

"Go on," said Miss Coates, who was getting new ideas, and arriving at the practical centre of the subject much quicker than she had expected to.

"Well, it seems to me," Glezen proceeded, "that if ever there is a time in a rich man's life when he should indulge in luxuries, or, perhaps, I should say, use his money in such a way as to give people work to do, it is in a time of depression like this. If he has building to do, let him build. Materials and labor are cheap, and he will never have so good a time again. He certainly will not if he waits until better times arrive. Instead of this, he shuts up his purse, curtails his expenses, and waits while people starve. The truth is, that half the evils which the poor are feeling now come from the rich man's short-sightedness and cowardliness. Every luxury that he indulges in gives work to somebody. Every enterprise that he engages in puts bread into hungry mouths. I should say that every rich man who cuts off his luxuries in a time like this, or fails to devise all possible schemes to keep the poor employed, and then sits down and doles out his money to keep them from starving, most lamentably fails of doing his duty. I'm not a rich man, but if any of my good friends have more money than they know what to do with, I advise them to spend it for something that will give work to idle hands,—to do this at once, and do it all the time. The work that produces a garment which you procure as a luxury, is to the person who makes it a necessity. The house which you build in a time of depression helps to bring the better time when you can get a good rent for it. The fact is that the good time we are all waiting for is locked up in the form of money in the coffers of those who refuse to use it to their own advantage, as well as to the advantage of those who are suffering for lack of labor."

"I'm sure I don't think you are very heterodox," said Miss Larkin. "I am sure you have common sense on your side, and I know that my way seems much clearer to me, and that I feel very much relieved."

"So say we all," said Nicholas.

A SCHEME PROPOSED.

When these questions were answered, and the brief discussions to which they gave rise had died away, Nicholas said:

"Gentlemen, the story of my work here is but the prelude to a proposition which I have to make. It should come through weightier words than mine,—from an older man and a man more widely known,—but if the proposition has any strength, it has it in itself and not in me. It is well, perhaps, that it will come to you without any great name and influence behind it, so that you may consider and handle it on its own merits."

"I have, during my few months of experience, become most discouragingly aware of the utter incompetency of the present modes of dealing with pauperism, and I have come to the profound, and what seems to me the irreversible,

conviction, that there need not be one hundred willing paupers, at any one time, in the city of New York."

"Oh!" "oh!" "oh!" came up in tones of incredulity from every part of the hall.

Nicholas felt the sting and it did him good.

"If there had ever been in this city," he went on, "a single great organization, either of benevolence or police, which embraced every district of the city in its surveillance and its offices of administration, and that organization had fallen into a hundred pieces, which had been grasped at and appropriated by opposing sects and rival guilds and associations, we could come to but one conclusion, viz., that the great enterprise of helping the poor was in a state of organized disorganization. That, as I apprehend it, is precisely the condition of this great enterprise to-day. Our organization is disorganization. These warring parts, informed and moved by discordant aims, vitalized by differing and often jarring motives, seeking incongruous ends, ought to be the factors of a harmonious whole. What are you doing now, gentlemen, but paddling around among palliations? What are many of you doing but nourishing—not designedly of course, and not directly, perhaps, but still nourishing, in spite of yourselves—the very vice whose consequences you are endeavoring to assuage? What are you doing but trying to build up separate interests in a cause which, in its very nature, has but one? How much of private, church and political interest stands organized, aggressive and self-defensive at the head of your great charities? And what have you done? The station-houses are thronged every night with disgusting tramps and paupers who haunt your kitchens for food, who hold out their hands to you in the street, who refuse work when it is offered to them, and who shame the sun-light with their filthy rags. Does your work grow less with all your expenditures? Is pauperism decreasing? Is it not coming in upon you and beating upon your sympathies and your efforts in constantly augmenting waves?"

Nicholas was entirely aware that he had assumed a tone and directness of address that were unbecoming to him, but he had been stirred to them by the sneers and the quiet, amused glances that he witnessed before him.

"I do not intend to make myself offensive to you," he said, "and I beg you to forgive such extravagance as may spring from my deep feeling on the subject."

"Will Mr. Minturn kindly give us his scheme?" said a bland-faced gentleman who rose in the audience.

"With pleasure," Nicholas responded. "I would like to see every charitable organization existing in this city, including my own enterprise, swept out of existence. I would like to see established in their place a single organization whose grand purpose it is to work a radical cure of pauperism. I would like to see the city government, which is directly responsible for more than half the pauperism we have, united in administration with the chosen representatives of the benevolence of the city, in the working out