A Modern St. George

By
Jacob A. Riis

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Scribner's Magazine

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The following abridged reprint of an illuminating article written for Scribner's Magazine by that champion of the poor and prophet of social betterment, Jacob Riis, is issued by the Russell Sage Foundation by permission of the author and Charles Scribner's Sons. The original article was illustrated and contained a sketch of the development of certain social agencies of New York City, notably of the Association for Improving the Condition of the Poor and the Children's Aid Society, and tributes to the founders of these organizations, which are omitted in this reprint.

Single copies of the reprint may be obtained free from the Charity Organization Department of the Russell Sage Foundation, Room 613, 105 E. 22nd St., New York.

A Modern St. George

The Growth of Organized Charity in the United States

TO the clear head and tender heart of Josephine Shaw Lowell her city will owe a debt of gratitude all its days. Upon her initiative the Charity Organization Society was founded in 1882, to prevent the overlapping of relief, and to "promote the general welfare of the poor by *social* and sanitary reforms." A single year's registration of 3,420 families that were tapping different relief sources discovered an able-bodied man hiding in three-fifths of them, hundreds living in plenty on the contributions of whole strings of societies, each of them believing the family its own particular charge. My back aches yet when I think of the Christmas eve trip I made to an old woman who lived alone in a hut at what is now the Ninth Street entrance to Pros-

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pect Park, and was reputed to be very poor. I toiled up the long slope with a sack of provisions, to encounter at her door an emissary of the St. Vincent de Paul Society, similarly burdened. Our comparing notes did not help ease our backs, for we carried the things back where they had come from, but it resulted in the discovery that the woman had $1,800 in bank and was a preposterous old fraud. And there were many such. Several winters after that I contracted a habit of contributing a nickel on my way home from the office to another old creature who sat in Chatham Square churning a wretched pocket edition of a hand-organ while she rocked a baby in her lap. It was always midnight when I came that way, and the baby appealed to me tremendously—especially when it snowed and the cold was bitter—until one night, as I dropped my nickel in her cup, the old woman lurched in the very act of mumbling her blessing upon me, and dropped the baby on the pavement. I picked it up, horrified, to find that it was a rag doll. The "mother" was drunk. In five years the society, after a series of such shocks to the nerves of New York, was able to report that the worst of that lot were "working for the city," no longer working the city. They were not, as I have shown in my own case, the only ones who had been doing that. In truth, we were

all guilty, the selfishly ignorant with the selfishly cunning. Some of us still remember the sermon in which Charles S. Fairchild, afterward Cleveland's Secretary of the Treasury, held the mirror up to us all. His text was the finding of two little children in a Washington Street den with a lot of dissipated women who sent them out daily with baskets to levy tribute on the pitiful. On the food they brought back the symposium of hags lived high: the money they spent for drink. "Covered with vermin, their hair unkempt and matted, while their few garments, men's sizes, hung upon them, giving them the appearance of scarecrows," they were indeed an object-lesson as they stood before the police justice.

"Who was to blame?" thundered Mr. Fairchild, in one of the earliest leaflets of the Charity Organization Society. "The dissipated women, the crowd of drunken and lazy people, the wretched mother—yes, all of these! But who were their partners? Who else but the givers of those cold victuals? If you had refused to give to those children without finding out for yourself what was amiss, the dissipated women and the drunken and lazy crowd would have had no motive to hide them and they would have come at once under good influences. The city of New York stood ready to provide amply for

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them, to place them where they would have been given a chance in life, where they would have worn garments enough on those cold winter days, not of 'men's sizes' either; where their hair would not have been unkempt and matted; where they would have ceased to appear 'like miniature scarecrows'; where they would have been taught to read and write, would have learned religion, morals, humanity, and whence they would have gone forth to decent, comfortable homes. And you, you givers of cold victuals, stood in the way of all this beneficence. You are to blame for the misery of these infants. You are guilty. You made their degradation too valuable to the disorderly crowd. You and your cold victuals.

"'Covered with vermin,' too. When your terrier is thus, you do something—something besides giving it more cold victuals."

