City and Its Dependents

By Frederick Almy, Chairman of Committee National Conference of Charities, 1904

FROM the time of Homer to the time of Washington methods of transportation were the same. They were limited to the horse and wagon, oars and sails. Then one century outdid thirty and added first the railroad and steamboat, and then, with a rush, the trolley, the bicycle, the automobile and perhaps the balloon. It is almost the same with methods of communication. In thirty centuries we gained only the printing press, but this one century gives us the telegraph, the postal service, the telephone, the phonograph and the marconigraph.

If we turn now to charity we find that from the earliest days until almost the present time charity had but two forms, largess and custody. These were illuminated by the devoted personal service of good men and women, but this personal service, like the forces of steam and electricity, though not new in the world, did not find effective expression until our own day. Largess slowly grew more intelligent and custody grew more humane, and even curative; but these still remained the type. The new charity in its reaction almost goes so far as to discountenance both. The reaction against alms was for a time excessive. Charity organization societies are beginning to realize this, and are now placing more emphasis upon the value of relief, and less upon its dangers.

For the last two decades the protest against mere alms, unaccompanied by personal work, has been incessant, but the protest against institutions is more recent. Not only is the cottage system now preferred to the congregate, but there is a disposition to have as little custody as possible; to place children in foster homes instead of in orphan asylums; to lessen the term of confinement in prison by trying probation before imprisonment, and parole after it; and even with the insane and other classes of defectives to try board in decent homes instead of the more or less unnatural institution life.

Either unwise relief or unwise custody will do more harm than good, but the latter is on the whole less open to abuse than the former, and the doctrine of the present day is that city governments should support institutions for "indoor relief" of the poor, or for the sick, but should give no relief outside of institutions. No outside relief is now given by New York, Brooklyn, Philadelphia, St. Louis, Baltimore, Washington, San Francisco, New Orleans, Louisville or Kansas City, and in our other large cities the amount of public outside relief is steadily decreasing. In New York, Brooklyn, Philadelphia and Washington city outdoor relief was abandoned after it had been given for years. It is now generally agreed that this form of relief is better left to the more flexible and personal methods of private charity. In private charity we are not so apt to have the bare gift without the giver, but the giver follows his giving with continuous care; and, moreover, in private charity, love, ingenuity and patience will often find substitutes for relief which help more safely.

These substitutes for relief are the glory of modern charity. In both public and private charity it is being realized that cure is better than care, but that prevention is better than cure. Vaster sums are being given in charity than ever before, but they are going largely to libraries, to industrial schools and to reformatories. The good Samaritan is no longer the very highest type of charity. Beautiful and rare as such personal charity is, it has been cleverly said that it would have been still better charity to keep the road to Jericho free from thieves. This would have been not merely wiser, but also kinder for the man who was set upon and robbed.

Cities now know that a good police department and good school and health departments will lessen poverty. The police and health departments decrease crime and disease and the school department increases education. In these ways they lessen pauperism instead of relieving it. Municipal libraries, playgrounds, baths, kindergartens and manual schools and municipal lodging houses all help to reduce vice and pauperism. Municipal summer concerts compete with the more dangerous attractions of the saloon. Municipal tenement house ordinances, and in Greater New York the admirable Tenement House Commission, are routing poverty in its chief stronghold. Where municipal ordinances will not suffice the state often steps in, with compulsory education laws, and laws regulating the employment of women and children in factories and stores and on the streets. Hereafter, for instance, in New York and Buffalo, boys under 14 cannot sell papers late at night, and boys under 10 cannot sell at all. In city after city juvenile courts are being established, so that delinquent children will be saved from all contact with adult vice. Through probation they are given a chance to reform, while a personal influence is brought to bear to which the children respond wonderfully.

Most or all of the measures just mentioned were first tested by private philanthropy, and even where the action has been official it has often been on the motion of a society or individual. The charity organization societies and settlements alone are responsible for much good social work in our cities, which will bear rich fruits. Nothing in this modern work is more vital than its personality. The early conception of a charity organization society in the popular mind was a sort of detective bureau to sift out fraud. Such societies now make their trained workers a nucleus for a great amount of intelligent volunteer service which enters the homes of the poor with patient, continuing friendship, trying to alter hard conditions and with the aid of church and school to lift and build character.

Such work is winning the battle against pauperism. In one of our larger cities, where there has been a charity organization society for twenty-five years, it has been shown that there are not as many dependent families today as there were twenty-five years ago when the city was only one-third as large. The society is much more closely in touch with all the poverty of the city now than then and is working with many families which would not have been on its books at all formerly because they do not need material relief, but nevertheless the total number of dependent families has grown smaller while the city has grown larger. Pauperism is being reduced and not merely relieved; and with the better work now done, and the better outside influences, still better results can be expected in the near future. Nearly all voluntary poverty rests on some fault of character—on sloth or appetite or weak will—and it is here that the churches help. Even with the aid of all the new social forces it is slow work, but it is succeeding. To the end of the world, as long as human nature and human institutions are imperfect, there will be richer and poorer, but the squalid, bestial poverty of the past is certainly passing.

