

THE SUBTLE PROBLEMS OF CHARITY.

PROBABLY there is no relation in life which our democracy is changing more rapidly than the charitable relation,—that relation which obtains between benefactor and beneficiary ; at the same time, there is no point of contact in our modern experience which reveals more clearly the lack of that equality which democracy implies. We have reached the moment when democracy has made such inroads upon this relationship that the complacency of the old-fashioned charitable man is gone forever ; while the very need and existence of charity deny us the consolation and freedom which democracy will at last give.

We find in ourselves the longing for a wider union than that of family or class, and we say that we have come to include all men in our hopes ; but we fail to realize that all men are hoping, and are part of the same movement of which we are a part. Many of the difficulties in philanthropy come from an unconscious division of the world into the philanthropists and those to be helped. It is an assumption of two classes, and against this class assumption our democratic training revolts as soon as we begin to act upon it.

The trouble is that the ethics of none of us are clearly defined, and we are continually obliged to act in circles of habit based upon convictions which we no longer hold. Thus, our estimate of the effect of environment and social conditions has doubtless shifted faster than our methods of administering charity have changed. Formerly when it was believed that poverty was synonymous with vice and laziness, and that the prosperous man was the righteous man, charity was administered harshly with a good conscience ; for the charitable agent really blamed the individual for his poverty, and the very fact of his own supe-

rior prosperity gave him a certain consciousness of superior morality. Since then we have learned to measure by other standards, and the money-earning capacity, while still rewarded out of all proportion to any other, is not respected as exclusively as it was ; and its possession is by no means assumed to imply the possession of the highest moral qualities. We have learned to judge men in general by their social virtues as well as by their business capacity, by their devotion to intellectual and disinterested aims, and by their public spirit, and we naturally resent being obliged to judge certain individuals solely upon the industrial side for no other reason than that they are poor. Our democratic instinct constantly takes alarm at this consciousness of two standards.

Of the various struggles which a decade of residence in a settlement implies, none have made a more definite impression on my mind than the incredibly painful difficulties which involve both giver and recipient when one person asks charitable aid of another.

An attempt is made in this paper to show what are some of the perplexities which harass the mind of the charity worker ; to trace them to ethical survivals which are held not only by the benefactor, but by the recipients of charity as well ; and to suggest wherein these very perplexities may possibly be prophetic.

It is easy to see that one of the root difficulties in the charitable relationship lies in the fact that the only families who apply for aid to the charitable agencies are those who have come to grief on the industrial side ; it may be through sickness, through loss of work, or for other guiltless and inevitable reasons, but the fact remains that they are industrially ailing, and must be bolstered and helped

into industrial health. The charity visitor, let us assume, is a young college woman, well-bred and open-minded. When she visits the family assigned to her, she is embarrassed to find herself obliged to lay all the stress of her teaching and advice upon the industrial virtues, and to treat the members of the family almost exclusively as factors in the industrial system. She insists that they must work and be self-supporting; that the most dangerous of all situations is idleness; that seeking one's own pleasure, while ignoring claims and responsibilities, is the most ignoble of actions. The members of her assigned family may have charms and virtues, — they may possibly be kind and affectionate and considerate of one another, generous to their friends; but it is her business to stick to the industrial side. As she daily holds up these standards, it often occurs to the mind of the sensitive visitor, whose conscience has been made tender by much talk of brotherhood and equality which she has heard at college, that she has no right to say these things; that she herself has never been self-supporting; that, whatever her virtues may be, they are not the industrial virtues; that her untrained hands are no more fitted to cope with actual conditions than are those of her broken-down family.

The grandmother of the charity visitor could have done the industrial preaching very well, because she did have the industrial virtues; if not skillful in weaving and spinning, she was yet mistress of other housewifely accomplishments. In a generation our experiences have changed — our views with them; while we still keep on in the old methods, which could be applied when our consciences were in line with them, but which are daily becoming more difficult as we divide up into people who work with their hands and those who do not; and the charity visitor, belonging to the latter class, is perplexed by recognitions and suggestions which the situation forces upon her. Our de-

mocracy has taught us to apply our moral teaching all around, and the moralist is rapidly becoming so sensitive that when his life does not exemplify his ethical convictions, he finds it difficult to preach.

Added to this is a consciousness in the mind of the visitor of a genuine misunderstanding of her motives by the recipients of her charity and by their neighbors. Let us take a neighborhood of poor people, and test their ethical standards by those of the charity visitor, who comes with the best desire in the world to help them out of their distresses. A most striking incongruity, at once apparent, is the difference between the emotional kindness with which relief is given by one poor neighbor to another poor neighbor, and the guarded care with which relief is given by a charity visitor to a charity recipient. The neighborhood mind is immediately confronted not only by the difference of method, but also by an absolute clashing of two ethical standards.