There are people yet who give cold victuals at the door and believe their brotherhood arrears paid with that, just as there are dispensers of charity tea—the tea put up by a highly respectable dealer "in New York and Newport," who sent me his invitation to buy with the pregnant suggestion: "It is politely requested that this tea be used only for the purpose intended." There is even the woman who in a workless winter, with starva-

tion abroad all about, gives a Christmas party to her lap-dog. We hear of such yet, but if the conviction has become deep and general among thinking men that there is need of doing something beside doling out back-door alms, the society of which Mr. Fairchild was one of the founders deserves full credit for helping it on.

At the outset it was not intended as a relief society, though that was and is a feature of its work which gives rise intermittently to the charge that it "spends more for salaries than for groceries," and sometimes even, because of its pernicious activity in the cause of the people—as seen from Albany—to a vengeful demand for an investigation of its accounts. But these things are happily rare now. The days of storm and stress lie a good way behind. The need of investigation, of registration, is understood and admitted. When the society reached its silver wedding with the day of good sense, it had its real work well in hand and declared boldly that, *having begun with the purpose of ultimately diminishing poverty, it had come to the conviction that it might and must be abolished in so far as it meant the lack of the essential conditions of normal living. To which end it stated the office of organized charity to be: having a bird's-eye view of the community needs, to take*

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up and carry out whatever reform, whatever task they point to that is not yet in hand. The principle thus enunciated stands: through the door it opened organized charity everywhere has gone out to "seek and destroy," in the words of Dr. Edward T. Devine, its spokesman at the Philadelphia National Conference, "those organized forces of evil, those particular causes of dependence and intolerable living conditions which are beyond the control of the individual" yet may be overcome by society acting as one. It remained only to make sure of the forces of evil. Were they, indeed, contained in the old formula, "improvidence and overwhelming misfortune," or had we further to seek?

Naturally, what lay nearest to hand came first. I came across the other day one of the old reports of the society that spoke of the "long and tedious fight" for a municipal lodging-house, toward which getting rid of the police-station lodgings was a necessary step. The words made me smile, for I had a hand in that fight myself. It was long, yes, but tedious never. I fed fat an ancient grudge all through it, for I knew from personal experience what those inhuman dens were like and that it was a Christian duty to destroy them. Besides, I worked side by side with Mrs. Lowell, and the day they were

closed by Theodore Roosevelt, police commissioner, we triumphed in the fight half won. The other half awaited the dawn of common-sense at Albany until this summer when the bill to establish a farm colony for young vagrants, to wean them from the tramp's life, passed the legislature at last. It was the legacy of the past, the halting midway of which now there is to be an end.

For the day of construction has followed the breaking of ground. The opening of New York's first playground in Poverty Gap itself, though it did not endure then, was earnest of what was coming, has come, as every one knows. School bo[illegible]s no longer ask, as did New York's in those days, for [illegible]roof that play is "educational"; they know it is, as much as their books. The grass in the people's parks is not sacred nowadays; the boy is coming to be that instead, and the country is safe. Schoolhouses and settlements invite the children in, where in the old days the corner-saloon was the only bidder with its back-room, sole recreation hall for the young, and this was its shameless bid: "Bring the girls, and pay for their drinks." It is fifteen years and more since a policeman shot down a boy in the street for playing ball, and the bullet is not made that will ever seek such a target again. So, there we are safe.

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Into the homes of the poor have come sunshine and air. The demon of darkness is not slain; there are more than a hundred thousand bedrooms yet in New York's tenements that are not fit for pigs to be in, let alone human beings. Whenever we settle back with the contented sigh that the battle is won, it is going against us. In Brooklyn, last winter, they got themselves into a state of righteous indignation because they were told by those who should know that the city of homes and churches let its poor dwell in darkness, too. No such thing, they said; couldn't be. But it turned out that there were as many sunless rooms as in Manhattan, and that they bore a direct relation to the number of baby funerals, once charged to the inscrutable decrees of an all-wise Providence. Letting in the light was just a question of ten or twelve dollars from the landlord's pocket. Putting it plainly: "dollars or death?" is a great help. But though years may pass before we hear the last of the "infant slaughter-houses," as Mr. Gilder called the baby-murdering tenements, *a million souls have been rehoused decently since the Charity Organization Society formed its tenement-house committee*, and the housing problem is no longer hopeless. We have a tenement-house law and a Tenement-House Department to enforce it, more or less faithfully

