

Death of Rt. Hon. Ch. Booth A Great Social Worker.

We regret to announce that the Right Hon. Charles Booth, whose work for nearly a generation profoundly affected public opinion on social questions, died at Gracedieu Manor, Leicestershire, aged 76.

Charles Booth was born in Liverpool on March 30, 1840, and was educated there. At 22 years old, when many of his contemporaries were still at the university, he became a partner in the family shipping business of Alfred Booth and Co. Later, and till the time of his death, he was on the board of the Booth Steamship Company.

"It was not until 1886, when he was past middle life, that he began working upon the books which have made his name a household word among all students of the social and industrial condition of the working classes," says the "Times."

A New Method

"Life and Labour of the People in East London," the first book—or, more properly speaking, series of books—published by Mr. Booth, made an impression which it is not easy to describe.

"Mr. Booth's method was entirely new. He set himself to draw a picture of the exact conditions under which the poor lived by an 'inquiry' in which the general character of every street in the metropolis should be investigated, and the result set forth in figures which would show, down to the fraction of a penny, the wages paid for every kind of labour, and the various ways in which it was spent. He divided society into eight 'classes,' from A, 'the lowest class, which consists of some occasional labourers, street-sellers, loafers, criminals, and semi-criminals' to class H, 'which may be shortly defined as the servant-keeping class.' He printed a map of London, with every street coloured according to the several social status of its inhabitants. It was a mighty task, and occupied seventeen years of unwearied labour, the last of the series being published in 1903.

"The reception of these books met with was all that their author could have wished. There were, indeed, candid critics, but the general public accepted the figures and generalisations implicitly.

"The chief effect of them, however, was not merely appreciation from the public eager to be told something definite and decisive concerning the lives of the poor. They aroused in the minds of people who had never thought very seriously about the matter before a desire to do something to bring about a better state of things in poorer London, and largely stimulated the keen constructive interest in all kinds of social questions characteristic of the present day.

"Exception has been taken to the whole scheme of Booth's book, as being too much in the nature of photographic studies of a particular time and place, without sufficient allowance being made for general economic

conditions or the history of social development.

A Personal Reason.

"There was, however, we are inclined to believe, a personal reason for the particular form in which Mr. Booth presented his subject. A man trained from earliest years in commercial life bases his conceptions of social questions upon present personal experience, his own or that of others in whom he has confidence, rather than upon the history of the past. He may study political economy and the social and industrial development of former years, but when he determines to apply that knowledge for practical purposes he instinctively seeks some method which will appeal to sight and touch. All the writings of Charles Booth bear this impress. It is their strength—and their weakness."

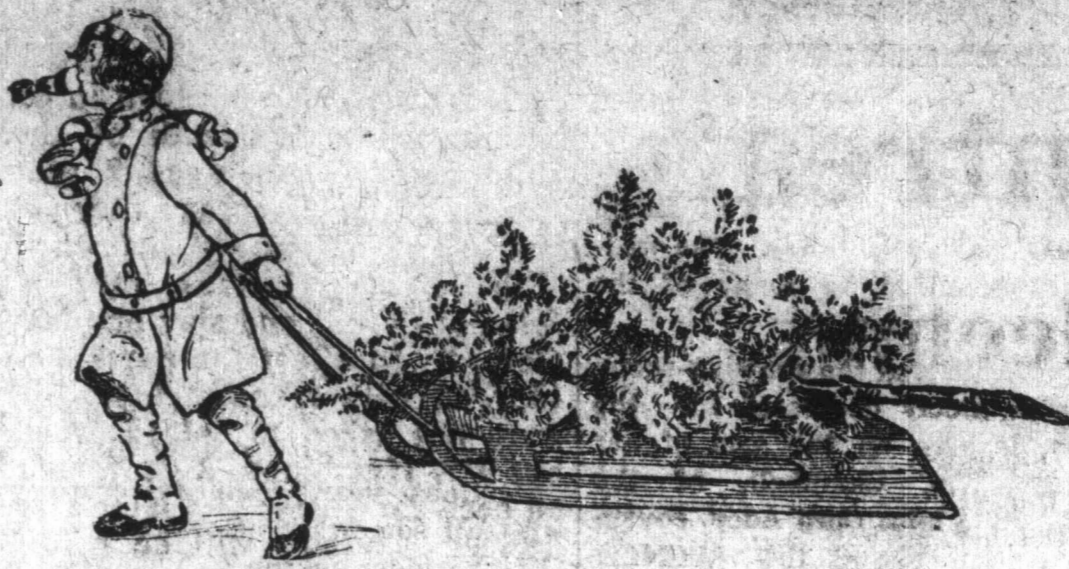
How Many Are There?

"Hundreds of persons had skimmed over the surface of 'London Labour and London Poor,' like the late Mr. Mayhew and Mr. G. A. Sala; hundreds more had dived into its depths of wretchedness, and described, often with literary skill and power, the destitution of this great city; but their work was qualitative only," says the "Daily Telegraph." "They told us how hundreds and thousands of the poor drag out a forlorn existence in sunken and poverty-stricken areas; but how many there were of them, what proportion they bore to the actual population, these were questions they could not answer. This, for the first time, Mr. Booth accomplished.

