

Talks by Tiberius.

THE DISMAL DWELLING.

I come back again to the subject of the past two weeks. My promise that I would give the inside view of the Poor Asylum, calls for fulfilment. Furthermore, I wish to acknowledge the letter which appeared in the News last week and which kindly and favourably referred to my first talk on the subject of the "Dismal Dwelling." It is something of a comfort to know that someone else besides myself, has some sense of righteous indignation on account of a fact, which is a crime and a shame, the fact of Newfoundland's treatment of the Official Poor in its midst. We desire to forfeit the blessing found in Holy Writ in the words: "Blessed is he that considereth the Poor, the Lord will deliver him in times of trouble;" we shall forfeit it unless something is done worthwhile for these poor poor inmates.

One thing gives me considerable thought and wonderment and that is that there is not a general outcry against the existence of such a blot on our modern life. How people can daily pass that site, daily know of the conditions which prevail there, daily see some of the inmates about the streets, and not cry out, passes my comprehension.

This is not the first time that the attention of the public has been drawn to the institution, it will not be the last, if I can raise a fuss.

There are certain elements which are absolutely necessary to the health and happiness of people in connection with any building, in which people are compelled to live. We will deal with a few of these:—

LIGHT.

The source of all light in the sun. The results of light are cheerfulness, health, carefreeness. The sun is always ready as a strong man to run a race. He plays behind the mist-cloud in the morning until by his own heat he has evaporated the mist, then from the clear sky he breaks forth in glorious and shining majesty. First the birds awaken with their songs, then the cattle low, and laugh, as they rise from their beds to greet good old King Sol; then, last but not least, man rises from his bed to feel new life in his blood and strength in his body by which to face all the world, and to successfully meet all the demands of his life. The children crowd the streets and lanes to play and frolic in the sun. And he plays and dances in the morning, to meridian and past it, he scatters a shower of jewels everywhere, with a ray here and flash there; all various—all full of life and light, and tender as the dew of the morning.

"It is morning—and in the light of that morning, thousands of eyes dash with renewed brightness for they have longed for the coming of the day. And in the light of the morning, thousands of eyes open, things that nestle in dust and darkness cover and fly away. Morning for the toll-worn artisan—for oppression and avarice, and gaunt famine and poverty are gone, and there is social night no more. Morning for the meek-eyed student—for scowling doubt has fled, and sophistry is silenced, and the clouds of error are lifted from the fair face of truth for aye, and there is intellectual wrongs are redressed, and contradictions harmonized, and problems solved, and men summer in perpetual brotherhood, and there is moral night no more."

Morning;—Hark how the sympathetic heavens reply; "Thy sun shall no more go down, neither shall thy moon withdraw herself, for the Lord shall be thine everlasting light, and the days of thy mourning shall be ended."

It is morning!!—"The planet now doth like a garment wear the beauty of the morning." An the light

climbeth, onward and upward, for there is a sacred noon beyond. That noon is Heaven:—"And there shall be no night there."

The earth was all chaos and void until the Creator made two great lights, one to shine in the day which He called the sun, one to shine in the night which He called the moon. Since then man has depended on sunshine for every material gift worthwhile. There is only one condition ever mentioned where man would not need the light of the sun, but there is no need of the sun there, because the sun is superseded by a still greater light. Man cannot live without light, and fully realize all his potential joys and powers. Even animals grov blind and become thin and sickly and die, when they are confined to dark habitations.

Carlyle in Sartar Resartus wrote: "But it is with man's soul as it was with nature: The beginning of creation is light. 'Till the eye have vision, the whole members are in bonds. Divine moment, when over the tempest-tossed soul, as once over the wild weltering chaos, it is spoken: Let there be light! Ever to the greatest that has felt such moment, is it not miraculous and God-announcing; even as, under simple figures, to the simplest and least. The mad primeval discord is hushed; the rudely-jumbled conflicting elements bind themselves into separate firmaments: deep silent rock foundations are built beneath; and the skye vault with its everlasting luminaries above; instead of a dark wasteful chaos, we have a blooming, fertile, heaven-encompassed world."

Permit me to indulge in flowers once more. As we think of Heaven with its vast and eternal lights, ruled by the two kings of lights, the Sun and Moon, the latter but reflecting the rays of the former, other words come to us. "Music is here; but it is the deep solemn harmony of the spheres. Poverty is here; but it must be read in characters of light, written on the sable garment of night. Architecture is here; but it is the colossal structure of the sun and system, and of cluster and of universe. Eloquence is here; but there is neither speech nor language, its voice is not heard." Yet it restless sweeps, comes over us in the mighty period of revolving worlds.