as we let politics strengthen its grip, or compel it to relax it—that is a question for us to settle as citizens. They were both part of the Charity Organization Society's social programme and grew out of its labors. *And year by year its tenement-house committee stands guard in the legislature, watchful of landlord attacks on the one hand and of any fresh symptom of public indifference on the other, well knowing that underlying more social mischief than all other causes together is bad housing.* "To prevent drunkenness," said the earliest legislative report on what ailed New York, way back in the middle of the last century, "give to every man a clean and comfortable home," and though it was laughed at then, it came much nearer the truth, in its simple philosophy, than the "great minds" whose remedy was to let things alone. Last spring there came to the meeting of the National Housing Association from half the States in the Union men and women to carry its message of work and victory with them to the farthest hamlets, for no longer are these fighters content to seek the foe in the slums of cities. Ignorance and apathy thrive in country lanes, as in city streets, and they make the slum in all days. The National Housing Association is the youngest child of the Charity Organization Society.

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The legacy of death and despair with which the dark-room tenements have cursed New York no man can measure. There are 10,000 deaths in the city every year from tuberculosis alone, and 40,000 dying slowly from the plague and spreading it among the rest of us. Five thousand little sufferers with misshapen, tortured limbs have it grafted upon their bones, for this is the one great cause that makes cripples of the children of the poor. The doctors tell us that a hundred thousand underfed, anæmic children are waiting their turn that is not slow in coming, and for them all there is but one help, light and air, which the dark tenement denies them. Yet even this record of slaughter does not measure the depths of the misery: when the father or the mother can no longer work, helpless poverty moves in and the tasks of the charity workers are hopelessly multiplied—hopelessly till it was discovered that consumption is not transmitted by heredity, but bred by an environment steeped in dirt and ignorance. We were long finding it out. More than a hundred years ago they jumped at the truth in the kingdom of Naples and stamped the disease out with fire and stringent laws. They burned the bedding and the houses of consumptives, and banished those who would not submit. The whole kingdom had become a hot-bed of tuberculosis to which

the stricken came from all parts of Europe as they flock to Colorado and New Mexico in our country and our day, until *vedi Napoli e poi mori*—"See Naples and die"—had become a proverb. People think nowadays that the saying refers to the beauty of the bay of Naples which makes a man content to die once he has seen it. So utterly was the plague stamped out that the world forgot the sinister sense of it.

Those despots knew nothing of germs and all the rest of the scientific lore; they just guessed and backed up their guess with force. Democracies walk with more wary feet. Nearly a century passed before we knew what they had so successfully imagined, and were ready for the fight. *The tubercle bacillus and the Charity Organization Society were born in the same year, born to a fight that was no longer hopeless. For it is with disease as with poverty; once you have made sure of the cause you have backing. Twenty years they have wrestled now, and an entire people has been aroused to take a hand in the fight, in which at last we are getting the upper grip.*

Multiply the mortality in New York by twenty and you have the record of the nation: 200,000 each year slain by this one foe, a million consumptives always with

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their faces set toward death; half of them easily saved, if taken in time. When once the disease has a firm hold they can be saved only from destroying others. Doctors alone were powerless; it was a campaign of education that was needed. The tuberculosis committee enlisted the printing-press, the newspapers, the post-office. The Christmas stamps of Denmark became bullets in the fight. Each one on the back of a letter asked questions, and the committee, and the Red Cross, were ready with the answers. "Don't spit, don't neglect a cold, don't sleep in stuffy rooms"—the "don't cards" went everywhere, printed in every tongue. In Little Italy they took the shape of pretty posters of Venetian canals with simple instructions printed on the border, and were hung in the rooms as pictures. Illustrated lectures were given in the schools; travelling exhibitions of the horrors of "lung blocks," of the simple ways of fighting the enemy with care and cleanliness, were started on their journeys through the land. Thousands flocked to them. "Tuberculosis revival meetings" were held in crowded halls. "Tuberculosis Sundays" enlisted the aid of the pulpits. In New York on a single Sunday more than two hundred sermons were preached by prearrangement on this topic. The committee fitted out an old ferry-boat as a day camp and showed that the sick

had other choice than to go far away to mountain or forest, or stay at home and die. They could stay, even in the tenements of New York, and live, given fresh air and wholesome food.

