

The Ragged School Union

By W. T. Cranfield ("Denis Crane")

During a short stay in Victoria, and while visiting at the house of a friend, the happy lot of Canadian children, as compared with that of many little ones in the Old Country, was borne in upon me with considerable force. We were discussing over the supper-table the work of the Ragged School Union among the waifs and strays of London, when a bright girl of eight or nine asked me to describe one of these gutter-children. Neither she, nor any other junior member of the party, all Canadian born, had ever seen a ragged, shoeless, outcast child. We are so familiar with the sight in London and other large English cities that I could hardly realize that I was not the victim of a joke.

Then the questions arose: How is it that there are so many poor children in London? and How does the Ragged School Union help them? As the same queries will doubtless arise in other minds when an appeal is made on behalf of Sir John Kirk's Christmas Dinner and Fresh Air Funds, I will endeavor to answer them, though owing to the scope of the questions and the limits of space, my words must be few.

The causes of destitution in England comprise, roughly, three classes: economic, social, and moral. Foremost among economic causes is the increasing employment of boys in what are called "cul-de-sac" or blind alley occupations; i.e., occupations which retain lads at good wages until they reach adolescence, when, being too big and demanding more money, they are discharged in favor of younger and cheaper labor. The young out-of-works then obtain odd jobs of various kinds and of uncertain duration, sandwiched between longer periods of idleness, during which they become demoralized and unfitted for continuous work. Ultimately they drop into the ranks of the regular unemployed, and ere long become unemployable.

In London, upwards of fifty per cent of the boys leaving elementary schools adopt one or other of these blind-alley callings. An additional eight or ten per cent enter the barely more promising field of clerical life as juniors or office boys. Of the rest, one-half enter trades in which employment is more or less discontinuous. Once thrown out of work, or laid aside by illness or an accident, they too, are in imminent peril of drifting to destitution.

Other economic causes there are, such as the "too-old-at-forty" principle, the difficulty with which married workers move from place to place at the demands of the labor market, the replacing of hand labor by machinery, and overpopulation; but of these I cannot now speak. The gravest cause is that which I have indicated.

Of social causes, early marriage and its frequent concomitant, a large family, easily holds first place. These unions, cemented ere character is formed, before the complicated responsibilities of married life are even partly understood, and, above all, before the man has acquired a reasonable prospect of permanent employment, open at the young couple's feet a gulf into which the slightest hitch or indiscretion is almost bound to precipitate them.

The effect of such unions on the fruit of them is alone enough to bow down any susceptible heart. The weak or defective offspring of immaturity, ill-nourished from the womb, unwisely and inadequately fed during childhood, and reared under conditions which disease and vice are more freely imbibed than health or virtue, what wonder that these children of rash improvidence grow up sickly, morbid, feeble-minded, and industrially incompetent?

All investigators into the moral causes of poverty agree in assigning a prominent place to drink. Many put it first. Perhaps more than any other cause, it is also a consequence. Almost every case in which drinking habits make serious inroads on the family exchequer can be matched with another in which the depleted state of the exchequer leads to the formation of drinking habits. The craving for stimulants is bound to assert itself where the whole conditions of life are monotonous, depressing and unwholesome, and finds an easy victim in those who are grappling with despair.

There is yet another failing of the poor that is responsible for much of their suffering. Some sociological students and mission workers place it even before drinking. I refer to general improvidence, manifesting itself in a failure to save, during times of comparative prosperity, against the certain return of unemployment; in sheer waste on food and other things that do not represent the best expenditure of the money concerned; and in the misuse of money, as in gambling and costly forms of pleasure-seeking.

The recent establishment of Labor Exchanges, and of increasing attention now being given by legislators to social questions, raise the hope that in the not distant future the lot of those subject to want through purely economic and industrial causes will be distinctly improved.

As to the moral causes, these lie, after all, at the very heart of the matter, and it is just here that the utility may, the priceless value, of such institutions as the Ragged School Union appears. In the long run it is character that counts. But by character I mean, not mere abstinence from recognized vice, and certainly not coherence to any particular creed or religious society, but virtue and honesty of purpose, combined with courage, self-control, diligence, perseverance, honesty, and common sense. And it is the lack of these, far more than specific acts of personal misconduct, that is responsible for the great mass of destitution due to moral causes.

I doubt, however, whether an open-minded student can much blame the poor for lacking qualities which their upbringing and the whole conditions of their life tend to make as exotic as roses in Iceland. It is so hard for the comfortable person, who knows poverty only from books; to realize what little aid or incentive to industry and self-respect and conventional virtue there is in the life of slum-land. He has his home, his chances of a competence and a leisurely old age, his friends, his books, his social position, to keep him at his task and out of the way of sinners.

But in thousands of cases the poor have not even one of these. What amazes those who know them first-hand is their patience and docility under conditions that might well provoke a revolution. I am not a sentimental man, but when I have gone into homes such as I know—block after block of them, street after

awaits the willing and the eternal grind of poverty is unknown.