A very little familiarity with the poor districts of any city is sufficient to show how primitive and frontier-like are the neighborly relations. There is the greatest willingness to lend or borrow anything, and each resident of a given tenement house knows the most intimate family affairs of all the others. The fact that the economic condition of all alike is on a most precarious level makes the ready outflow of sympathy and material assistance the most natural thing in the world. There are numberless instances of heroic self-sacrifice quite unknown in the circles where greater economic advantages make that kind of intimate knowledge of one's neighbors impossible. An Irish family, in which the man has lost his place, and the woman is struggling to eke out the scanty savings by day work, will take in a widow and her five children who have been turned into the street, without a moment's reflection upon the physical discomforts involved. The most maligned landlady is usually

ready to lend a scuttleful of coal to a suffering tenant, or to share her supper. A woman for whom the writer had long tried in vain to find work failed to appear at the appointed time when a situation was found at last. Upon investigation it transpired that a neighbor further down the street was taken ill; that the children ran for the family friend, who went, of course; saying simply, when reasons for her failure to come to work were demanded, "It broke me heart to leave the place, but what could I do?"

Another woman, whose husband was sent up to the city prison for the maximum term, just three months before the birth of her child, having gradually sold her supply of household furniture, found herself penniless. She sought refuge with a friend whom she supposed to be living in three rooms in another part of the town. When she arrived, however, she discovered that her friend's husband had been out of work so long that they had been reduced to living in one room. The friend at once took her in, and the friend's husband was obliged to sleep upon a bench in the park every night for a week; which he did uncomplainingly, if not cheerfully. Fortunately it was summer, "and it only rained one night." The writer could not discover from the young mother that she had any special claim upon the "friend" beyond the fact that they had formerly worked together in the same factory. The husband she had never seen until the night of her arrival, when he at once went forth in search of a midwife who would consent to come upon his promise of future payment.

The evolutionists tell us that the instinct to pity, the impulse to aid his fellows, served man at a very early period as a rude rule of right and wrong. There is no doubt that this rude rule still holds among many people with whom charitable agencies are brought into contact, and that their ideas of right and wrong are quite honestly outraged by the

methods of these agencies. When they see the delay and caution with which relief is given, these do not appear to them conscientious scruples, but the cold and calculating action of the selfish man. This is not the aid that they are accustomed to receive from their neighbors, and they do not understand why the impulse which drives people to be good to the poor should be so severely supervised. They feel, remotely, that the charity visitor is moved by motives that are alien and unreal; they may be superior motives, but they are "ag'in' nature." They cannot comprehend why a person whose intellectual perceptions are stronger than his natural impulses should go into charity work at all. The only man they are accustomed to see whose intellectual perceptions are stronger than his tenderness of heart is the selfish and avaricious man, who is frankly "on the make." If the charity visitor is such a person, why does she pretend to like the poor? Why does she not go into business at once? We may say, of course, that it is a primitive view of life which thus confuses intellectuality and business ability, but it is a view quite honestly held by many poor people who are obliged to receive charity from time to time. In moments of indignation they have been known to say, "What do you want, anyway? If you have nothing to give us, why not let us alone, and stop your questionings and investigations?" This indignation, which is for the most part taciturn, and a certain kindly contempt for her abilities often puzzle the charity visitor. The latter may be explained by the standard of worldly success which the visited families hold. In the minds of the poor success does not ordinarily go with charity and kind-heartedness, but rather with the opposite qualities. The rich landlord is he who collects with sternness; who accepts no excuse, and will have his own. There are moments of irritation and of real bitterness against him, but there is admiration, because he is rich and successful. The

good-natured landlord, he who pities and spares his poverty-pressed tenants, is seldom rich. He often lives in the back of his house, which he has owned for a long time, perhaps has inherited; but he has been able to accumulate little. He commands the genuine love and devotion of many a poor soul, but he is treated with a certain lack of respect. In one sense he is a failure, so long have we all been accustomed to estimate success by material returns. The charity visitor, just because she is a person who concerns herself with the poor, receives a touch of this good-natured and kindly contempt, sometimes real affection, but little genuine respect. The poor are accustomed to help one another, and to respond according to their kindliness; but when it comes to worldly judgment, they are still in that stage where they use industrial success as the sole standard. In the case of the charity visitor, they are deprived of both standards; she has neither natural kindness nor dazzling riches; and they find it of course utterly impossible to judge of the motive of organized charity.

Doubtless we all find something distasteful in the juxtaposition of the two words "organized" and "charity." The idea of organizing an emotion is in itself repelling, even to those of us who feel most sorely the need of more order in altruistic effort and see the end to be desired. We say in defense that we are striving to turn this emotion into a motive: that pity is capricious, and not to be depended on; that we mean to give it the dignity of conscious duty. But at bottom we distrust a little a scheme which substitutes a theory of social conduct for the natural promptings of the heart, and we ourselves feel the complexity of the situation. The poor man who has fallen into distress, when he first asks aid, instinctively expects tenderness, consideration, and forgiveness. If it is the first time, it has taken him long to make up his mind to the step. He comes somewhat bruised and battered, and in-

stead of being met by warmth of heart and sympathy he is at once chilled by an investigation and an intimation that he ought to work. He does not see that he is being dealt with as a child of defective will is cared for by a stern parent. There have been no years of previous intercourse and established relation, as between parents and children. He feels only the postponement or refusal, which he considers harsh. He does not "live to thank his parents for it," as the disciplined child is reported to do, but cherishes a hardness of heart to his grave. The only really popular charity is that of visiting nurses, who carry about with them a professional training, which may easily be interpreted into sympathy and kindness, in their ministrations to obvious needs without investigation.