"Mr. Booth set out with the intention to show the numerical relation which poverty, misery, and depravity bear to regular earnings, and to describe the conditions under which each class of the people lives. To many minds the desirability of such knowledge must have occurred, but most men would have quailed at the prospect of the enormous labour and expense involved in attaining it. It is Mr. Charles Booth's distinction that he carried through his self-imposed task so systematically that he was able at the end to produce a series of maps of London, street by street, representing its varying degrees of poverty by shades of colour.

"To reach this object he collated the experience of School Board 'visitors,' of the relieving officers, and of the police; he obtained the assistance of the clergy and lay workers among the poor, used the returns of the Local Government Board, the School Board, and the boards of guardians; and finally employed his own agents and secretaries, who walked over the whole ground for the purpose of testing and verifying the information obtained. This was no sentimental work that appealed to the hearts and even possibly touched the pockets; it was scientific work, and illumined the understand-

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ing. In a true sense Mr. Booth produced a sociological map of London such as had never been produced before.

A Census of London's Poverty.

"By far the most valuable outcome of Mr. Booth's labours was that relating to the extent and distribution of London's poverty now for the first time known. Taking the population of that portion of the capital which he investigated at 4,309,000, he divided them into five classes as regards economical conditions, and these were the results which he published in 1891:

Class	Numbers.	age.
A.—Lowest	37,610	.9

B.—Very poor	316,834	7.5
C.—Poor	938,293	22.3
D.—Working-class (comfortable)	2,166,503	51.5
E.—Middle-class and above	749,930	17.8

"To these figures must be added 99,820 inmates of various institutions.

Thirty per Cent. of Poverty

"Mr. Booth drew from these data the induction that 30.7 per cent. of the population that 30.7 per cent. of were 'in poverty.' Class C, the largest, included all those whose earnings were small because of irregularity of employment, and those whose work, though regular, was ill-paid. He thus arrived at the general con-

clusion that there were in all London:—

Living in poverty . . . 30.7 per cent.
Living in comfort . . . 30.7 per cent.

"A crucial question bearing on these results is what is meant by the words 'in poverty.' Following the example of Mr. Booth, a similar investigation, still more detailed, was undertaken by Mr. B. Seebohm Rowntree for the city of York, and the latter inquirer adopted a two-fold heading, that of 'primary' and 'secondary' poverty. The first comprised families whose total earnings were 'insufficient to provide the bare necessities for the maintenance of physical efficiency,' while the second class con-

sisted of those whose total earnings would have been sufficient but for other expenditure, either useful or wasteful.

"Whereas Mr. Booth found in London on or beneath the 'poverty line' 30.7 per cent. of the population, Mr. Rowntree found for York a proportion of 7.84 per cent. But the latter figures were collected in a period of prosperous trade, 1899, whereas those of Mr. Booth referred to only an average period, 1887 to 1892.

"The outcome of both inquiries seemed to prove that the debris and wreckage of our social system are in much the same proportion in a provincial town as in the capital."

"The name of Charles Booth deserves a definite and an inalienable place in the Pantheon of great Englishmen, who have rendered vital services to the race," says the "Chronicle."

War Comparisons Civil War and Great War

By means of copious quotations from various sources, including the speeches and writings of Lincoln, Charles F. Thwing, LL.D., in "The Hibbert Journal" for October, draws an interesting comparison between the American Civil War and the present upheaval. Both divisions of the American Commonwealth declared as every nation involved to-day declares, that they were fighting for the fundamental and sublime principles of liberty and patriotism:—

"The Federal Government, battling for the freedom of the slave, was also battling for the rights of all men to be free; England, fighting Germany is fighting for the democratic principle everywhere. The Federal Government, fighting for national integrity against a domestic foe; England, fighting Germany, is fighting for the national integrity of Belgium and of other small peoples, and indeed of large peoples, against foreign enemies. Under new conditions and diverse forms New World history comes to repeat itself in the Old World."

The parallel extends further. For at least a generation the Southern States had been preparing, whilst the North was as unready as England to meet a world cataclysm. Also after three years of constant warfare and abnormal expenditure the resources of the North, like those of England, were found to be not only unexhausted but apparently inexhaustible. The Civil War was prolonged far beyond the thought of either contestant. Troops were only enlisted for three months. The Southern States believed, as Germany believed, that their preparations would make victory early and complete:—

"The first two years of the present war were not unlike the first two years of the American conflict. The attacking party in the Civil War had the advantage: the attacking party in the World-War had the advantage: the attacking party usually has the advantage. But the nation attacked, especially if it be in either form or reality a republic, presently finds itself, and it finds itself the more completely and adequately the longer lasts the struggle. Throughout the second half of the four years of the American struggle it became more and more evident with each passing month that the Southern cause was weakening, the Northern strengthening, and that victory for the Northern eagles was becoming assured. Reverses for Lincoln's men were not unknown; but the sweep of the current was clear and its general force unstemmed. To point out the analogy would be superfluous."

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