These facts but faintly adumbrate the extensive nature of Sir John Kirk's great institution, but further particulars will be gladly supplied on application to Sir John himself, at John St., Clerkenwell, London, England; to Mr. J. T. Deaville, 718 Fort St., Victoria, B. C., or to Mr. A. J. Brace, at the headquarters of the Y. M. C. A., by whom also contributions will be gratefully received.

FLOWERS SERVE AS WEATHER PROPHETS

It is said that not only the coming weather may be foretold by an acquaintance with flowers, but also the time of the day and the time of the year; and, in fact, Linnaeus possessed such a knowledge of them that he needed neither watch, nor calendar, nor weather-glass. Lord Bacon observed that when the flower of the chickweed expanded fully and boldly no rain will succeed for some hours or days. If the flowers of the Siberian sow-thistle keep open during the night, rain, it is said, is certain to fall the next day. The leaves of the trefoil are always contracted at the approach

Marriage Laws of Europe

Only too often do English girls in their ignorance contract marriages with foreigners with whom they have fallen in love, and live to find that in the eyes of their husband's countrymen they have, after all, not been wives at all.

It would be a difficult and a lengthy task to arm the public, and particularly the ignorant parent and the unsuspecting girl, against the dangers of these mixed marriages, says a correspondent of the London Express, but in the space I have at my disposal I should like to point out the salient facts to be ascertained before such mixed marriages can be at all reasonably safe. And first I may say that generally all foreigners who marry English girls in England can only do so legally by the laws of their country when they have first complied with all the requirements of their own country in the matter of intending marriage. And the chief of

daughter twenty-four years of age; and if either is an orphan, the consent of the legal guardian is needed. The publication of an intended marriage of a person abroad must be made in the place where he last dwelt in Germany two weeks before the marriage; and it must also be made by advertisement in the domicile of a foreigner, though in this case a declaration from foreign legal authorities that no impediment exists is accepted as an alternative. Any person wishing to marry a second time must show that a legal settlement has been made on the children, if any, of the first marriage.

By Italian law, an Italian who marries a foreigner abroad in compliance with the laws of the foreign country is legally married, but here again it is conditional on his also complying with the requirements of the Italian law. To marry without parental consent a man must exceed twenty-five and a woman twenty-one years of age, and they must publish the usual notices of the marriage, where the Italian party was last domiciled.

In the Netherlands, persons under twenty-one must not marry without the consent of the parents, and between twenty-one and twenty-five they must perform the "acte respectueux" to which I have referred. Over twenty-five years of age neither consent nor "acte respectueux" is required. In Spain for civil marriage consent is required until the man is twenty-three and the woman twenty-five; in Sweden and Norway consent is not necessary after twenty-one; but widowers must not remarry until six months after the deaths of their widows.

In Russian law the marriage, if between a male Russian and a female foreigner, must be celebrated in a Russian church or by a Russian priest, and an undertaking must be given that the children will be brought up in the Russo-Greek faith; while in Greece the law is so unfriendly to mixed marriages that I would advise any young woman contemplating marriage with a Greek to make him become a naturalized Englishman first.

This, briefly, sums up the preliminaries which the Continental nations desiderate before recognizing a mixed marriage. There are, in addition, important considerations affecting the remarriage of divorced persons, widowers and widows, and there are many minor points which would need attention.

RESIGNATION

There is no flock, however watched and tended,
But one dead lamb is there!
There is no fireside, howsoever defended,
But has one vacant chair!

The air is full of farewells to the dying,
And mournings for the dead;
The heart of Rachel, for her children crying,
Will not be comforted!

Let us be patient! These severe afflictions
Not from the ground arise,
But oftentimes celestial benedictions
Assume this dark disguise.

We see but dimly through the mists and vapors;
Amid these earthly damps
What seem to us but sad, funeral tapers
May be Heaven's distant lamps.

There is no Death! What seems so is transition;
This life of mortal breath
Is but a suburb of the life elysian,
Whose portal we call Death.

She is not dead—the child of our affection—
But gone unto that school
Where she no longer needs our poor protection,
And Christ Himself doth rule.

In that great cloister's stillness and seclusion,
By guardian angels led,
Safe from temptation, safe from sin's pollution,
She lives, whom we call dead.

Day after day we think what she is doing
In those bright realms of air;
Year after year, her tender steps pursuing,
Behold her grown more fair.

Thus do we talk with her, and keep unbroken
The bond which nature gives,
Thinking that our remembrance, though unspoken,
May reach her where she lives.

Not as a child shall we again behold her;
For when with raptures wild
In our embraces we again enfold her,
She will not be a child!

But a fair maiden, in her Father's mansion,
Clothed with celestial grace;
And beautiful with all the soul's expansion
Shall we behold her face.

And though at times impetuous with emotion
And anguish long suppressed,
The swelling heart heaves moaning like the ocean,
That cannot be at rest!

We will be patient, and assuage the feeling
We may not wholly stay;
By silence sanctifying, not concealing,
The grief that must have way.

—Henry Wadsworth Longfellow.