The state of mind which an investigation arouses on both sides is most unfortunate; but the perplexity and clashing of different standards, with the consequent misunderstandings, are not so bad as the moral deterioration which is almost sure to follow.

When the agent or visitor appears among the poor, and they discover that under certain conditions food and rent and medical aid are dispensed from some unknown source, every man, woman, and child is quick to learn what the conditions may be, and to follow them. Though in their eyes a glass of beer is quite right and proper when taken as any self-respecting man should take it; though they know that cleanliness is an expensive virtue which can be expected of few; though they realize that saving is well-nigh impossible when but a few cents can be laid by at a time; though their feeling for the church may be something quite elusive of definition and quite apart from daily living, — to the visitor they gravely laud temperance and cleanliness and thrift and religious observance. The deception doubtless arises from a wondering inability to understand the ethical ideals which can require such im-

possible virtues, combined with a tradition that charity visitors do require them, and from an innocent desire to please. It is easy to trace the development of the mental suggestions thus received.

The most serious effect upon the individual comes when dependence upon the charitable society is substituted for the natural outgoing of human love and sympathy, which, happily, we all possess in some degree. The spontaneous impulse to sit up all night with a neighbor's sick child is turned into righteous indignation against the district nurse because she goes home at six o'clock. Or the kindness which would have prompted a quick purchase of much needed medicine is transformed into a voluble scoring of the dispensary, because it gives prescriptions, and not drugs; and "who can get well on a piece of paper?"

If a poor woman knows that her neighbor next door has no shoes, she is quite willing to lend her own, that her neighbor may go decently to mass or to work; for she knows the smallest item about the scanty wardrobe, and cheerfully helps out. When the charity visitor comes in, all the neighbors are baffled as to what her circumstances may be. They know she does not need a new pair of shoes, and rather suspect that she has a dozen pairs at home; which indeed she sometimes has. They imagine untold stores which they may call upon, and her most generous gift is considered niggardly, compared with what she might do. She ought to get new shoes for the family all round; "she sees well enough that they need them." It is no more than the neighbor herself would do. The charity visitor has broken through the natural rule of giving, which, in a primitive society, is bounded only by the need of the recipient and the resources of the giver; and she gets herself into untold trouble when she is judged by the ethics of that primitive society.

The neighborhood understands the selfish rich people who stay in their own

part of the town, where all their associates have shoes and other things. Such people do not bother themselves about the poor; they are like the rich landlords of the neighborhood experience. But this lady visitor, who pretends to be good to the poor, and certainly does talk as though she were kind-hearted, what does she come for, if she does not intend to give them things which so plainly are needed? The visitor says, sometimes, that in holding her poor family so hard to a standard of thrift she is really breaking down a rule of higher living which they formerly possessed; that saving, which seems quite commendable in a comfortable part of the town, appears almost criminal in a poorer quarter, where the next-door neighbor needs food, even if the children of the family do not. She feels the sordidness of constantly being obliged to urge the industrial view of life. The benevolent individual of fifty years ago honestly believed that industry and self-denial in youth would result in comfortable possessions for old age. It was, indeed, the method he had practiced in his own youth, and by which he had probably obtained whatever fortune he possessed. He therefore reproved the poor family for indulging their children, urged them to work long hours, and was utterly untouched by many scruples which afflict the contemporary charity visitor. She says sometimes: "Why must I talk always on getting work and saving money, the things I know nothing about? If it were anything else I had to urge, I could do it; anything like Latin prose, which I had worried through myself, would not be so hard." But she finds it difficult to connect the experiences of her youth with the experiences of the visited family.

Because of this diversity in experience the visitor is continually surprised to find that the safest platitudes may be challenged. She refers quite naturally to the "horrors of the saloon," and discovers that the head of her visited family,

who knows the saloons very well, does not connect them with "horrors" at all. He remembers all the kindnesses he has received there, the free lunch and treating which go on, even when a man is out of work and not able to pay up; the poor fellows who are allowed to sit in their warmth when every other door is closed to them; the loan of five dollars he got there, when the charity visitor was miles away, and he was threatened with eviction. He may listen politely to her reference to horrors, but considers it only "temperance talk."

The same thing happens when she urges upon him a spirit of independence, and is perhaps foolish enough to say that "every American man can find work and is bound to support his family." She soon discovers that the workingman, in the city at least, is utterly dependent for the tenure of his position upon the good will of his foreman, upon the business prosperity of the firm, or the good health of the head of it; and that, once work is lost, it may take months to secure another place. There is no use in talking independence to a man when he is going to stand in a row, hat in hand, before an office desk, in the hope of getting a position. The visitor is shocked when she finds herself recommending to the head of her visited family, whom she has sent to a business friend of hers to find work, not to be too outspoken when he goes to the place, and not to tell that he has had no experience in that line unless he is asked. She has in fact come around to the view which has long been his.