It was not only the citizen who needed education; half the time it was the city. In New York the Health Department was crippled by politics. It had led a valiant charge, but ran short of ammunition. The men who held the city's purse-strings were niggardly. Organized charity swung its forces toward its support. An investigation showed that of the more than 40,000 consumptives in the city whom the department had registered, half had got away and were drifting about, scattering the contagion unhindered. The infected houses they left had other tenants who did not know of their peril and took no precautions. Hospitals were discharging patients daily without inquiry into where they went, and without following them up. With only three thousand beds for consumptives in the city, thirteen thousand went in and out through the year. The endless chain of mischief and misery was in full operaton again.

With the facts in hand the tenement-house committee started a "budget campaign" and carried it through

with resistless energy. The city appropriated $263,500 for the Health Department's tuberculosis work. Instead of eight inspectors the department sent out a hundred and fifty. It borrowed a leaf from Tammany politics by organizing the city into districts, each with a "captain" in the person of a nurse directing the fight in that quarter. In the schools fresh-air classes were opened for the pale and "unresponsive" pupils. They were fed with hot meals at noon and with milk and bread in between, and the teacher found listlessness and stupidity giving way to life and interest. Tuberculosis clinics were opened in the crowded parts of the city and the country caught up the idea. In seventeen months one hundred and seventeen such special dispensaries were started in the United States, and more are added constantly. We are not out of the woods yet. Sanatoria are needed—many of them—for those who can be cured, the while charity cares for their loved ones at home and frees the patient's mind from worry; hospitals with forcible detention for the homeless wanderers who spread contagion abroad; more than a single preventorium for the hundred thousand pale and ill-fed ones who are listed as the consumptives of the next generation. But already the impact upon the death-rate in the urban population of New York State is discernible.

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In five years it should show plainly. ***Legislatures are aroused, prevention has become the national slogan in the struggle with the White Plague. The number of hospitals and sanatoria for tuberculosis has increased from*** 111 ***with*** 10,000 ***beds in*** 1895 ***to*** 422 ***with*** 26,000 ***beds in*** 1911. The State Charities Aid Association which is in the field to "make each local community look its own social work squarely in the face and get it to do what is needed," and has done it with such success that twenty-three out of fifty-seven counties in New York have taken steps to provide tuberculosis hospitals in the last two years, has raised the banner, "No uncared-for tuberculosis in 1915." *All through the land, from the Atlantic to the Pacific, resounds the crash and clamor of this battle. Organized charity is winning the biggest fight it has started yet.*

Fight, yes! But the *war* is wider than that. Consumption kills the man. There is that which would kill the state. It is not only underfeeding that makes the pale, anæmic children who fall an easy victim to tuberculosis and who cannot learn in school. It is well to cut windows in the dark rooms and to make playgrounds where the children can romp and grow into whole men and women. But if their hours out of school are spent at home, toiling till late at night at tasks

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far beyond their years, making the violets that blossom in my lady's hat at three cents a gross; cutting out embroidery edging at one cent an hour; making baby dresses at forty-two cents for a day of fourteen hours of unremitting labor—oh! I am not imagining these things. I am telling the story we all read, those of us who cared, in the photographs at the Child Welfare Show in my city—when they do this, where then is their play? And where will be, by and by, the citizenship we look for in free men of a free country? Free country! When the census tells us that the volume of child labor is increasing far more rapidly than the population; that as exploiters of tender childhood for our gain we are rushing headlong in the steps of Old-World nations who long since saw whither that course led and abandoned it for their own safety; when in Southern cotton mills children under ten are at work, "some of them so small that they can reach their work only by climbing up;" when Pennsylvania reports that in the coal-breakers the accidents to children exceed those to grown workers by 300 per cent.; Indiana that in her factories the ratio is 250 per cent.; and Michigan owns to 450 per cent. excess of injury and fatality against the child—with such things existing, was he far off the track who in anger exclaimed: "This may be child labor from one point of view; from another it is child murder!" And what other remedy is there than war to the death on such abuses?

