

Education as an Eradicator of Pauperism in England

LONDON, May 29.—(Special Correspondence for The Bee.)—No one who has had a taste of English country life can share contentedly with six million other people the advantages and drawbacks of this greatest city on earth, until he has first given himself the chance to look again upon the green fields of this beautiful land, with their affluent spangling of buttercups and daisies, and to listen once more to that matchless symphony of the woods which is kept up here all day and far into the long twilight by the thrush, the linnets, the bark, the blackbird, and the world-famed English nightingale. Such at any rate was the feeling of the one who has undertaken in this correspondence to give American readers the latest and newest developments in charitable and reform work over here; and the fact of the annual meeting of the charity organization societies of Great Britain being held this month in the university town of Cambridge, situated, as that town is, in the midst of charming English scenery, with no end of characteristic English villages all about it, afforded just the opportunity I craved, and made it possible for me, while enjoying pleasure, to still attend to business.

Oxonians in Straitjackets.

Cambridge itself, the cap and gown part of it, was in a flutter of apprehension. Over the rival University of Oxford there has recently passed one of those periodic waves of social and moral stringency, resembling on a small scale the reform spasms which occasionally attack New York City. Certain rules are to be enforced which of late, it appears, have fallen into "innocuous desuetude." The "undergrad" must now always wear his cap and gown when he appears on the streets in the forenoon, and woe betide him if hereafter he shall dare to dispense with this tell-tale paraphernalia in any walks he may take after his evening dinner. The point of this is that Oxford is determined to keep its students out of taverns, billiard rooms, and even restaurants, and that the cap and gown rule, rigidly enforced, will materially aid the proctor and his spotters, or "bull dogs," as they are called, in bringing this reform to pass. So it is at Oxford, and at Cambridge tremors of apprehension were felt by tavern keepers and others lest a regime of equal strictness should be inaugurated there. But at any rate the Cambridge "Spinning House" has had its day. This was the university bastille in which formerly, without any legal process, any girl, good or bad, might be incarcerated for the simple offense of being found conversing on the streets with a university man after a certain hour in the evening. What gave this woman's prison its moral deathblow was that some years ago there was immured in it a girl who, tho' a little venturesome, was still perfect in virtue and belonged to one of the best families, and now in the march of improvements has the building itself been demolished.

Can't Escape the City.

Incidental to this Cambridge visit was that coveted view of English life, with its quaint villages, trim landscapes and enrapturing bird songs. But the city followed me even into the country and the way in which this was done is so typical of old England and will serve so well to introduce the proceedings of that great Cambridge conference on charities that I should be culpable if I failed to describe it. In saying that the city followed I mean

merely that the corporation of the city took its way that morning into the country. The mayor of Cambridge was in his scarlet robes and the macebearer, more gaudy still, was in front of him, while in other carriages were lesser dignitaries. Twelve miles did they journey in this state to the little village of Reach. This settlement dates back to King John and, though it is little more than a hamlet now, it was known some hundreds of years ago as "The City of the Seven Churches." It was, however, no church business that was on foot that day, nor anything relating to King John's magna charta. It was a simple horse fair that had to be opened and before the thing could start in due form there must be a proclamation of it, with its precedent "Oyez" by the mayor of the neighboring university town. This is because Cambridge still enjoys, in shadow if not in substance, some manorial rights over that village.

In this occurrence there were distant suggestions of what you meet here wherever you go—not only the mustiness of age, but the love of pomp and that attachment of the people to old customs, which sentimentality is one of their greatest charms, but which in its practical effects, particularly as applied to trade and commerce, is their great national misfortune and is gradually losing them the markets of the world. But over this last named trait why should an American shed any tears when what is their loss is our gain? This American didn't. He scarcely, in fact, thought of it when this antiquated formality first came to his notice, so occupied was he with reflections it aroused bearing directly upon the subject of his visit.

Largess Suggests Poverty.

This cavalcade of dignitaries, having properly performed its office, was then on the return journey toward Cambridge. The villagers were out in force with all their many children, and these interested spectators, I soon found, were as much bent on business as on pleasure, for from time immemorial the Cambridge corporation in its annual visits to Reach has been in the habit of throwing out newly-coined pennies and half-pennies as a sort of largess to mark its progress. One of these I got myself; I couldn't help picking it up, it was thrown so near. How fortunate I was, for they tell me that this is the last coinage that will bear the image of Queen Victoria, and that if I keep it a hundred years or so and am still in England I may perhaps sell it for \$1,000 or more! But thoughts of personal gain did not in the least blind me to the significance of this proceeding, and it seemed as though, in the matter-of-course way in which those coins were thrown out and in the eager scramble of the boys and girls to get them, I had before me as true an explanation of why pauperism is so common in England as any that was offered at that great meeting of the charity societies. Isn't it because the children of the working classes and those still poorer are so largely taught from infancy to expect tips and bounties of various kinds? This, I am sure, will bear thinking about, and the more any visitor thinks of it with his eyes open the more likely will he be to fall in with it.

But, happily, pauperism is decreasing in this country. It always does in every country as education extends and self-respect becomes more common. The term "pauper" is not inclusive of the great mass of struggling people who are helped now and again by individuals, nor the large number who get systematic help from charitable

societies, providing that these do not also "come on the rates" for help. To be classed as a pauper one must be supported in whole or part by the parish. In July last the number enjoying this unfortunate distinction in England and Wales was 761,248. For an aggregate population estimated then at a little over 32,000,000, this is a painful showing, amounting to about one in every forty-two persons. Relatively, however, these figures are encouraging, for the year before the total exceeded that of last year by 16,015. Recently, too, I have seen it stated on good authority that if the paupers of today were in the same ratio to the population as they were thirty or more years ago, there would now be not the 761,248 which there really are, but twice that number, or more than 1,500,000 of this unfortunate class.