The charity visitor may blame the women for lack of gentleness toward their children, for being hasty and rude to them, until she learns to reflect that the standard of breeding is not that of gentleness toward the children so much as the observance of certain conventions, such as the punctilious wearing of mourning garments after the death of a child. The standard of gentleness each mother has to work out largely by herself, as-

sisted only by the occasional shamefaced remark of a neighbor, that "they do better when you are not too hard on them;" but the wearing of mourning garments is sustained by the definitely expressed sentiment of every woman in the street. The mother would have to bear social blame, a certain social ostracism, if she failed to comply with that requirement. It is not comfortable to outrage the conventions of those among whom we live, and if our social life be a narrow one, it is still more difficult. The visitor may choke a little when she sees the lessened supply of food and the scanty clothing provided for the remaining children, in order that one may be conventionally mourned. But she does not talk so strongly against it as she would have done during her first month of experience with the family since bereaved.

The subject of clothes, indeed, perplexes the visitor constantly, and the result of her reflections may be summed up something in this wise: The girl who has a definite social standing, who has been to a fashionable school or to a college, whose family live in a house seen and known by all her friends and associates, can afford to be very simple or even shabby as to her clothes, if she likes. But the working girl, whose family lives in a tenement or moves from one small apartment to another, who has little social standing, and has to make her own place, knows full well how much habit and style of dress have to do with her position. Her income goes into her clothing out of all proportion to that which she spends upon other things. But if social advancement is her aim, it is the most sensible thing which she can do. She is judged largely by her clothes. Her house-furnishing with its pitiful little decorations, her scanty supply of books, are never seen by the people whose social opinions she most values. Her clothes are her background, and from them she is largely judged. It

is due to this fact that girls' clubs succeed best in the business part of a town, where "working girls" and "young ladies" meet upon an equal footing, and where the clothes superficially look very much alike. Bright and ambitious girls will come to these down-town clubs to eat lunch and rest at noon, to study all sorts of subjects and listen to lectures, when they might hesitate a long time about joining a club identified with their own neighborhood, where they would be judged not solely on their personal merits and the unconscious social standing afforded to good clothes, but by other surroundings which are not nearly up to these. For the same reason, girls' clubs are infinitely more difficult to organize in little towns and villages, where every one knows every one else, just how the front parlor is furnished, and the amount of mortgage there is upon the house. These facts get in the way of a clear and unbiased judgment; they impede the democratic relationship, and add to the self-consciousness of all concerned. Every one who has had to do with down-town girls' clubs has had the experience of going into the home of some bright, well-dressed girl, to discover it uncomfortable and perhaps wretched, and to find the girl afterwards carefully avoiding her, although she may not have been at home when the call was made, and the visitor may have carried herself with the utmost courtesy throughout. In some very successful down-town clubs the home address is not given at all, and only the "business address" is required. Have we worked out our democracy in regard to clothes farther than in regard to anything else?

The charity visitor has been rightly brought up to consider it vulgar to spend much money upon clothes, to care so much for "appearances." She realizes dimly that the care for personal decoration over that for one's home or habitat is in some way primitive and undeveloped; but she is silenced by its obvious

need. She also catches a hint of the fact that the disproportionate expenditure of the poor in the matter of clothes is largely due to the exclusiveness of the rich, who hide from them the interior of their houses and their more subtle pleasures, while of necessity exhibiting their street clothes and their street manners. Every one who goes shopping at the same time with the richest woman in town may see her clothes, but only those invited to her receptions see the Corot on her walls or the bindings in her library. The poor naturally try to bridge the difference by reproducing the street clothes which they have seen; they therefore imitate, sometimes in more showy and often in more trying colors, in cheap and flimsy material, in poor shoes and flippant hats, the extreme fashion of the well-to-do. They are striving to conform to a common standard which their democratic training presupposes belongs to us all. The charity visitor may regret that the Italian peasant woman has laid aside her picturesque kerchief, and substituted a cheap street hat. But it is easy to recognize the first attempt toward democratic expression.

The charity visitor is still more perplexed when she comes to consider such problems as those of early marriage and child labor; for she cannot deal with them according to economic theories, or according to the conventions which have regulated her own life. She finds both of these fairly upset by her intimate knowledge of the situation, and her sympathy for those into whose lives she has gained a curious insight. She discovers how incorrigibly bourgeois her standards have been, and it takes but a little time to reach the conclusion that she cannot insist so strenuously upon the conventions of her own class, which fail to fit the bigger, more emotional, and freer lives of working people. The charity visitor holds well-grounded views upon the imprudence of early marriages; quite naturally, because she comes from a family and

circle of professional and business people. A professional man is scarcely equipped and started in his profession before he is thirty; a business man, if he is on the road to success, is much nearer prosperity at thirty-five than at twenty-five, and it is therefore wise for these men not to marry in the twenties. But this does not apply to the workingman. In many trades he is laid upon the shelf at thirty-five, and in nearly all trades he receives the largest wages of his life between twenty and thirty. If the young workingman has all his wages too long to himself, he will probably establish habits of personal comfort which he cannot keep up when he has to divide with a family, — habits which, perhaps, he can never overcome.

