

be traced. He asks the Royal Sanitary Institute to point out to the railway companies the fact that their rules are frequently broken in this respect, and suggests the desirability of drawing the attention of the companies and the public to the existing condition of affairs and calls for reform in the manner of cleansing the cars.

Helping the Sightless.

In every city, almost a familiar figure on some street corner has been that of a mendicant, a cane in one hand, a tin cup in the other. Sometimes a variation has been found in the unfortunate who saws on a battered and tuneless violin. Always, though, he has worn the insignia of his rank, a card bearing the words, "Help the Blind." And always tender-hearted passers-by have been found ready to drop coins into the little tin cup in order that the sightless one might maintain life in his afflicted body.

This spectacle, fortunately, is one that is rapidly disappearing. It has been found that the truest charity toward this class lies not in showering them with small coins, but rather in aiding them to support themselves in some more desirable fashion. One of the most commendable of philanthropies is that which teaches the blind to help themselves. When one is deprived of one of his faculties others become keener. Because of this rule the blind person's sense of touch is extraordinarily developed and thus permits him to become a skillful craftsman even though he is unable to behold the work of his hands.

Agencies are at work nearly everywhere now teaching the blind the best use for their hands and fingers. But there must be further support and encouragement from the public if the plan is to succeed fully. While the blind produce eminently merchantable articles, the public must learn their desirability and have easy access to the places where the goods can be purchased. Before Christmas a department store in New York devoted space to a display of these products. No charge was made to those who fashioned the articles or to their sponsors, and every cent the articles brought was turned over to the makers. This suggests the thought that department stores might well afford to give

space to such articles at all times, thus adding to their reputation for public spirit and generosity. Salespeople could doubtless be provided from among the blind themselves. The blind would prefer not to be idle, not to be indigent, not to be mendicants. Let them be helped in the most practical way.

The Plague: How It Is Spread.

James Scott writes in "The Sanitary Record" (London): If proof were wanted of the amazing fact that minuteness of living forms is synonymous with tremendous power, it could be found in connection with the influence of microbes. For the creation and distribution of evil—and in some directions for good—they are possessed of very mysterious, far-reaching capacities. Among the foremost examples must be classed the plague microbe, named *Bacillus pestis*. This is the germ which is at present occasioning so much anxiety to the Medical and Sanitary Authorities, causing them to institute plans and precautions which, in the judgment of persons who know nothing of the possibilities of the subject, savor more of the action of unreasoning, panic-stricken men than that of sane ones.

But men who are familiar with the performances of these invisible objects know that those who govern municipal affairs should be warmly thanked for their vigorous care, as they are undoubtedly preventing the occurrence of disasters of a very horrible, deadly character, such as that which ravaged this country during 1665—at the time of the Great Plague—and still takes toll in thousands of lives in India. From July, 1909, to June, 1910, there were 141,357 deaths from plague in India.

To look down the compound microscope at some of the microbes of the plague always surprises the uninitiated observer, because, although they may be magnified several thousands of times, they appear to be simply a collection of tiny dots. To reflect, however, on their capabilities is to induce a shudder; for there are enough depicted to devastate a whole town, if they could secure lodgement and multiplication in people's bodies. They would lay its inhabitants prone as corpses within a week.

How strange that normally invisible specks should be able to do more mischief