Buffalo, N. Y.

Wonderful Man Who Talks with Birds

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A TRAVELER was cutting his way through the jungle which clothes the peak of Mount Diablo, in the West Indian island of Jamaica. Suddenly he halted, with uplifted machete.

"Fee-fee, so tender. Fee-fee, so-o-o-o tender."

It was the call of the ground dove, and seemed to come from a low bush a few yards to his left. Away in the distance he heard the answering call of the ground dove's mate.

Peering through the bushes the traveler saw not a bird, but a man. He was lying on the grass in a small clearing, warbling the ground dove's call as perfectly as if he were a ground dove himself. The answering call grew nearer and nearer, and presently the female ground dove flew into the clearing, perched unhesitatingly on the man's hand and talked to him as if he were her mate.

This man whom the birds of wood and forest treat as one of themselves is an American named Charles Denison Kellogg. He was born in California, the son of a "forty-niner," who used to be known as the "Grand Old Man of the Mines." From infancy he was a dreamy, impractical child, with a great love and tenderness for all living things. In boyhood he used to lie down in the woods and listen to the birds instead of going to school or playing with other lads.

All his life he has studied the language and habits of the dwellers in the woods in preference to those of his fellow men. He could take rank as the greatest living authority on birdlife if he chose to write about birds instead of living among them and learning more about them.

"Imagine," said a friend of his, "a human being calling birds to him and understanding all the little worries and troubles in their seemingly careless lives. Could anything be more wonderful? He can tell you all about their wooings and their love songs, all about the long-drawn, happy notes of the mother bird, who has just hatched her young. His face in those moments tells the interesting story of his lonely, yet happy life with his feathered friends in the forests of the far west and the jungles of the tropics.

There is not a bird note which Mr. Kellogg cannot imitate perfectly. He does not whistle or sing the notes, as an ordinary man would do; he warbles them exactly like the birds.

"It is not imitation," he tells his friends. "To put it briefly and badly, nature has given me a bird-throat. I cannot explain it—nobody can. Many scientists have examined my throat and listened to my notes and trills. They all confess themselves puzzled. They say there is something peculiar in the formation of my throat which enables me to sing like birds without merely imitating them. I have never met another man who possesses this curious gift."

Mr. Kellogg spends the greater part of the year camping out in the woods alone, or with his wife—another enthusiastic birdlover—and perhaps a sympathetic friend like Mr. John Burroughs. He has traveled all over North America, from Alaska to Mexico, making friends with all sorts and conditions of birds, and he has also pitched his tent in Jamaica and other West Indian islands in search of birds which have been exterminated in the United States, such as the blue heron.

He is not fond of taking people with him into the woodland; he will take no one unless he knows that person is a lover of birds. He treats the birds as a gentleman treats his friends, introducing only desirable acquaintances to them. Men who have accompanied him into the woods speak with amazement of his intimacy with everything that flies.

"The moment we entered the shady precincts of the woodland," said Stephen Chalmers, a plantation overseer, who accompanied him on one of his expeditions in Jamaica, 'Kellogg's manner changed. He had been talking to me about his adventures in various parts of America, but instantly he forgot my very existence and began calling to his beloved birds. What puzzled me was that the birds seemed to know him.

"Somewhere among the trees a woodpecker called. The call was answered, seemingly by another bird where Kellogg was standing. Again the woodpecker called, and again it was replied to.

"'Did you do that?' I asked in amazement.

"Kellogg did not reply. He was staring at the trees. In a little while a tiny woodpecker fluttered on to a tree near to us, and then on to Kellogg's outstretched hand. It looked up into his face, opened its little beak and talked volubly to him, while he talked back. They kept up a friendly conversation for several minutes and then the woodpecker flew away. I don't know what he said to it, but it seemed to me that he was asking about the health and prosperity of its brothers of the woodland.

"Presently we saw a black-and-golden banana bird fluttering around a plantain blossom. It suddenly stopped and uttered its sweet call, 'Tom Paine! Tom Paine!' Kellogg instantly responded, and the bird looked at him and flew nearer. Then, for quite five minutes, they kept up an animated, melodious conversation. At last the gaudy-colored bird flew away, and at the same moment the naturalist wheeled around and replied to the 'Coo-coo-coo-coo of a dove in a cottonwood tree."

When he is asked to explain the reason of this instinctive friendship between himself and the birds Kellogg replies:

"It is love. Anybody who goes into the woods with the spirit of love in his heart, and without the faintest desire for destruction or for possession, can make friends with the birds, if he is moderately tactful and patient. Birds can read the heart better than men can. They know their friends and are ready to love them.

"In all my travels I have never carried a gun and have never found it necessary to harm bird, beast or man. The man who carries a gun in wild parts is likely to make trouble for himself; the man without firearms is practically certain to find peace and a warm welcome wherever he goes."

Mr. Kellogg owns a big Newfoundland dog, which usually accompanies him on his expeditions into the woods. He has taught it from puppyhood to love all living things as he himself loves them. Wild birds will perch on this dog's head as they do on the head of its master.