Hence it is that organized charity, which sees in the exploitation of the child the ruin of the man and the endless perpetuation of its tasks, has thrown down the gauntlet to this foe and has roused the whole country to demand that "there shall be no child labor." The boy or girl who toils with a needle through the evening hours by the dim light of a smoky kerosene lamp, and in school falls behind his class because he cannot see what is written on the blackboard, does not need spectacles to be given him by private or public charity. That is the wrong prescription. He needs to be taken out of the tread-mill that is killing his sight with his spirit. You see how inquiry into the "causes" leads deeper and ever deeper down, and demands ever more searching remedies. Against the cruelty of a drunken father the protection of a strong society may avail; against such inhumanity as this the power of the whole community must be invoked. Nothing less will do it.

Seven years has the war against *child labor raged in the nation. Its irreducible demand is that no child*

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shall be permitted to work under fourteen; none at night or at dangerous trades, nor more than eight hours in the daytime, under sixteen. The call of bugles is in the air as I write this, and the tramp of many feet, little and big. They are marching to the celebration of the "sane and safe Fourth of July," that obtains at last in my city. But not until this fight has been won are we either sane in celebrating our freedom, or safe in fact; not until then are we on the road to real independence of the thraldom of toil that was meant to be the honorable badge of manhood, not the hideous destroyer of childhood. And while we are about it we mean to safeguard, too, the mothers of the race. There are few states in the Union to-day that have not given their assent to the principle, at least, of child-labor legislation; the practice will follow in them all, as the community conscience is aroused. New York has made a law that no person under twenty-one shall be employed in the night messenger service, since an investigation in twenty-seven cities disclosed the moral slough in which it steeped young boys. The bawdy-house, the gambling den, the disreputable hotel are among its best customers after the lights go out in quiet homes. The Supreme Court has intervened for the protection of woman. "Ten hours the maximum legal working day

for women in every State of the Union within ten years" is the confident claim of the National Consumers' League. Before that day we shall, I believe, be ready to *demand that all home work in tenements shall cease, at whatever cost of readjustment to the industries that now thrive upon this form of economic slavery.*

Toward these ends organized charity is working, but it no longer soothes itself with the belief that they are in fact ends; rather they are stages on the way. A human working day does not fill the measure of industrial justice. When we are told that in Allegheny County—that is, Pittsburg—526 workers were killed by industrial accidents in a single year, 258 of them married men with families, it no longer sounds like a threat to ask that the burden of such wholesale slaughter shall fall upon the business, not on the worker. Rather *it seems like the counsel of common-sense that it is both wiser and cheaper to do industrial justice than to foot the bill for the machinery of court and jails, and public and private relief that may soothe but cannot cure anything.* When the death-rate among the foundlings in the Randall's Island Hospital was, year after year, 100 per cent—they practically all died, in spite of Jersey cows and every care which medical knowledge could suggest—

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and the joint committee of the State Charities Aid Association and the Association for Improving the Condition of the Poor took them over and, by putting them out in families, reduced the mortality in the first year to one-half, in the second to less than a third, and at the end of eight years to eleven in a hundred, then they had found a perfect remedy for that misery, viz., to give the baby a mother instead of a nurse. So, when the nurses of the last-named society, working among tenement mothers with newborn children found that they lost 17 per cent. of the babies to whom they were called after they were born, while they saved all but 5 per cent when they took the mother in hand before her confinement, and that this held true right along, they had met and conquered a condition of fatality consequent upon ignorance with its logical corrective: proper instruction and care. *But when the statisticians show us two-thirds of a million unnecessary deaths in the nation, and find the causes in a poverty consequent upon intermittent employment, too long a working day and too low wages to keep the workers alive, then we are facing something which charity, in its simple sense of trying to relieve, cannot deal with. We are facing an industrial maladjustment which society itself must take in hand, if it will be not only just but safe.*

