

Philanthropy as a Science

TOPIC FOR WEEK OF FEB. 23.

"My Neighbor," Chapter IX. Isa. 58:1-12.

REV. J. H. MCARTHUR, S.T.D., EMIN.

THE term "philanthropy," according to its derivation, means a love for men, and implies a disposition or effort to help men to a higher and happier condition in life. The work of improving the condition of men, especially of the needy and unfortunate, may be done in a careless, haphazard and intermittent manner. In order that philanthropic efforts may accomplish the most good and confer benefits that are the most lasting, it is necessary to recognize and study the principles that underly philanthropy as a science.

Love the True Basis. The true basis for all efficient philanthropic work is found in the scripture injunction, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." A man may be moved to help his needy neighbor from a sense of self-respect; he would be ashamed that it is known that one whom he might help and ought to help is allowed to suffer at his door. He may not care for his neighbor's suffering, but he cares mightily for his own reputation; hence, he would rather help his neighbor than incur the suspicion of being inhuman; though he loves him not, yet he would be ashamed to act the part of Dives, who refused to administer to the needs of Lazarus, lying helpless at his gate. A man may help his needy neighbor from a sense of self-defence. The condition in which his neighboring poor live may be a menace to his health or to his business, and, in order to protect himself, he is willing to assist in improving their condition. He is willing to aid any philanthropic work that will tend to the general good of the community, not because he has any concern for the community, but because he hopes himself to share in the general good, and his concern is chiefly for himself. All true and efficient philanthropic effort must be based on love; such as moved the good Samaritan to care for the wounded Jew who had no love for him or his race; such as was absent from the life of the rich young ruler, who cared less for the poor than he did for his riches; such as had its supreme illustration in the life of our Lord, who, though he was rich, yet for our sakes became poor. There is great power in riches; there is greater power in voluntary poverty.

The man who is only moral ceases to give the moment he has satisfied his conscience; but the man of love ceases not to give so long as there is need which he can help. Love not only sends help to the poor, but further shows a personal interest in them. All such may not be in need of money, but all are in need of hear sympathy. Love is not satisfied with the mere gift of money; love makes the further gift of self. Lowell has beautifully said:—

"Not what we give, but what we share,—
For the gift without the giver is bare;
Who gives himself with his alms feeds three—
Himself, his hungry neighbor and
Me."

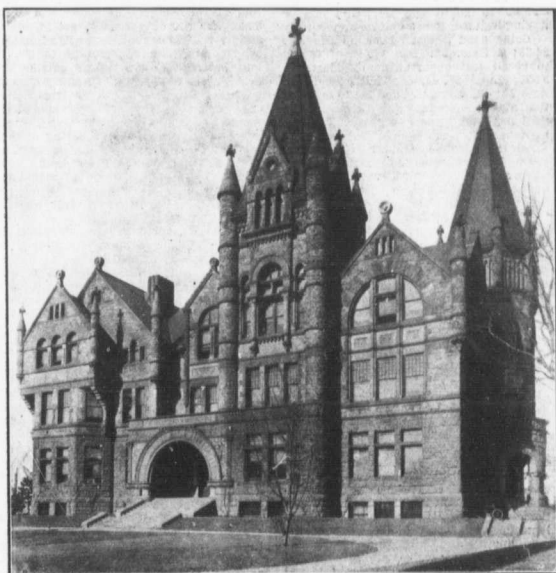
Intelligent Philanthropy. Philanthropic efforts, in order to be efficient, must be intelligent. The philanthropist must take the necessary time and trouble to inquire into the needs and circumstances of the poor and the unfortunate. Intelligent love always aims to find out who are in need of help, and the particular kind of help they are in need of. Intelligent love will give the right thing, to the right persons, in the right way, and with the right end in view. To do this it is necessary to study carefully the conditions in which the needy class live.

Some may need only money; some may need only advice; some may need only an opportunity to work; some may need only temporary help; and some may need constant care and supervision; but all need sympathy.

Intelligent philanthropy must necessarily be organized. In no other way can it find out who are worthy, and what their particular needs are. Not only should there be in every city a charity organization for the relief of the poor, but there should be some kind of connection between the different organizations of this kind, so that each may know what the others are doing, and to whom they are administering help. This will be found to be the most effective way of covering the whole field, so that no one will be neglected, and also the most effective way of avoiding overlapping in their

renew. The philanthropist has not done his whole duty when he has relieved present suffering and administered to present needs. The hungry poor must be provided with food to-day, but steps should be taken to enable them to provide their own food to-morrow. To supply the wants of the poor without trying to better their condition tends only to poverty; but to change the conditions that produce poverty, while relieving temporary need tends to true manhood. Not merely the temporary good, but the permanent good of the people should be the aim of the philanthropist. A wise policy in these matters seeks not only to relieve immediate distress, but also to remove its causes by altering the conditions that create it. The following quotation from Edward T. Devine is to the point: "Charity may be of a kind that will transform the unfit into such as are fit to survive, and still more readily, charity—or, to use a more appropriate term, an enlightened relief policy—may alter the conditions which create the unfit."

In caring for the poor, the sick, the neglected, the defective, and the delinquent, it is well to remember that "An



VICTORIA COLLEGE, QUEEN'S PARK, TORONTO.

work and of preventing certain unprincipled and worthless men from preying upon the innocence or ignorance of the different charity organizations. When a man appeals to a society for help that society should have some means of finding out whether or not that man has been receiving help from other similar societies, and of finding out also what his needs are and how it can best help him. Such knowledge is not always easily obtained, but ought to be always available for those who are doing charity work. The organization of all charity work is the surest and best way of obtaining and making available all knowledge that is necessary for the successful prosecution of the work.

The Aim of Philanthropic Effort is to meet immediate needs, and to remove their causes, so as to prevent their recur-

rence. The aim of prevention is better than a pound of cure"; and, "Better a fence round the edge of the cliff, than an ambulance down in the valley."

There are some philanthropic works which can hardly be classed under the head of charity, such as securing work for the unemployed. There are men in need who are both willing and able to work; but the problem is, how to get the men and the work together. The solving of this problem should not be left to private initiative alone. Sometimes a man who is willing to work wastes a lot of time in looking for work, and when he finds it, it is not the kind for which he is best adapted. Many of these evils could be remedied if the state would institute a system of labor bureau. This would result in giving work to every man that is able and willing to work,