Once the Newfoundland found a sparrow with a broken wing fluttering on the ground and pounced upon it.

"Ah!" thought Mr. Kellogg, "the desire for prey has broken out again, and the teaching of years is undone."

But it was not so. The dog lifted the sparrow gently in its mouth and bore it unharmed to its master, evidently desiring him to mend the broken wing. The bird was in hospital for some time, and every day the dog visited it to inquire sympathetically how the wing was getting on. When at last the bird flew away its canine friend barked joyously and rolled on the ground with delight. More marvelous still, the sparrow returned several times to pay a friendly call on the dog.

Now and then Mr. Kellogg emerges from the woods to visit his friends and give a few lectures on birdcraft. He is an unpractical man, quite out of tune with the age in which he lives. He cares nothing for money. He would just as soon lecture for nothing as for pay. His only purpose in lecturing is to teach people to understand and love birds as he does, and in this he is successful. Sportsmen go away from his lectures vowing they will not slaughter another bird, and women make up their minds never to wear another feather in their hats.

A fashionable woman, wearing a bird in her bonnet, sat in the front row of the audience, at one of Mr. Kellogg's lectures. As he talked about the romance and tragedy of bird life, making the loves and sorrows of his feathered friends seem as real to his hearers as their own, people looked at the offensive bonnet with reproachful eyes. The poor woman blushed vividly and tried to remove the bird furtively. At last the lights were turned down to enable lantern slides to be shown, and when they were turned up again the bird had disappeared from the bonnet.

"I never felt so bad in my life," said the woman afterward. "The people looked at me as if they would have liked to treat me as the bird had been treated. But that was not the worst of it. I felt such a monster. I'll not wear another bird or another feather as long as I live."

Animals as well as birds love Mr. Kellogg on sight. He visited a house where a fierce daschshund was kept. The dog always flew at strangers and had bitten several.

"Take care," cried the host, as Kellogg walked into the garden. "The dog's loose."

The dog, hearing a strange footstep, rushed out intent on slaughter. But when it saw the Californian advancing with outstretched hand, it stopped with a puzzled look and wagged its tail doubtfully. Kellogg tapped its head lightly with the tips of his fingers and looked steadily into its eyes. Immediately it rolled on the ground with delight, licked his boots, and could hardly be induced to leave his side.

"Don't pat a dog or stroke its head," said Kellogg, turning to his host. "Tap its head lightly with your fingertips and it will love you forever."

There is only one animal which does not endorse the naturalist, and that is the harmless, necessary cat. He doesn't like cats, because they prey upon his beloved birds. When a cat is around he delights in giving the fluttering cry of a bird with a broken wing. Pussy, scenting an "easy mark," rushes vainly about the room until she is nearly frantic, but, of course, she cannot find the bird.

Mr. Kellogg was one of the first of the new school of sportsmen who hunt with the camera instead of the gun. He has found photography of great assistance in probing the mysteries of bird life. Some of his snapshots are wonderful. They show the mother bird feeding her young, or quarreling with the intrusive cuckoo.

One series of photographs illustrates the love, courtship, marriage and family life of a pair of wrens. Great patience and care were needed to secure these views. The photographer had to conceal his camera in a mantle of foliage, with only the lens visible, and wait for days to get a satisfactory snapshot.

At Salem, in New Jersey, there is an immense rookery, whither crows flock at certain seasons of the year from hundreds of miles around. This was the scene of one of Mr. Kellogg's greatest exploits.

For many years it had been the ardent desire of many ornithologists to obtain a photograph of this rookery when the vast flocks of birds were assembled. No one had ever succeeded in achieving this difficult feat until Mr. Kellogg did it. This was how he managed it:

He reconnoitered the ground, and decided that the only way to succeed was to ambush during the day, and trust to a flashlight camera to take the photograph at night. In stalking strange birds, with which he is unacquainted, he uses artificial hayricks and bushes, under cover of which he moves slowly towards them.

One winter's night, when the crows arrived at their usual meeting place, they observed nothing unusual in an ordinary looking hayrick which had found its way to the spot. Inside that hayrick was Mr. Kellogg with his powerful flashlight camera. There he lay all night in the snow, with the temperature several degrees below zero, taking photographs, while the deafening cawing of 100,000 crows made the night hideous.

Mr. Kellogg was the first man to tackle the celebrated "Bird Rock," in the Gulf of St. Lawrence, and take photographs of the millions of gannets that nest there. He was lowered down the face of a precipitous cliff in a rope chair, with his camera slung around his neck. Swinging dizzily on the rope; with hundreds of gannets shrieking around him and beating him with their wings, he took several pictures, which have proved to be of great value to naturalists.

And Yet He Meant Well

He was extremely bashful and very much in love, and the combination made his life miserable.

One evening he called and found the whole family, with the great exception of Herself, assembled in the library.

He discussed politics with Her father and the servant question with Her mother, when suddenly his tongue faltered, for She appeared in the doorway.

Rising hastily, he exclaimed, more cordially than gracefully, "Ah, at last, here comes the missing link."—Lippincott's Magazine.