The sense of prudence, the necessity for saving, can never come to a primitive, emotional man with the force of a conviction, but the necessity of providing for his children is a powerful incentive. He naturally regards his children as his savings-bank; he expects them to care for him when he gets old, and in some trades old age comes very early. A Jewish tailor was quite lately sent to the Cook County poorhouse, paralyzed beyond recovery at the age of thirty-five. Had his little boy of nine been a few years older, the father might have been spared this sorrow of public charity. He was, in fact, better able to support a family when he was twenty than when he was thirty-five, for his wages had steadily become less as the years went on. Another tailor whom I know, a Socialist, always speaks of saving as a bourgeois virtue, one quite impossible to the genuine workingman. He supports a family, consisting of himself, a wife and three children, and his parents, on eight dollars a week. He insists that it would be criminal not to expend every penny of this amount upon food and shelter, and he expects his children later to take care of him.

This economic pressure also accounts

for the tendency to put children to work over-young, and thus cripple their chances for individual development and usefulness, and with the avaricious parent it often leads to exploitation. "I have fed her for fourteen year; now she can help me pay my mortgage," is not an unusual reply, when a hard-working father is expostulated with because he would take his bright daughter out of school and put her into a factory. It has long been a common error for the charity visitor, who is strongly urging her family toward self-support, to suggest, or at least connive, that the children be put to work early, although she has not the excuse that the parents have. It is so easy, after one has been taking the industrial view for a long time, to forget the larger and more social claim; to urge that the boy go to work and support his parents, who are receiving charitable aid. The visitor does not realize what a cruel advantage the person who distributes charity has, when she gives advice. The manager in a huge mercantile establishment employing many children was able to show, during a child-labor investigation, that the only children under fourteen years of age in his employ were protégés, urged upon him by philanthropic ladies, who were not only acquaintances of his, but valued patrons of the establishment. It is not that the charity visitor of an earlier day was less wise than other people, but she fixed her mind so long upon the industrial lameness of her family that she was eager to seize any crutch, however weak, which might enable them to get on. She failed to see that the boy who attempts prematurely to support his widowed mother may lower wages, add an illiterate member to the community, and arrest the development of a capable workingman. Just as she has failed to see that the rules which obtain in regard to the age of marriage in her own family may not apply to the workingman, so also she fails to understand that the present conditions of em-

ployment surrounding a factory child are totally unlike those which obtained during the energetic youth of her father. Is it too much to hope that the insight which the contemporary visitor is gaining may save the administration of charity from certain reproaches which it has well deserved?

This never ending question of the means of subsistence not only oppresses the child who is prematurely put to work, but almost crushes a sensitive child through his affectionate sympathy. The writer knows a little Italian lad of six, to whom the problems of food, clothing, and shelter have become so immediate and pressing that, although an imaginative child, he is unable to see life from any other standpoint. In his mind the goblin or bugaboo of the more fortunate child has come to be the need of coal, which caused his father hysterical and demonstrative grief when it carried off his mother's inherited linen, the mosaic of St. Joseph, and, worst of all, his own rubber-boots. He once came to a party at Hull House, and was interested in nothing save a gas-stove in the kitchen. He became excited over the discovery that fire could be produced without fuel. "I will tell my father of this stove. You buy no coal; you need only a match. Anybody will give you a match." He was taken to visit at a country house, and at once inquired how much rent was paid for it. On being told carelessly by his hostess that they paid no rent for that house, he came back quite wild with interest that the problem was solved. "Me and my father will go to the country. You get a big house, all warm, without rent." Nothing else in the country interested him but the subject of rent, and he talked of that with an exclusiveness worthy of a single-taxer.

The struggle for existence, which is so much harsher among people near the edge of pauperism, sometimes leaves ugly marks on character, and the charity visitor finds the indirect results most

mystifying. Parents who work hard and anticipate an old age when they can no longer earn, take care that their children shall expect to divide their wages with them from the very first. Such a parent, when successful, seizes the immature nervous system of the child and hypnotizes it, so to speak, into a habit of obedience, that the nerves and will may not depart from this control when the child is older. The charity visitor, whose family relation is lifted quite out of this, does not in the least understand the industrial foundation in this family despotism.

The head of a kindergarten training class once addressed a club of working-women, and spoke of the despotism which is often established over little children. She said that the so-called determination to break a child's will many times arose from a lust of dominion, and she urged the ideal relationship founded upon love and confidence. But many of the women were puzzled. One of them remarked to the writer, as she came out of the club-room, "If you did not keep control over them from the time they were little, you would never get their wages when they were grown up." Another one said, "Ah, of course, she [meaning the speaker] does n't have to depend upon her children's wages. She can afford to be lax with them, because, even if they don't give money to her, she can get along without it."