To say that we need light is one thing, to demand that we be understood as meaning sufficient light is another. If a man lives, or "bides," in a shack 3 feet by 10 feet, which has only one window and that 4 inches square, built in the North side of his shack, and covered with dust and dirt, it cannot be denied that he has light, but it must be emphatically denied that he has sufficient light.

Our first charge against the inside view of the Poor Asylum is that there is not sufficient light; and when light means so much and is so necessary for health and happiness, then we affirm that inside conditions there at present tend to sickness, unhappiness and all kindred ills.

Just imagine if you can a large building, the general outline of which is oblong. It has several flats or stories. We have never seen the basement, so cannot write of it. I imagine however, that it is a case of (to quote the Nigger yarn) it being de-basement. No I am only concerned with the place where the poor poor are compelled to spend most of their days and nights. Here is a flat, say 100 feet by 50 feet. Lengthwise it is divided into three parts; a long row of rooms; a long hall; another long row of rooms. The rooms are bed-rooms. I have seen as many as seven beds in one room which was only large enough for one person. The bed-rooms have windows for the most part, but the inmates should not be expected

to spend their days in the same room in which they spend their nights. What other place remains? Why the long hall. The hall is about 100 feet by 10 feet. Two windows only, one at each end, light the hall. Rarely does the sun shine through those windows. The poor poor huddle together pitifully in winter, and almost so in summer, in these dark halls. Passing down the halls it is necessary to keep in the centre, and to keep your eyes open, lest you stumble over some poor sufferer, by the way.

The only place beside where any decent quantity of light is allowed to shine through the day, is in the so-called Hospital; and to go there, would almost make you pray that the light might not shine. I say again, I do not blame the Superintendent and his assistants, they should not be blamed, but notwithstanding, whoever is to blame, the conditions are blameworthy. If God could be heard to speak with regard to the Poor Asylum, He would say: "Let there be light." I have a feeling that fire-light is better than the present dismal apologies for the genuine thing.

FOOD.

Another necessity to human existence is food. Man cannot live by bread alone, even if the bread is made from first grade flour and in a first rate manner; which it is not in the Poor House. Man needs a variety in his food. It is economy to eat much and to eat variety of food, it saves drug bills. No one can say that the food at the Poor Asylum is either enough to satisfy hunger, or to keep up physical strength. I have tasted soup, which is a common dish there, and for dinner, the main meal of the day, the only dish sometimes, excepting for a thick junk of bread. I have tasted such soup and could not tell it apart from viscous salted water. The poor inmates dare not complain, but the truth gets out somehow. One would be tempted to think that the hall, where the food is served to the well folks there, is purposely darkened, so that the poor poor shall not see what it is, which is called food. Blindness may even be a blessing. Sometimes years ago, when I read for the first time the story Oliver Twist by Dickens, I thought that Bumble was dead and that Oliver did not need to ask for more; but Bumble is not dead, the Government is Bumble, and Oliver Twist, the poor poor, is still asking for more. The report is still going to Bumble that Oliver is asking for more. The official reply still is: "What asking for more. I know that boy, (meaning Oliver) will be hung." Times have changed since Bumble's time of Dickens' fame, standards are higher. I am prepared to swear that not one member of the Government; nor one member of the Government-appointed Commission which officially visits the institution once or twice a year, nor any one who knows the deceptions of life. I say not one of them would, after seeing the meals that cook the food; the range on which it is cooked, and the food when cooked, attempt to live on that food without first of all preparing for a stomach sick life and an early death. Yet our relatives and friends are there, and the public is mum. The poor poor need food and more food, and better food. Times have changed but has Bumble? Has Oliver Twist? Has the officialdom?

HOME.

"Be it ever so humble, there's no place like home."

"Dulce Domum — Home Sweet Home." What sound vibrates upon the heart more delightfully? The world itself is beautiful, but who shall describe its realities? Napoleon amidst all the triumphs of his greatest days declared that he would rather be home with his Josephine. Admiral Collingwood as he paced the deck of his victorious ship was sighing for home. Home-life, with all its discipline and associations, will be the material for many a future meditation; and the principles of those who are dead and gone will be respected and coveted, not only because of their intrinsic worth, but because they are tinged with the bright colours of earliest memory. Looking back, it will seem to them as if:—

"The air of Paradise did fan the house, And angels offic'd it."