Group at Osborne Cottage, August 18

Standing, left to right—Princess Christian of Schleswig-Holstein, Princess Patricia of Connaught, Prince Maurice of Battenberg, Princess Henry of Battenberg, Mrs. Hay Newton, Mr. V. Corkran.

Sitting, left to right—Prince Leopold of Battenberg, The Queen of Spain, The King of Spain, Princess Victoria of Schleswig-Holstein.

street—and seen the tragic evidences of struggle and pain, with no prospect of alleviation, no, not even to the grave, I have come away too sick to work or eat.

Now, I may be wrong, but I attribute this patience and docility in the vast majority of cases to a kind of elemental religion which the poor possess (using the term in the broadest sense) and which such endeavors as those of Sir John Kirk and his helpers widely propagate. It has been fashionable to scoff at "Little Bethels," to despise the obscure men and women who go down into the courts and alleys of the city with a certain ancient message; and to talk a little shyly even of the larger churches at work among the poor.

But can it be denied that, with all their faults, they have done at least one invaluable service, namely, opened the mind of the poor to idealism, and encouraged the contemplation of abstract realities—such as virtue, honor, courage, heroism—and particularly I hope of an inheritance better than that to which they were born.

The Ragged School Union has, not in London alone, but all over England, dozens of busy centres, right amid the very homes of the poor, where practical Christianity is both lived and taught. Its workers become the personal friends of those among whom they live, helping them, with counsel, guidance, and even physical labor, to face the hardness of their lot with fortitude and to cultivate in difficult soil the rarest flowers of the human spirit.

The children, however, are its special care. These look to the mission premises as to a second—and often a far superior—home. There they receive instruction in handicrafts, in general usefulness, in smartness of bearing, in personal cleanliness, in obedience and, of course, in the Christianity of Christ; they share in the Dinner Fund and the Fresh Air Fund when need arises; they are helped to situations suited to their capacities. And many a bright lad, who, but for the Union's help, would have drifted into the ranks of the unemployables and been a menace and a curse to his country, has been watched over and cared for until he has come to man's estate and then, amid the good wishes of his friends, has sailed for Canada or some other fair land across the sea where work

of a storm. If the African marigold does not open its flowers by seven o'clock in the morning, rain may be expected with certainty on that day. An uncommon quantity of seeds is produced by white thorns and dog-rose bushes in wet summers, and this is considered as a sign of a severe winter. Many plants with compound flowers direct them toward the east in the morning, carefully following the direction of the sun, and appearing toward the west in the evening; but before rain they are punctually closed, as with the tulip.

AS SLOW OUR SHIP

As slow our ship her foamy track
Against the wind was cleaving,
Her trembling pennant still looked black
To that dear Isle 'twas leaving.
So loath we part from all we love,
From all the links that bind us;
So turn our hearts as on we rove
To those we've left behind us.

When, round the gowl, of vanished years
We talk, with joyous seeming—
With smiles that might as well be tears,
So faint, so sad their beaming;
While memory brings us back again
Each early tie that twined us,
Oh, sweet's the cup that circles then
To those we've left behind us!

And when in other climes we meet
Some Isle, or vale enchanting,
Where all looks flowery, wild, and sweet,
And naught but love is wanting,
We think how great had been our bliss,
If Heaven had but assigned us
To live and die in scenes like this,
With those we've left behind us.

As travelers oft look back at eve,
When eastward darkly going,
To gaze upon that light they leave
Still faint behind them glowing—
So, when the close of pleasure's day
To gloom hath near consigned us,
We turn to catch one fading ray
Of joy that's left behind us.

these requirements are 1) that they should publish in their country the notices of such intended marriage as required by law, and (2) that they should obtain the consent of their parents to the marriage if they are under a certain age—which varies from twenty-one to thirty.

In Austria, after the intending bridegroom or bride is twenty-four years of age, no parental consent is necessary. But if the man is in any way still connected with the military service, he must have the consent of the military authorities.

In Belgium the law allows a Belgian to marry a foreigner abroad according to the laws of that foreign country; but the marriage will not be valid in Belgium if he is under twenty-one, and has not obtained the consent of his parents. If between the ages of twenty-one and twenty-five, he must make a "respectful and formal request" for his parents' advice; and if the parents object, they may apply to a court of justice and state their grounds for refusal, and such refusal may be upheld.

If the son or daughter be twenty-five years of age, no consent is required.

In Denmark any person contracting a marriage, whether there or abroad, requires the parental consent when under the age of twenty-five, and a widower must not contract a second marriage within three months of the death of his wife. The usual publication must be made.

By the law of France no man may contract a marriage under the age of twenty-five without the consent of his parents. From that age until he is thirty he will be required, as in Belgium, to perform the "acte respectueux," and this act differs from the Belgian in that he has to perform it three times over at monthly intervals, and it is not until a month has elapsed from the third formal request that he will be allowed to contract a valid marriage.

Orphans must not marry without the consent of that Continental monstrosity, the family council. In all cases of a Frenchman marrying a foreigner abroad the usual notifications must be posted at the mairie of the commune in which he last had his abode.

In Germany, consent of the father is required until the son is twenty-five, and the



POKEY BOYS



A LIVE ONE

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