There are an impressive number of children who uncomplainingly hand over their weekly wages to their parents, sometimes receiving back ten cents or a quarter for spending-money, but quite as often nothing at all; and the writer knows one daughter of twenty-five who for six years has received two cents a week from the constantly falling wages which she earns in a large factory. Is it habit or virtue which holds her steady in this course? If love and tenderness had been substituted for parental despotism, would the mother have had enough affection, enough power of expression, to hold her

daughter's sense of money obligation through all these years? This young woman, who spends her paltry two cents on chewing-gum, and goes plainly clad in clothes of her mother's choosing, while many of her friends spend their entire wages on clothes which factory girls love so well, must be held by some powerful force.

It is these subtle and elusive problems which, after all, the charity visitor finds most harassing. The head of a family she is visiting is a man who has become blacklisted in a strike. He is not a very good workman, and this, added to his reputation as an agitator, keeps him out of work for a long time. The fatal result of being long out of work follows. He becomes less and less eager for it, and "gets a job" less and less frequently. In order to keep up his self-respect, and still more to keep his wife's respect for him, he yields to the little self-deception that this prolonged idleness is due to his having been blacklisted, and he gradually becomes a martyr. Deep down in his heart, perhaps — But who knows what may be deep down in his heart? Whatever may be in his wife's, she does not show for an instant that she thinks he has grown lazy, and accustomed to see her earn, by sewing and cleaning, most of the scanty income for the family. The charity visitor does see this, and she also sees that the other men who were in the strike have gone back to work. She further knows, by inquiry and a little experience, that the man is not skillful. She cannot, however, call him lazy and good-for-nothing, and denounce him as worthless, because of certain intellectual conceptions at which she has arrived. She sees other workmen come to him for shrewd advice; she knows that he spends many more hours in the public library, reading good books, than the average workman has time to do. He has formed no bad habits, and has yielded only to those subtle temptations toward a life of leisure which come to the

intellectual man. He lacks the qualifications which would induce his union to engage him as a secretary or an organizer, but he is a constant speaker at workmen's meetings, and takes a high moral attitude to the questions discussed there. He contributes a kind of intellectuality to his friends, and he has undoubted social value. The neighborhood women confide to the charity visitor their sympathy with his wife, because she has to work so hard, and because her husband does not "provide." Their remarks are sharpened by a certain resentment toward the superiority of the husband's education and gentle manners.

The charity visitor is ashamed to take this narrow point of view, for she knows that it is not altogether fair. She is reminded of a college friend of hers, who told her that she was not going to allow her literary husband to write unworthy pot-boilers, for the sake of earning a living. "I insist that we shall live within my own income; that he shall not publish until he is ready, and can give his genuine message." The charity visitor recalls what she has heard of another acquaintance, who urged her husband to decline a lucrative position as a railroad attorney, because she wished him to be free to take municipal positions and handle public questions without the inevitable suspicion which attaches itself in a corrupt city to a corporation attorney. The action of these two women had seemed noble to her, but they merely lived on lesser incomes. In the case of the workingman's wife, she faced living on no income at all, or on the precarious income which she might be able to get together. She sees that this third woman has made the greatest sacrifice, and she is utterly unwilling to condemn her while praising the friends of her own social position. She realizes, of course, that the situation is changed, by the fact that the third family need charity, while the other two do not; but, after all, they have not asked for it, and their

plight was only discovered through an accident to one of the children. The charity visitor has been taught that her mission is to preserve the finest traits to be found in her visited family, and she shrinks from the thought of convincing the wife that her husband is worthless, and she suspects that she might turn all this beautiful devotion into complaining drudgery. To be sure, she could give up visiting the family altogether, but she has become much interested in the progress of the crippled child, who eagerly anticipates her visits, and she also suspects that she will never know many finer women than the mother. She is unwilling, therefore, to give up the friendship, and goes on, bearing her perplexities as best she may.

The first impulse of our charity visitor is to be somewhat severe with her shiftless family for spending money on pleasures and indulging their children out of all proportion to their means. The poor family which receives beans and coal from the county, and pays for a bicycle on the installment plan, is not unknown to any of us. But as the growth of juvenile crime becomes gradually understood, and as the danger of giving no legitimate and organized pleasure to the child becomes clearer, we remember that primitive man had games long before he cared for a house or for regular meals. There are certain boys in many city neighborhoods who form themselves into little gangs with leaders somewhat more intrepid than the rest. Their favorite performance is to break into an untenanted house, to knock off the faucets and cut the lead pipe, which they sell to the nearest junk dealer. With the money thus procured they buy beer, which they drink in little freebooters' groups sitting in an alley. From beginning to end they have the excitement of knowing that they may be seen and caught by the "coppers," and at times they are quite breathless with suspense. In motive and execution it is not the least