Relationship, freedom, care, love, these things and similar make home. A nation's strength lies in its home-life. Men and women need home. When boy and girl are settling down to the most joyous and the same time the most solemn and serious phase of life, 'tis said, "They are making a home for themselves." For self-realization and fulfilment such is absolutely necessary; i.e., on general lines.

The poor poor in the Poor Asylum have no home. They bide in an institution. They are cursed with officialdom; they are limited and barred and bound. They need light, they get gloom; they need love, they get only mental service; they need to be clean, but are not. Strangers give them food, and look after them; an ungrateful public forgets them; they live, they die; they are buried; none know; none care; no one attends the funeral save the official undertaker, and the official clergyman. No tears, no flowers. The corpse is lifted out of the bed into the official black box and is borne away. No tears, no flowers. Another poor miserable soul takes the same place in the identical bed; ad infinitum and nauseum. Pity the poor poor in the "Dismal Dwelling."

"Double Cause to Be Thankful," States Wolfe

Both Himself and Wife Are Restored to Splendid Health By Tanlac.

"I guess we have a double cause to be thankful to Tanlac, for it has not only done my wife so much good that she is looking better than she has for years, but has also relieved me entirely of my stomach trouble so that now I feel just fine." This was the statement of Mr. and Mrs. John E. Wolfe, of Grand Desert, Nova Scotia, who were in Halifax recently on a shopping trip, and called at Kinley's Drug Store for two bottles of Tanlac. For many years past Mr. Wolfe has been in the blacksmith's business in Grand Desert, and both he and his wife have lived there all their lives and are very highly respected.

"I hadn't been well for over three years," said Mrs. Wolfe, "and was really in a very weak and run-down condition. I had indigestion very bad; my food used to sour and I had pain after every meal. I was so nervous and excitable that the least unusual noise made me start, and at night my rest was so disturbed that I always felt too tired to do my housework. I had no energy or strength and was rapidly getting worse. When I found out that I had gained 40 lbs. in weight from a hundred and forty to a hundred and fourteen pounds I became alarmed at my condition."

"There was something so convincing about the Tanlac statements in the papers that I decided to try it. That was two months ago, and to-day I'm a different woman. I never have a touch of indigestion now. My appetite is splendid and my food seems to do me good. All signs of nervousness are gone and I am feeling stronger and better in every respect. I have gained exactly eighteen pounds in weight, and Mr. Wolfe here can tell you how much I have improved in health."

"Yes, it's a fact all right," said Mr. Wolfe, when appealed to. "It has certainly done the wife more good than any other medicine she ever took. I had suffered from indigestion and stomach trouble for years myself, too, and when I saw the way it helped her, I started taking Tanlac also. I've only taken two bottles but it has relieved me entirely of my trouble. My food agrees with me perfectly now, and I never felt better in my life, and I've gained ten pounds in weight. We both think Tanlac is the greatest medicine in the world."

Tanlac is sold in St. John's by M. Connors, and by the leading Druggist in every town.—adv

Busy Antwerp.

GREAT BELGIAN PORT HAS MANY NATURAL ADVANTAGES.

Belgium is working at its reconstruction with a most laudable energy which contrasts strongly with the social unrest and agitation reigning in England and in France. The Belgian Government, rightly proud of what has already been achieved, recently invited three French ministers to Belgium on a tour of observation so that they might realize for themselves the progress accomplished in the domain of social reconstruction. Their journey ended by a visit to the port of Antwerp, which is about to become a French base for the transport of German coal.

Although Rotterdam is a dangerous rival, the great Belgian port, nevertheless, possesses considerable superiority on account of the facility of access and its labor conditions. The Belgian Chamber of Commerce recently published a communication concerning the characteristic features of Antwerp, of which the following are worth noting:

The port is accessible for vessels 230 metres long, drawing 10 metres of water, and possessing docks 5,000 metres long, provided with hydraulic cranes housed in metallic sheds which extend over an area of more than 200,000 square metres.

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AGENTS.

port, which is actually being carried 150 tons an hour.

In 1914 Antwerp was the centre of 100 or more navigation services, whilst the depth of the port will be 13 metres at low or high tide. These new docks will also be provided with hydraulic cranes, with numerous railway tracks, allowing freight to be directly transferred from car to steamer and vice versa, whilst 12 pneumatic elevators can discharge

able traffic by way of the Rhine, to the particular advantage of Strassburg.

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