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**Talks by Tiberius.****THAT DISMAL DWELLING — WHO WANTS IT?**

"The Workhouse of the Smallburgh Union, Norfolk, has been offered for sale by auction. Nobody wants it." Soon after I had enclosed my last article in an envelope to forward it, I took up an English paper, "The Churchman" to read, and almost at once my eyes fell upon the advertisement which I have quoted at the head of this "talk." As I followed my mind to roam freely, the question came unbidden: Suppose we put up for sale by auction, the dismal dwelling known as the Poor Asylum, situated in St. John's West, would anybody want to buy it? By the way, I have stated that it is in St. John's West, but if the City continues to grow, as it has grown for the past ten years, the Poor Asylum, years ago called by a leading statesman, "Newfoundland's Disgrace," will be in the centre of the city rather than in the West End.

I feel certain that once the people of St. John's really see the Poor Asylum, as it can be seen by anyone who has eyes to see; as it is seen by anyone who knows what is being done for the poor "destitute" in other cities, or who knows anything at all of citizenship, such a big roar of disapproval will go up to high heaven that those in authority will immediately take steps to build a new and a modern home for the unfortunate people who must in their latter days, throw themselves upon the mercy of the "Parish." I believe in the soundness and reliability of the public conscience. Once it is awakened nothing is so mighty, i.e. among human agencies. My endeavour is to awaken the public conscience on the subject and disgrace of our Poor Asylum. Last week I described it as I saw it from the outside; next week

I may describe it as I have seen it from the inside. This week I desire to expatiate on the principle involved in the question: "Who wants it," i.e., "Newfoundland's Disgrace?"

I have reason to believe that nobody wants either the life or the building, any more than the people of Smallburgh want their "Workhouse." A certain man kept hens in a small house which was built like a Pyramid. The hens lodged there for several years. So small was the house and of such a queer shape that it could not be well cleaned. Consequently the odour and so on, which gathered about the house got into the wood of which it was made. There came a day when the man took pity on those hens and built them a large, roomy, and cleanable, house, (that is my own word.) He began to demolish the old house, but though he wore a kind of gas mask, white doing it, and although by force of sheer doggedness he laid it flat and in reasonably small sections on the earth, yet he had to call in the Sanitary Board men to remove the noxious pile. Wood was very expensive; even fire wood had a great value; yet he was glad to give that wood away; he did not want it and he did not know of anyone who did. He dare not even take it into his home to burn it; so great would have been the smell. So on and so on, ad infinitum, ad nauseam. "Nobody wanted it."

FIRST PREMISE.

Nough said; I do not think that any body would really want our Poor Asylum, even if it were up for sale by auction. I have reasons for that statement. At least that is my first premise.

SECOND PREMISE.

Since, "I am my brother's keeper,"

since the "Golden Rule" is a Divine law and a necessary law; then we are not justified in placing "Our Relatives," where we don't want to go, or to house "Our Relatives" in any shack that we wouldn't buy at an auction. We like nice homes, we need them, light, heat, cleanliness, comfort, these things not only contribute to life, they are life. Let us do unto others as we would that they should do to us. Or to give a free rendering of Kant; Let us so act, that we would wish that our conduct become universal law. Result, a brighter and better world and so far as the Poor Asylum people go, a new home, a home at once economical; hygienic; roomy.

The old story of Cain and Abel teaches us that in answer to the question: "Am I my brother's keeper?" there can be only one right answer. "AM I MY BROTHER'S KEEPER?" Abel lay on the green grass, and earth's innocent flowers shuddered under the dew of blood. "And the Lord said unto Cain, Where is Abel thy brother? And he said,—" (For the first murderer is also the first liar.)—"I know not; "And he insolently added (For the first murderer is also the first egotist.) "Am I my brother's keeper?" But the Lord sweeps aside the darling falsehood, the callous question, "And He said, What hast thou done? the voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground, and now thou art cursed." And Cain fled to the land of exile with the brand of Heaven's wrath on his soul and on his brow.

A careful study of that old story, a story which has been found, in some form or other in all histories, a story as old as man, a careful study of it cannot but make us think. We need to ask the question: "Am I my brother's keeper?" The true and high within us will immediately answer in the affirmative; the false and low will answer "no." A vast multitude

with correct ideas but incorrect moral conduct, will give a lip answer "yes," but go on as if they had said "no." That vast multitude is the sickly compromising element of which a large part of the human race is made up. "Until men almost learn to scoff So few are any better off."

In the story of the good Samaritan we have another type of mind in the quizzical sneering Lawyer who raised the question: "And who is my neighbour? i.e., Who is my brother?"

EVERYBODY IS OUR BROTHER.