To this conviction their work has led the social workers of to-day: for, observe that organized charity has changed front entirely from the day when it considered poverty only in its economic and moral bearings on the man or the family. And here we meet again the "causes" of poverty for which men have sought in all days. They found them, as they thought, only to discover that there were yet others beyond their reach. "Improvidence and overwhelming misfortune" satisfied them in the long ago. Later on, the scientific tabulators counted up twenty-five or twenty-seven, I forget which, all real sources of misery as they knew only too well. It did seem as though, with such an array, we should be getting somewhere, but we were not. The bread-line was still there, in itself an ugly arraignment of something desperately wrong somewhere; for the midnight bread-line is made up of *hungry* men. The homelessness was still there. Improvidence explained some of it, intemperance some of it; all the rest of the "causes" each accounted for its share; none, nor all of them together, for it all. What if they were, in fact, symptoms—the very lack of character, of capacity, of efficiency, in the front rank?

That is the vision which social workers saw when six years ago they proposed a new definition of the problem of poverty. Stripped of all verbiage, they found *the*

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causes of the poverty in our cities to be four: ignorance, industrial inefficiency, exploitation of labor, and failure of government to attain the ends for which it existed, the welfare of the citizen. Poverty in their view was but evidence of a maladjustment of society itself, against which we strive in vain unless we enlist the very forces of the society which created it. The remedies then present themselves. Ignorance and industrial inefficiency demand changed methods of education. Manual and vocational training crowd forward at once. We are adopting them already, on the very showing that the great mass of our young who leave the school at fourteen to go to work get nowhere with the training they have received. They join the army of unskilled workers, and middle-age finds them fatally handicapped, "industrially inefficient." Look at the map and see what a host they are. A clear-sighted school-man marshalled them in line thus: Standing shoulder to shoulder, the high-school graduates of the country made a line across the State of California; the college men reached barely across the peninsula of the Golden State. But the public-school children who quit early from force of economic stress reached across the country from California to Maine, back again, and once more across mountain and plain as far east as Chicago. To half of the mischief the school holds the key.

Exploitation of labor! What is there that has not been exploited in our money-mad day? But first and last the worker is the sufferer. When we read of the swindling with false weights and measures, it is upon him the burden falls heaviest. When the packer puts a cent on the meat, the retailer sticks on five and an extra cent or two for selling in the small quantities where his biggest profits lie. While you who read this pay five dollars a ton for coal, he pays twelve or fourteen, buying it by the pail. Wherever he turns, the sea is full of sharks. He pays more rent in proportion than the man on Fifth Avenue. The pawnbroker with whom he establishes a credit, in the ineffectual struggle to make ends meet, charges him fifteen or eighteen dollars a year for the use of ten. That is what it comes to, with "hanging-up" charges, if he resorts to the pawn-shop weekly, as too many do. It was "to divorce the three golden balls from the three Furies" that the charity organizers established the Provident Loan Society which in seventeen years has increased its capital from a hundred thousand dollars to seven millions and a half, has loaned out seventy millions, and brought down the usurious rates of the pawnbroker. Waste and improvidence, yes! but the destruction of the poor is still their poverty. The saloon lies in wait for the man who lives from hand to mouth, the policy game

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robs him, corrupt politics exploit him in a dozen ways he counts as kindness. When we deny him a transfer on his way home from his work, we impose a tax of thirty dollars a year on a family whose entire income may not be much over six hundred and whose total expenditure for clothing in the year is less than three times thirty. Some one said that ours is yet "a half-savage society infused and fitfully illuminated with visions of social duty."

"But these things are inevitable." No, says the social worker: the whole environment in which the poor man is set in our cities is unfavorable to him; it favors, on the other hand, the accumulation of great wealth. He does not arraign the one against the other; he says simply that the heaping up of great fortunes carries with it the responsibility of not exploiting the poor.