unlike the practice of country boys who go forth in squads to set traps for rabbits or to round up a coon. It is characterized by a pure spirit of adventure, and the vicious training really begins when they are arrested, or when an older boy undertakes to guide them into further excitements. From the very beginning the most enticing and exciting experiences which they have seen have been connected with crime. The policeman embodies all the majesty of successful law and established government in his brass buttons and dazzlingly equipped patrol wagon. The boy who has been arrested comes back more or less a hero, with a tale to tell of the interior recesses of the mysterious police station. The earliest public excitement the child remembers is divided between the rattling fire-engines, "the time there was a fire in the next block," and the patrol wagon "the time the drunkest lady in our street was arrested." In the first year of their settlement the Hull House residents took fifty kindergarten children to Lincoln Park, only to be grieved by their apathetic interest in trees and flowers. On the return an omnibusful of tired and sleepy children were galvanized into sudden life because a patrol wagon rattled by. Eager little heads popped out of the windows full of questioning. "Was it a man or a woman?" "How many policemen inside?" and eager little tongues began to tell experiences of arrests which baby eyes had witnessed.

The excitement of a chase, the chances of competition, and the love of a fight are all centred in the outward display of crime. The parent who receives charitable aid, and yet provides pleasures for his child and is willing to indulge him in his play, is blindly doing one of the wisest things possible; and no one is more eager for playgrounds and vacation schools than the charity visitor whose experience has brought her to this point of view.

The charity visitor has her own ideas

concerning the administration of justice. To her mind, the courts can do no wrong. To be sure she has never come in contact with them, and she is shocked as she gradually discovers that the courts are used for justice or revenge exactly according to the ethical development of the plaintiff. Almost the only court which the very poor use, certainly the only one to which they voluntarily appeal, is the police court; and they hasten to that often, not in order to secure justice, but for the much more primitive desire for revenge. The penalties for swearing out a warrant if the arrested person fails to be proved guilty are so inadequate that they are practically never enforced; hence there is no restraint to the impulse against fulfilling the threats of "I'll have you arrested," and "I'll take the law to you," which are such quick and common retorts in neighborhood quarrels.

An old lady takes care of her five grandchildren, three of them headstrong boys with whom she has no end of trouble. Her only sources of revenue are the precarious earnings of the two older boys and the rent of two thirds of a house, which she owns and partly occupies. She is an affectionate and devoted grandmother, but she balances her over-indulgence by administering an occasional good scolding to her children and her tenants. One day she met one of her former tenants upon the street, a well-dressed, prosperous young matron, who had left her house owing her ten dollars for rent. The good clothes of the delinquent tenant offered a sharp contrast to the shabby attire of the landlady. She asked for her back rent gently enough at first, but the conversation fast grew acrid and stormy. The tenant refused point blank to pay up, and that evening, at nine o'clock, after the defeated landlady had told the tale to her sympathizing family, and they were already in bed, an officer came with a warrant to arrest the head of the house for disorderly con-

duct and to carry her off to the nearest police station. Fortunately, the good Irish heart of the officer was touched by the piteous plight of the old lady of seventy-eight, and he contented himself with her promise to appear before the police justice the next morning at ten o'clock. She came to Hull House early in the morning in a pathetic and bewildered state of mind, that she who had avoided a police court all her life, and had held it up as an awful warning to her grandsons, should now be brought there herself because she had tried to collect the rent justly due her. She went to the police court accompanied by two of her Hull House friends. During the earlier stages of the trial they kept in the background, and were chagrined to find that the old lady appeared very badly. The sight of her triumphant and prosperous tenant brought forth a volley of shrill invective. The tenant was filled with reasonable excuses and surrounded by several witnesses. She had meant to pay up as soon as her husband received his month's wages, and had repeatedly told the old lady so. She was attacked on the street in the presence of strangers, and her character brought into question. The prosperous plaintiff made so good an impression that the judge was about to dismiss the case with a stern reprimand to the landlady for losing her temper and making a scene in the streets, without any further investigation as to her character or claims. One of her Hull House friends was prompted by her long acquaintance with the defendant to make an appeal so eloquent that the judge grew chivalric, and finally apologized to the old lady for the annoyance caused her; and the light-minded although kind-hearted tenant, touched in turn by his example, borrowed ten dollars on the spot from one of the swell witnesses whom she had brought, and paid her back rent. The desire to administer justice in the case apparently never occurred to anybody involved. It was a question of bad

manners and shrewish retort, eloquent speaking and kind-hearted response, from beginning to end. The desire for revenge was mollified, if not gratified, by the arrest, and the complainant softened. It would be easy to instance dozens of similar cases.