All men are our brothers; all who sin, all who suffer, all who lie, murdered, like Abel, sick and wounded like the poor traveller by the way, where they have been left by the world's thieves and murderers, where they have been left by the frosty hearted (Christian), (so called), or by the scupulously religious Levite, on the hot and dusty wayside of the world. Yes all men are our brothers; and when we injure them by lies, which cut like a sharp razor, by sneers, by innuendoes, by intrigues, by slander and calumny, by hatred, by malice, and by thoughtless uncharitableness, by want of heart, by lust of gain, by neglect, by absorbing selfishness, we are inheritors of the spirit of the first murderer, if not of his guilt. If we confine our thoughts to those who need our service most, if we allow kindly charity to awaken in us a vision of duty not done or ill done, we will take into our hearts those poor people in the Poor Asylum of St. John's West, and call them brothers and sisters, and treat them as such. Among them lies a duty, a great sphere for the noblest and best exercises. We neglect to do our duty there at our peril.

THE QUESTS OF THE STATE.

We are constantly told by callous persons what a crime it is to give to the poor. Granted we always need

to be discreet in our alms giving, but here are no beggars, they are the guests of the State and the State is trying to give them a home and food and clothing. Not trying very hard, perhaps, yet it is the burden and privilege of the State to try and to succeed. It is high time that we had finished with our verbal poultries, our sickly flattery and hysterical gush; there is an insistent call for action, big action, immediate action. We have not quite done our duty to the world of the wretched when we have proved to our satisfaction that men whose passionate love for their fellow men has reclaimed thousands of the Arabs on our streets, and preached the gospel to the lowest of the poor, are contemptible fanatics.

Is it, indeed, the case that as we toll in our luxurious armchairs we not only need give nothing to help these efforts, but can even afford to look down from the whole height of our paltry puny conventionalism on workers who have more of the love of God and man in their little fingers than any ordinary thousand of us have in our whole carcasses. These men of the "love of God and their fellows," are far higher in the just measure of man than the men of thin respectability and smug religiosity who sneer at them, even though they may be fanatical. The fanatics who love and recognize men as brothers, they do the deeds that mark true brotherhood. They rescue the perishing, care for the dying; they heal the broken hearted; they have wrought and fought, and toiled and sweated and bled and prayed and suffered, and are the salt of the earth.

LOWELL'S PARABLE.

James Russell Lowell, was a poet, a statesman, a man of the world. He told a Parable:

"Said Christ the Lord, 'I will go and see.' How men, my brethren believe in Me."

The chief priests and rulers and kings welcomed Him with State and pompous services:

"Great organs surged through arches dim. Their jubilant floods in praise of Him; An in church and palace and judgment hall He saw His image high over all. But still, wherever his steps they led The Lord in sorrow bent down His head; And from under the heavy foundation stones The Son of Mary heard bitter groans. Have ye founded your thrones and altars then. On the bodies and souls of living men? And think ye that building shall endure Which shelters the noble and crushes the poor?"

In vain they pleaded their customs and their religious rites.

"Then Christ sought out an Artisan, A low-browed, stunted, haggard man, And a motherless girl whose fingers thin Pushed from her faintly, want and sin. These, led He, in the midst of them And as they drew back their garments, hem For fear of defilement, "So here" said He, "The images ye have made of Me."

The moral of the Parable is evident, very evident. To give it a local application. There are those that live and die in misery and shame on the borderland of destitution. Little children wall and starve and perish, and soak and blacken soul and sense, and the most that we do for them is to throw an odd dime or two at them at certain seasons of the year. There are those in the Poor Asylum living in a building dark and unclean. Old and young, clean and unclean, (until they all become unclean,) sane and insane, (till death do them part.) Living in halls between walls which are soaked and steamed in the fumes and gases and greases, the accumulations of many years. What are we going to do about it? Say a little

prayer and then set in our comfortable home, in snug religious security and peace, (false) of mind. If we do we shall forget all about it, only until painfully reminded by the force of retributive law, and then pay for our shameful neglect. If we neglect them they will be left uncared for, but our responsibility is all the greater. It is vain for us to ask, "A I my brother's keeper?" we know or we ought to know our responsibility; let us face it.

CONCLUSION.

Our first premise was:—Nobody wants the Workhouse. Nobody wants to live there. But people are living there; have to live there.

Our second premise was:—"I am my brother's keeper" and have no right to place a brotherman where I would not wish to be placed, even if circumstances were against me. Our conclusion is:—Therefore, get busy, remove that unsightly block, that menace to our city life, that reflection upon our civil righteousness; Remove it; burn it up; build a real home for the poor people; we may have to go there to live ourselves some day. What you do, do quickly.

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