Manhood Asserts Itself.

The inference from this is that the last thirty years have witnessed a gradual increase amongst the lower classes of the elements which make for self-supporting manhood, and one cannot help recalling in this connection that it was just about thirty years ago when, by the elementary education act, with its provision for school boards and for large grants of money, the first steps were taken to put within reach of these classes the benefits of the common school. Since then hardly a year has passed in which Parliament has not enlarged upon this first enactment. The first great addition was a compulsory attendance law and the next was the entire abolition of the weekly fees. The children of the poorest may now begin to get free education when they reach the age of 3 years, and only when they have passed certain elementary standards, or have reached 13 years, does the law exempt them from attendance. This is certainly good as far as it goes, but the quality of those ten years of early instruction, the conditions under which the teaching is given and how inadequately it fits the recipients for a manly, self-supporting life—these evidently are questions that are still in fierce dispute.

At the recent conference of charity organizations the faultiness of the existing educational system was boldly classed by Mr. T. C. Horsfall of Macclesfield, one of the best authorities in England, as one of the causes of English pauperism. The one chance, he said, which the mass of the people had of being able to keep off poverty was in its keeping or gaining health and strength in childhood and youth, and in its gaining then the power to work well and use rightly its leisure time. But the community, he said, by establishing a system of compulsory education, had taken the formative time of the life of every member of the working class under its own control, and by its failure to even attempt to keep healthy children healthy, to bring to the ailing a return of health and to train all children to desire and know how to work well and how to use aright their leisure time, it was directly the cause of a great amount of the existing poverty.

Conditions Are Better.

That the utterances of this speaker were largely shared by the 250 charity experts who had gathered from all parts of the kingdom to listen to him, was evident from the hearty "hear, hears" which greeted them. But for myself, knowing from long and close observation how much better present conditions are in English school life than those formerly in vogue, I felt relieved when the foregoing statement was modified a little. Mr. Horsfall admitted that by their national system of education

the population generally was better fitted for self-supporting and self-respecting life than it could be with no system, but to his main contention he still held. It was impossible to doubt, he said, that if the English system were but as thoughtfully arranged, and as completely managed as that of Switzerland and those in vogue in parts of Germany, thousands of men and women who were now paupers, or sickly, would be strong and healthy and well-to-do.

It was the general opinion of this great conference of charity experts that the chief cause of poverty was environment, and that if the laws passed and the influences exercised by the state and community were what they should be, the pauper class would soon be so greatly reduced as to give hope of its final extinction. The drinking saloon came in for not a little blame, of course; yet, for tolerating this in its present vice-breeding forms, the chief blame lay, it was held, at the door of society. One speaker twitted his squeamish-minded countrymen upon their conscientious objections to wholesome recreation on the Lord's day. It would be impossible, he said, to find a better method for insuring that the mass of the people should have the habit of drinking to excess and should not know how to use their leisure time properly than the system so long maintained by the guiding classes, and still but little modified, by which on the one day of rest drinking saloons are allowed to be open and all places of wholesome recreation, such as tennis courts, bowling greens, cricket grounds and concert halls, are closed.

Environment and Pauperism.

But in considering environment as a breeder of pauperism, this congress of charities hurled its strongest invectives against overcrowding, and the want of proper sanitation in those mis-named dwellings in which so many thousands of English workmen have to find their only apology for a home. It was openly admitted that "in all towns and in a large proportion of villages, there were houses which, by their structural wrongness, or lack of air and light, made physical and moral health and strength impossible for all, or nearly all, who had to live in them." But in this connection how pleasant to know that in these days a really heroic effort is being made to alter these wretched conditions. The haste to put up "model dwellings" is almost feverish. In London it seems as though every slum were threatened. The London County Council has provided in this way for thousands upon thousands of workmen. Two years ago it planned at enormous expense to re-house some 50,000 or 60,000, and very recently it entered upon another vast re-housing

scheme, the total cost of which will reach, it is said, more than \$7,000,000, and this doesn't include what is being done by the borough councils of London or by private philanthropy.

HENRY TUCKLEY.

Automobile Driving

(Continued from Fifth Page.)

that lies southwest of the town. Comfortable farmhouses and large country churches show the thrift of the community. A few miles from the river the hills lessen in size preparatory to leading tourists to roads that are as level as a race track.

Greenwood is the beginning of a straight away course which follows the railroad track into Lincoln and offers a road so smooth that it would encourage the latest wheelerman to search. Bidding farewell to Chairman R. A. Miller of the Greenwood village board, the automobilists started on a dash for the capital city. Cornfields and groves were blurred into a mass of brown and green. The machine raced with trains that sped along the line track with the enthusiasm of a young athlete who has just discovered his powers.

Closing Scenes of the Run.

A five-minute stop at Waverly for water. A hasty greeting to the president of the village board, S. M. Clark, and the racer started again on its trip Lincolnward. The smokestacks of the shops at Havelock loomed in sight and Wesleyan university was visible. In a few minutes the dome of the state house and a score of church spires marked the location of the city. Suburbs were left behind. After a short run over pavements the automobile landed its passengers at the door of the executive mansion, where they were greeted by Governor and Mrs. Savage.

The patient amateur photographer has learned to bear with equanimity the musty joke about breaking the camera. But the picture taker who would also be an automobilist must fortify himself against another onslaught from the would-be wags. The white man's burden has been increased. Unless you keep your bell ringing so loudly that hearing is impossible "Where's your horses?" will greet you at every turn.

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