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CARELESS, COSMOPOLITAN MONTREAL

Our Biggest City is in Great Need of Social Reconstruction

By J. H. C. GAINFORT

ON the summit of a gentle slope, a few miles from Montreal, there nestles among the trees the garden suburb of the city, Montreal West. Its houses are beautiful homes, most of them are set in spacious grounds and surrounded with all manner of flowers and greenery. Its people are the prosperous business folk of the city.

At the foot of the same hill is the village of Bluebonnets—the overflow from the slums of the city itself. Its houses are mostly wooden boxes, crowded together without breathing space between; its back yards are rubbish heaps of infection for its children to play amongst. Half the people who live there are “out-of-work.” They are Russians, Poles and Ruthenians; also a few Bulgarians.

Montreal West is the first bit of the outskirts of Montreal that the visitor from the west sees from the train windows. Bluebonnets is the next. They are the garden suburb and the slum, which is also the first of the foreign colonies on the way to the city itself.

The foreign population of Montreal varies. In the spring it is usually in the neighbourhood of 100,000. There are 55,000 Jews, nearly 15,000 Italians, 4,000 Greeks, 2,200 Chinese, 12,500 Russians and Poles. Of Bulgarians, Roumanians, Lithuanians and Syrians there are about another 5,000, while other nationalities, including some Germans



A Rickety Rendezvous for Russians and Poles.



A Romantic Italian Backyard on Frontenac Street.

and Austrians, make up the balance of the total.

There has been much excitement lately on account of these Germans and Austrians. The Germans do not colonize, and for the most part are fairly well-to-do. Of the so-called Austrians, there are comparatively few real Magyars; they are mostly people of Slavic origin. Their sympathies are naturally with Russia.

AS in the case of Bluebonnets, which has a population of about 700 foreigners, there are a number of other colonies on the outskirts of the central part of the city. Little Italy lies between Park Avenue and Amherst Street, and above Mount Royal Avenue—a considerable portion of the north end of the city, with a population of some 5,000 Italians.

In Point St. Charles are a large number of Russians and Poles. The housing conditions there are bad.

It is in the central districts, however, that the conditions under which these foreigners live are worst. St. Timothee Street and its neighbourhood,

time to time Cyril dropped in at the Mission, and after a time left his baker master. He is in more prosperous circumstances now.

Just across the road from the City Mission is a little terrace of three houses.

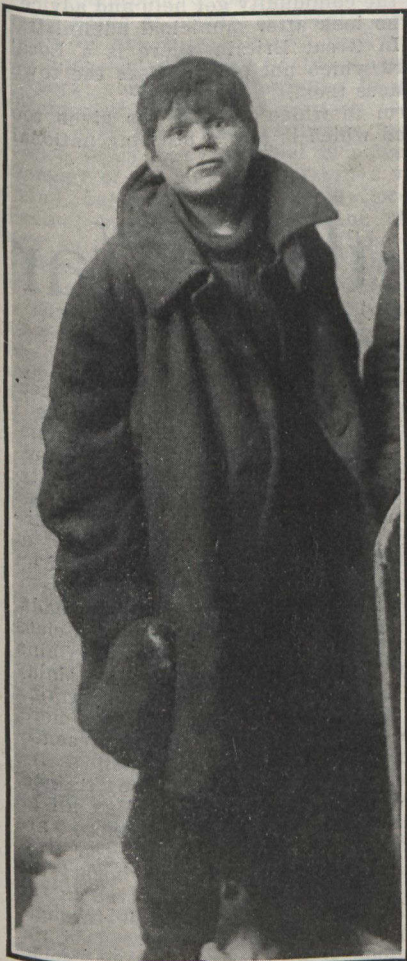
One is inhabited by Russians, one by Poles and sandwiched between them, in the middle house, are a family and several boarders of Austrian nationality.

In the evenings the occupants of all three houses sit on their doorsteps and smoke peacefully; but there is never interchange of remarks between the Austrians and the Russians and Poles.

It may be armed neutrality, or it may be that they just don't know there is any war. Most of the foreign peoples even although not speaking the same language fraternize to a certain extent if living in the same district.

THE Y. M. C. A. workers in the foreign colonies believe that 65 per cent. of the foreigners in Montreal are not aware that there is war in Europe. They do not understand our language and rarely get a newspaper of their own. Added to this there is the fact that 57 per cent. of the Italians and 87 per cent. of the Russians are illiterate.

The housing conditions are disgraceful among the foreign colonies. The city building inspection department appears to be ignorant of the fact that



Cyril, the Galician Boy, as he was by Nature.



Cyril Transformed by Organized Charity.

in the heart of the east end of Montreal, has an Italian population of nearly 5,000; while Latour Street, further west, contains about 2,000.

On and near Cadieux Street, east of St. Lawrence Boulevard, which divides Montreal into east and west, there are large numbers of Russians and other people of the Slav race.

It is stated by those who are carrying on work among these foreigners that the majority of the children do not attend school. The Presbyterian and Methodist churches, the Montreal City Mission and the Y. M. C. A. are doing what they can, but are quite unable to cope with the situation, unless given greater means. The Y. M. C. A. has an energetic branch among the Italians.

One day not many months ago a Galician boy of thirteen drifted into the City Mission.

Cyril, it appeared, was working for a Hebrew baker. He received 10 cents a week. The Mission gave him some decent clothes, including a pair of boots.

Cyril went back to the baker. The new boots were taken from him and sold for the benefit of his master. From