

PUBLIC STOVES OF PARIS.
A BOON TO THE WAFARERS OF THE GREAT FRENCH METROPOLIS.

Some of the Miseries of Modern London—A Couch of the Flings—A Severe Wind on the Other Side of the Atlantic Maintained by the Municipality.

One of the cheapest and at the same time one of the most acceptable modes of benevolence is the supply for a few hours of warmth and shelter to the miserable class of homeless wanderers, says the Pall Mall Gazette of March 1. During the inclemencies of the present winter great numbers have been the sufferings of many of those poor wretches and especially of those women and tender infants. The number of our unfortunate, both in London and Paris, is very considerable, amounting, on the lowest estimate, to many thousands. Any person who cares to explore at night the vicinity of the Thames Embankment, Covent Garden Market, the East End docks and other districts of London may soon satisfy himself as to the fact of there being numerous homeless human creatures who, even on the most freezing nights, have no bed but stones, and no shelter from the piercing wind.

By attendance at certain hours, and by employing with certain conditions of course, of these poor wretches might have a casual ward, or one of the few night refuges which are supported in London for the benefit of this very class. But from various circumstances, the demands of those do not avail, except those of the limited amount of shelter afforded by such establishments. Hence they find a temporary abode only in the lee of the street, and its consequent discomforts. Nor are these the only people exposed to much suffering in winter nights in great cities. Many have had to give up their work, workers and laborers occasionally have in the intervals of their work, or while on the lookout for employment, to wait long weary hours in cold and damp places, in the boon of any kind of shelter, with warmth and light, is a most welcome alleviation of their lot. During the past year or two the number of persons acting under the name of benefactors of a benevolent nature has increased. One of the best known of that body, Mr. George Berry, has established seven of such night shelters in that city, and are now in course of erection. Mr. Berry, Cadogan of Birmingham, has shown through the agents of his firm (Cadbury Brothers) some official statement courteously furnished by Mr. Berry, which may be suggestive to those who desire to help others in other large cities.

The public warning places "Chances of public" or "Parcels" are not erected by private beneficence, but are established and maintained by the municipality.

They consist of large wooden structures, of a temporary character, and sometimes not available, each capable of sheltering 500 persons at one time.

The warmth is given out from several large stoves, placed in different parts of the hall. The iron railing around the stoves, so that persons who wish to do so can approach close to them.

A number of forms, or "chaffeur," are placed near the stoves for those who wish to sit down. There is also a "chaffeur" there about half dozen large circles of people taking their rest.

Coal is burned, as being, in the long run, the most economical.

The frequenters of these warming places are not allowed to cook anything there, nor is any food provided for them, they simply go there to sleep.

The halls are open from 8 o'clock in the evening until 5 o'clock in the morning, when they are closed.

Between these hours any one may enter them freely and without question.

One side of each structure is appropriated to men, the other to women.

On the floor, which is at the door of each hall, where duty is to look after the fire, keep the place as tidy as practicable and maintain order.

The experiment is considered to be a decided success, and is calculated to allay some of the fierce and sedentary passions excited in the poorest class by the miseries of frequent exposure throughout the winter.

The whole expense of the erection and maintenance of the chaffeuses is so small in comparison with the amount of suffering alleviated that this form of charity may, it is hoped, be widely imitated in many other places. Although it is with the aid of private beneficence that such similar shelters, yet model, it is better that the work should be systematically undertaken and carried out by municipal bodies, in Paris. It is a good idea, easily and thoroughly administered.

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It is a remarkable fact that in the whole, there is much less need for night asylums, or warming places, in England as compared with France. But it is also evident that even in England there is a large number of special incitements or trade depression, or when there is any marked absence of employment for multitudes who, though not illiterate, are ignorant of the language in which they can speak, and are no longer fit to work. It is a help, but not a substitute, for self-support. No task work is demanded, as in English "asylums," or as a part of the punishment.

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