

of this grand cure. I would like to see the city divided into districts so small that one man can hold in each, not only a registry of every family living in it, but obtain and preserve a knowledge of each family's circumstances and character. I would have a labor-bureau in every district, in connection with this local superintendent's office. I would have the record of every man and woman even more complete than any that has ever been made by your mercantile agencies. I would have such vagrancy as we find illustrated by the tramps and dead-beats who swarm about the city a sufficient crime for condemnation to hard labor in prisons and factories built for that purpose. I would make beggary on the street a misdemeanor punishable by imprisonment. I would have every helpless person understand where help in emergencies can always be had by a representation of facts, subject to immediate and competent examination. I would see the matter so arranged that a premium would be put upon the truth, and a ban upon falsehood. Temperance and intemperance should always be considerations in dealing with the poor. There is no limit to the benefits which such an organization as this would have the power to inaugurate and perpetuate, and, gentlemen, I verily believe that under its intelligent and faithful administration we could banish beggars from the streets, introduce a new era of prosperity and virtue among all the suffering poor, and save ourselves forever from the terrible pauperization that curses and almost kills the cities of the Old World."

It was a great scheme, or a great dream, and the audience listened to it in profound silence.

"Such, roughly sketched and with but few details, is the outline of a plan in which I have such perfect faith that I am willing to pledge for its support all the money that I feel at liberty to spare from my fortune. I believe in it so entirely, that I should be willing to give my life to it. No argument could heighten my conviction, no demonstration could make me surer of my conclusion."

A curious change had passed over the audience during the quick sketching of this grand scheme. The men who had come in, representing various organizations and enterprises, were at once united in a common front against a plan which would abolish their offices, level the eminences on which they stood, and not only subordinate but destroy their hold upon the public. There was perfect mutual understanding amongst them in a moment.

One after another rose, uttered his little compliment to Nicholas, expressed his conviction that the people were not ready for so sweeping a measure as this, admitted that the policy of cure had not yet received the attention which its importance demanded, and then each agreed with somebody else that this great army of laborers in the field of public beneficence, fighting their way toward one great end, under different generals, with different motives and watchwords, was a most inspiring sight. Sentiment and rhetoric were harnessed together to

draw the dead bull out of the arena, and flowers were tossed upon the carcass as it disappeared.

Nicholas was sick at heart. He had seen the old, shabby trick of attributing to the people the lack of readiness for a desirable reform by leaders whom such a reform would carry out of business too often to fail to gather its meaning. He had been complimented and tolerated; but the scheme from which he had hoped so much, and to which he was willing to sacrifice so much, had been carefully and politely pooh-poohed out of the realm of possibilities.

So far as he was concerned, the work of the evening was done; and he was about to say this to the audience before him, when an old gentleman in spectacles arose, and, in moving a vote of thanks to the young man to whom they were all so much indebted, begged the privilege of saying a word on behalf of his Master.

"I have deeply regretted," he said, "that in the whole course of the discussion I have heard no reference to the religious aspect of the matter before us. Christianity, as I apprehend it, is the only available cure for the evils which we are trying to mitigate, and so far as we may be able, to remove. There is a great harvest before us, and what we want is reapers. We want the truth preached to these benighted masses. We need to have the quickening motives of our holy religion implanted in these dead hearts and unworthy lives. When we accomplish this, we accomplish the only radical cure that seems to me to be possible."

Nicholas could not understand, with his view of the case, why these remarks should receive the secret approval and open applause with which they were favored, but he had no time to reply before a thin man with a thin voice rose to indorse the speech, in all its length and breadth, — a task to which a very small man was quite equal, — and to second the motion of thanks.

After the vote of thanks was rendered, Nicholas rose and said:

"Gentlemen, I accept your thanks for all that they mean, and more; and you will confer a still greater favor upon me if you will all go home and read the parable of the sower. I think that in it you will find that soil is quite as necessary as seed, — indeed that the seed is thrown away, where the fowls of the air pick it up, unless a soil is prepared in advance. I regard an able-bodied pauper as beyond the reach of Christian motives. You might as well preach to a dog as to a liar by profession, which is what every able-bodied pauper is. Christianity is for men and women, and not for those in whom the fact and sense of manhood and womanhood are lost. Don't comfort yourselves with the idea that you are doing what you can for the cure of pauperism by preaching to it. I have a friend who believes in external applications. I do not agree with him entirely, but if I am to choose between a sermon and a rawhide, I am inclined to think that the rawhide will produce the deeper and more salutary impression. I believe in Christianity, but before I undertake to plant it I would like something to plant it in. The sowers are too few and the seed is too precious