

cabs and private automobiles; when the easily-given command to the driver is "Home!" or "The Savoy," or "Prince's"—then it is the social workers, both among the males and the females, find abundant work to their hands.

It is an obvious thing to say that wealth and affluence rub shoulders with poverty and degradation everywhere; but there is no more persistently blind eye to this fact than in London, where the ugly contrast is so blatantly apparent. But it is only the man or woman that understands, whose heart is concerned at the picture.

On the Embankment I was one of a motley company of at least a thousand lined up in a queue, that surely contained a sample of every species of wretchedness under the sun. There were genuine out-of-works, "won't-works," shufflers of every sort, foot-pads, "ticket-of-leave" men, with others qualifying the same way—and you could have put their ages anywhere between eighteen and eighty. Happily, the younger ones were provided for elsewhere; the contact here was quite bad enough for a grown man!

I had my mind especially on the newcomers, those who had only recently slipped into the ranks, and had not yet acquired the professional attitude and shuffle. Old hands and new, amateurs and professionals alike, we were massed along the river frontage of Somerset House, where the last wills and testaments of the country's deceased—their bequests and benefactions—were safely filed and recorded. And there were more than enough police standing guard over us to check any tendency to disorder we could have shown even on full stomachs.

After a weary period of waiting—and some had been there three and four hours—a period spent mostly in miserable silence, the plain-clothed rescue officials came up with the "food and bed" tickets. It is some satisfaction to know that no one is sent empty away, for the Church Army and Salvation Army cut up the queue between them.

Each man does two hours in the labour tents woodchopping; but actually he works not more than half the time, for he has a meal of soup and bread to take in. The tickets are timed at intervals of three hours on from midnight, and the men go in batches of seventy or eighty at a time. My ticket would not admit me until 9 a.m., which left me with nine hours to kill. The agencies mentioned have met this difficulty by providing "shelters," where the men can at least have something to eat and lie down, and not have to parade the streets all night.

I was a Church Army man for the time being, so I followed those who, not holding midnight tickets, were bound for the Millbank shelter. It is a derelict candle factory, tucked away at Westminster, within the shadow of the fine Victoria Tower of the Houses of Parliament. The shelter is just enough to justify its name, containing little else be-

side its two huge floors enclosed in whitewashed walls, with aged, greasy rafters just contriving to support the whole.

At the first glance the scene resembles nothing so much as a big opium den—one of the institutions you may stumble across now and then. Flickering lamps lend some illumination to the place, but their light is somewhat obscured by the thick haze of breaths and vapours that rises from the bodies of the inmates. These are grouped in all sorts of attitudes round the glowing fire buckets that are set here and there on the floor. Their faces represent every shade of expression from comparative content to deepest dejection. The social army has, at any rate, done its best, for besides providing the men with the shelter, it has served each of them with a pint and a half of good, wholesome soup and a chunk of bread.

This is now the exquisitely restful hour after the meal. There is repose generally throughout the strange assembly, heightening the resemblance to an opium den. For the satisfying soup, on top of the exertions of the day, has produced a lovely soporific effect that one would give much to purchase under other circumstances. Beautifully warm inside and out, not one of us feels inclined for much effort. Those who have tobacco make the most of it. And it is surprising what a passable average mixture—it wouldn't exactly be called a blend!—you can produce from the fag-ends you have collected during the day.

One man caught my attention particularly among the smokers. He was a regular wreck of a "toff," but he held fast to every shred that remained of his past respectability. He wore a battered top-hat on the back of his head with the inimitable air of the Bond Street swell, and there was unmistakable superiority in the cut of his frowsy frock-coat. His linen collar and cuffs were of some forgotten age of laundry treatment, but they were there. A pipe was too vulgar for him to smoke, so he held between his lips the stump of a cigar, which had somehow come into his possession, and which he consumed economically with very evident enjoyment.

Occasionally a growl, a grumble, or a guffaw rises above the faint hum of indefinite human sounds, but that is the only out-of-the-way noise; if we except the decrepit, half-witted creature in a far corner, crooning softly and not unmusically to himself, whom nobody objects to. The man unfamiliar with the atmosphere of a "shelter" has to get acclimatised to it. The air, of course, is suggestive of the commonest of lodging-houses; yet there is something indefinably and indescribably distinctive about the "shelter." But it is easy to make oneself at home, once the effect of first impressions has worn off.

The faint light that flickers o'er the recumbent figures is kind both to the stranger and the latest

recruit, comparatively securing him from too close scrutiny. It is not difficult, by the employment of a few obvious artifices, to get on conversational terms with one's widest-awake neighbour.

In muffled monotones—for censure swift as it is ungentle falls surely on the noisy inmate—the wide-awake one reveals some of the details of his past. He is an educated man; that is evident as soon as he speaks. You are surprised to learn that he is a fully ordained priest, though not that drink has been his relentless enemy. A common enough story, you will say. This man knows most of the regular comers at the shelter, for he is as regular as any of them.

The once man of religion explains that his old chum—the owner of the top-hat and frock coat—is entitled to be addressed as "The Hon.," since he is the younger son of a peer. "Bertie," as he is known by his intimates, came a series of croppers through wine, women and cards. Then there is, strange to say, a Scotsman—a jeweller's assistant from Edinburgh—knew his business well, had a "row" with his employer and left, thinking he could easily find another job; got on the rocks gradually and couldn't pull himself round again; no clothes now to make himself respectable enough to seek work, even if he had the necessary testimonials. There are dozens of similar stories represented in those huddled, sleeping forms.

But the time has come for us to make for Aldwych and the wood-chopping. Another dawn has come, and if it fails to bring much hope for the majority of us, we have rested well for a few hours, and at least we can do the same again to-night.

The Englishman Problem

ENGLISHMEN of almost all sorts, sizes and conditions have managed to drift into Canada. The story of the Englishman in this country is one of the most peculiar, paradoxical and interesting. The greatest colony in the Empire, originated by the French, conquered by the English, and partially peopled in the East by Loyalists to the flag of England after the American Revolution, has no greater Imperial problem on its hands to-day than—what to do with the Englishman. It is agreed that if the right kind of Englishman can be got, no better class of immigrants could be secured anywhere. Opinion generally seems to have settled it, that so far Canada has got a large number of the undesirable class, along with a good many sterling, sensible Englishmen who learn quickly to adapt themselves to conditions in a new country. Of the latter the celebrated Barr colony settled at Lloydminster are a good example. The trouble with the average slumbered Englishman, however, is that never having had experience with land, he has no appetite for it.



AN EARLY-MORNING GROUP OF DERELICTS
Interior of the Millbank Shelter, where the once well-to-do jostle the born-hungry in all sorts of clothes.

Photo by Campbell-Gray, Hyde Park W