Time was when we sat and grieved over the bad heredity that held men fast, forgetting that their real heredity as children of God flatly refutes such a doctrine. Then when we saw that the thief's child, growing up in a decent home, grew decent with it, we concluded that this dreaded heredity was, after all, the sum of all past environments and that, since we could fashion that of to-day, we could make heredity for the days to come, and

we took heart. But the environment proved too much for us. Now comes the charity worker, the social worker and says to us: "We will change the environment through the very forces that made it. Society has worked out crooked results. It was not its purpose; therefore, let us find the wrongs in government and correct the mischief at its source, so giving the real man his chance. The very defects in character, which now hopelessly oppose us, we shall be able to repair by strengthening the man, by lightening his burdens and brightening his outlook." *We may not abolish all poverty, for we cannot prevent unforeseen disaster; but undeserved poverty, the misfortune we can help, we shall really help that way and only that way. The individual we shall always have to relieve as best we can; and the better we understand, the better shall we be able to set him on his feet. The social end we shall all have to get under, to lift the environment that crushes the worker.* For it is the only way we can do it.

Let the worst of society's vices, the social evil itself, serve as an illustration. When, says Dr. Edward T. Devine, with whom I unreservedly agree—when employers pay their girls living wages, when their homes are made attractive enough, when prostitution is kept out of the

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tenements as the law says it shall be, when rational amusement is provided for the children of the poor, when men cease to tempt them with vile resorts for their own gain, and when we speak the truth plainly of this matter, deluding ourselves no longer with the vain hope that segregation and such measures will banish this evil—then prostitution will be reduced to so small a thing that we shall need to concern ourselves little about it.

This, then, is the case of organized charity in briefest outline, as it stands to me. It is easy now to see the place and significance of such signs of our times as City Planning, as Municipal Research, as Surveys of the Cities to seek and find the standard of living to the maintenance of which all social efforts must tend, if they are to work out enduring results; as the Rockefeller Institute for Medical Research that hunts the hook-worm and its fellows, and with them hunts much of poverty to its lair; the Sage Foundation, that great benefaction which gathers into its benevolent purpose all educational efforts seeking to harness the world's forces "for the improvement of social and living conditions"; schools of philanthropy and social settlements. The war on the housefly seems no more incongruous than the demand for a living wage. They are all parts of a whole that pursues the

same unselfish end: lightening the intolerable burdens of humanity which selfishness has imposed.

I suppose I shall be asked now if this is not all socialism. No, I should not even term it altruism. I should call it religion. And before you scoff at that definition, read the programme of social service which was "enthusiastically adopted" by the Baptist Church in convention at Philadelphia only the other day. Beginning with justice for all men and ending with "the abatement of poverty," it embraces under seventeen heads that include the abolition of child labor, the sweating system, and the overlong working day, the whole programme of human emancipation, point by point. These people were not crank socialists, it seems; they were practical Christians. Does the emphasis that is laid by the whole Christian Church upon social service nowadays, and the recognition by government after government of the principle of employer's liability, of the old-age pension, and the rest of the claims once held as Utopian tell us nothing? Massachusetts is preparing to fix a minimum wage for women and minors, and I took note recently of the editorial confession of a critic who wondered where all this would end: *"The final argument in this controversy is, of course, that when less*

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than living wages are paid, the number of paupers and criminals, with incidental burdens on the taxpayer, inevitably increases." Yes, that is the position of organized charity, exactly.

There are two kinds of socialism, it has been truly said, one of which we shall have to let in unless we want the other to break in. The one kind says, "What is mine is thine!"—that is service. The other meets us with the threat, "What is thine is mine!"—that is vengeance. We shall have to choose one of the two, and I think that is what we are doing. It has often seemed to me that the *function of present-day organized charity—and I mean the term to embrace all that we now call betterment work—is twofold: on the one hand it is, with its army of irresistible facts, helping turn the church from the barren discussion of dogmatic differences to face the real needs of the brother; on the other it is guiding the old threat into the safe and helpful ways of service, and giving us for a socialistic, a social programme. Nor is there need of fear that in the change the personal touch that counts for so much will be lost. The "scientific" charity is not cold; it is warm and human. If it were not so it would have no power to appeal to the religious impulse. It is "organized love," and it is effective: it does not by mischance hinder where it sought to help.*

Has organized charity really accomplished all this; or is it itself part of a great world change to which coming generations will point as the most pregnant in all human history, the coming of democracy into its birthright? Even so, is this modern St. George not in truth a slayer of dragons? And if we reject him as our champion, where shall we find another to enter the lists?