockets of "all such as are religiously and devoutly disposed." It is sad but undeniable that our charities are nearly all destroyers of unselfishness by the paid or perfunctory performance of what ought to be done directly from love, and are besides actual factors in the creation of paupers.

We are told to help the poor to help themselves. The help they really need is help to get rid of us who monopolize the earth and of our charities which are a device for keeping astride of their necks. Charity organizations have done one good thing: they have collected statistics and discredited the claim that the main cause of poverty is drunkenness. It is the other way, the main cause of drunkenness is misery and anxiety. They have also shown conclusively that the cause of poverty is not laziness; about 40 per cent of those who apply for assistance to our society for improving the condition of the poor (and others show the same record) need no help but an opportunity to work. When the Pilgrim Fathers came to this country they brought little and

found nothing here—but land. Suppose some one had submitted to them that he was out of work; those austere toilers would have laughed at him. They would have said, cut up that wood; dig out those stones; spade that field. As long as men can get land there is no lack of work. But we allow individuals to monopolize the land. This is the first cause of poverty—and of charity.

What should we do about it? Divide the land anew? That would do no good. The sensible and natural course is where anyone has a monopoly of any kind, to make him pay to the rest of the community its reasonable value; as in law, when property is divided among heirs, if one takes all the land, he pays the others who take none. What we need is access to the land. Make it unprofitable to hold natural opportunities without using them. Tax land values and other natural monopolies up to the full amount of their rent, and as they increase in value let the taxes increase proportionately. If we destroy speculation in land, remove the artificial barriers to opportunity, and cease to fine men for working by taxing wealth, it will be as absurd for a man to be "out of work" as it would be for him to be "out of air."

BOLTON HALL.

The Dreamer

(Written for Henry George Edition of The Independent.)

"Only a dreamer," was Pharo's cold sneer,
When Moses, the cause of his poor brother, plead.
"Only a dreamer—a phantom-filled seer,"
But his dream was of Freedom in Tyranny's stead.
Ah, Pharo! the jewels you set in your crown
Are paltry compared with that "gem" of the mind—
Which dares to shine out against tyranny's frown
Filling altars of love with the light of mankind!
Vain boast! O ye rulers, and princes, and kings,
Your palaces, altars and thrones are in dust,
But with love, that's immortal, posterity sings,
Of "Moses the meek" who was true to his trust.

"Only a dreamer this carpenter's son,
For Nazareth harbingers nothing of good."
But scarce had the work of this "dreamer" begun,
Than the tyrant and hypocrite awestricken stood.
What marvel's of wisdom came forth when he spoke!
What kindness and love in his actions behold!
To his "trumpet of truth" earnest spirits awake,
For truth is more precious than cofers of gold.
The multitude learned of this message of peace,
His plea for the hungry, oppressed and poor,
And a time when all hatred and warning should cease,
And Earth overflow with a bountiful store.

The dreamer is gone—but the dream will come true,
For justice will conquer the world with its power,
And Love will be lord of the work that we do
And virtue shall blossom—a heavenly flower.
That "Kingdom" he promised will come as a dawn,
And wisdom, and righteousness, then shall unfold.
The treasures return (when the robbers are gone)
With more than was lost in the Eden of old.

"He's only a dreamer," the wise men declared,
When Genoa's youth turned his keel to the west,
As they caught the last glimpse of this "dreamer" who "dared"
They whispered, "Farewell," with a sigh or a jest.
Time passes—the watchers grow weary and few
And the friends of Columbus are mourning his fate.
The time is forgotten, he bade them adieu,
And now his returning, no "dreamers" await.
But over the crest of the waves is discerned
"A sail," ah, indeed! masses rushed to the quay!
The "dream" has come true, and the "dreamer" returned,
And the crowd that had hissed him, is frantic with glee.

"Only a dreamer," proud Briton be-

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gan,
And laughed at a government minus a "king."
The "rights of the king" versus "the rights of the man"
Is the song which the tyrants and plunderers sing.
But justice and liberty flame in the soul
Till nerves became steel and the Will becomes law.
Till a handful of men in this mighty control,
By such masterful manners hold Briton in awe.
Oh, Washington! you were a "dreamer of dreams,"
But the hearts of a nation with gratitude warm
As out of your dream the reality gleams
Of a nation, a people, secure from the storm.

The fire of the prophet is burning again:
Henry George as a "dreamer" of justice arose.
Such bold declarations as "I am for men"
Struck fear to the bosom of Liberty's foes.
"He's only a dreamer," the critics observe;
But "dreamers" are deaf to the sneers of the world.
They know that the cause which their labors deserve
Will soon have its beautiful banner unfurled.
Toil on little band, for the glimpse of a dawn
Reflects on the cloud of oppression and pain,
The midnight is past and the gloom will be gone,
And the Earth, like an Eden, will blossom again.

A "dreamer!" This man whose great motto was "Man,"
Not a man as a tyrant or man as a slave,
But equal and free, with a power and a plan
From poverty's pang, all his brothers to save!
A "dreamer" inspiring the World with his dream—
A "dreamer" of good, not a doer of harm—
A "dreamer," but justice and love are his theme—
A "dreamer" which tyranny views with alarm:
'Tis better if Truth must be bound to the stake,
And Justice and Liberty prone in the dust,
To dream of heaven to come; than awake,
To the horrible hell that is bred by the trust!

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WHAT THE SINGLE TAXER SEES

(Written for Henry George Edition of The Independent.)

What the single taxer sees is this: No matter how many reforms you make, no matter how much you increase the productiveness of men, no matter how much you educate people, and make them good citizens and good men, no matter how great your public improvements may be, no matter how great improvements you make in individuals or institutions or constitutions or governments, so long as the absolute control of natural opportunities and of the special privileges attached thereto belongs to a privileged number, THEN THE RESULT OF ALL YOUR REFORMS AND IMPROVEMENTS IS TO ENHANCE THE WEALTH AND PRIVILEGE AND POWER OF THIS NUMBER, OUT OF ALL PROPORTION TO THE GOOD OF THE WHOLE.

The history of European nations shows this by their wide separation of classes. The history of America is showing it every day more and more. J. H. DILLARD, New Orleans, La.