The greatest difficulty is experienced when the two standards come sharply together, and when an attempt is made at understanding and explanation. The difficulty of defining one's own ethical standpoint is at times insurmountable. A woman who had bought and sold school-books stolen from the school fund, books plainly marked with a red stamp, came to Hull House one morning in great distress because she had been arrested, and begged a resident "to speak to the judge." She gave as a reason the fact that the House had known her for six years, and had once been very good to her when her little girl was buried. The resident more than suspected that her visitor knew the schoolbooks were stolen, when buying them, and any attempt to talk upon that subject was evidently considered very rude. The visitor wished to avoid a trial, and manifestly saw no reason why the House should not help her. The alderman was out of town, so she could not go to him. After a long conversation the visitor entirely failed to get another point of view, and went away grieved and disappointed at a refusal, thinking the resident simply disobliging, — wondering, no doubt, why such a mean woman had once been good to her; leaving the resident, on the other hand, utterly baffled, and in the state of mind she should have been in had she brutally insisted that a little child should lift weights too heavy for its undeveloped muscles.

Such a situation brings out the impossibility of substituting a higher ethical standard for a lower one without the intermediate stages of growth; but it is not as painful as that illustrated by the following example, where the highest ethical standard yet attained by the charity

recipients is broken down, and the substituted one is not in the least understood: —

A certain charity visitor is peculiarly appealed to by the weakness and pathos of forlorn old age. She is responsible for the well-being of perhaps a dozen old women, to whom she sustains a sincere and simple and almost filial relation. Some of them learn to take her benefactions quite as if they came from their own relatives, grumbling at all she does, and scolding her with a family freedom. One of these poor old women was injured in a fire years ago. She has but the fragment of a hand left, and is grievously crippled in her feet. Through years of pain she had become addicted to opium, and when she first came under the residents' care was held from the poorhouse only by the awful thought that she would there perish without her drug. Five years of tender care have done wonders for her. She lives in two neat little rooms, where with a thumb and two fingers she makes innumerable quilts, which she sells and gives away with the greatest delight. Her opium is regulated to a set amount taken each day, and she has been drawn away from much drinking. She is a voracious reader, and has her head full of strange tales made up from books and her own imagination. At one time it seemed impossible to do anything for her in Chicago, and she was kept for two years in a suburb where the family of the charity visitor lived, and where she was nursed through several hazardous illnesses. She now lives a better life than she did, but she is still far from being a model old woman. Her neighbors are constantly shocked by the fact that she is supported and comforted by "a charity lady," while at the same time she occasionally "rushes the growler," scolding at the boys lest they jar her in her tottering walk. The care of her has broken through even that second standard, which the neighborhood had learned to recognize as the standard of

charitable societies, that only the "worthy poor" are to be helped; that temperance and thrift are the virtues which receive the plums of benevolence. The old lady herself is conscious of this criticism. Indeed, irate neighbors tell her to her face that she does not in the least deserve what she gets. In order to disarm them, and at the same time to explain what would otherwise seem loving-kindness so colossal as to be abnormal, she tells them that during her sojourn in the suburb she discovered an awful family secret, a horrible scandal connected with the long-suffering charity visitor; that it is in order to prevent the divulgence of this that the ministrations are continued. Some of her perplexed neighbors accept this explanation as simple and offering a solution of a vexed problem. Doubtless many of them have a glimpse of the real state of affairs, of the love and patience which minister to need irrespective of worth. But the standard is too high for most of them, and it sometimes seems unfortunate to break down the second standard, which holds that people who "rush the growler" are not worthy of charity, and that there is a certain justice attained when they go to the poor-house. It is doubtless dangerous to break down this sense of justice, unless the higher motive is made clear.

Just when our affection becomes large and real enough to care for the unworthy among the poor as we would care for the unworthy among our own kin, is a perplexing question. To say that it should never be so is a comment upon our democratic relations to them which few of us would be willing to make.

Of what use is all this striving and perplexity? Has the experience any value? It is obviously genuine, for it induces an occasional charity visitor to live in a tenement house as simply as the other tenants do. It drives others to give up visiting the poor altogether, because, they claim, the situation is untenable unless the individual becomes a member of a sister-

hood which requires, as some of the Roman Catholic sisterhoods do, that the member first take the vows of obedience and poverty, so that she can have nothing to give save as it is first given to her, and she is not thus harassed by a constant attempt at adjustment. Both the tenement house resident and the sister assume to have put themselves upon the industrial level of their neighbors. But the young charity visitor who goes from a family living upon a most precarious industrial level to her own home in a prosperous part of the city, if she is sensitive at all, is never free from perplexities which our growing democracy forces upon her.

We sometimes say that our charity is too scientific, but we should doubtless be much more correct in our estimate if we said that it is not scientific enough. We dislike the entire arrangement of cards alphabetically classified according to streets and names of families, with the unrelated and meaningless details attached to them. Our feeling of revolt is, probably, not unlike that which afflicted the students of botany and geology in the early part of this century, when flowers were tabulated in alphabetical order, when geology was taught by colored charts and thin books. No doubt the students, wearied to death, many times said that it was all too scientific, and were much perplexed and worried when they found traces of structure and physiology which their so-called scientific principles were totally unable to account for. But all this happened before science had become evolutionary and scientific at all, — before it had a principle of life from within. The very indications and discoveries which formerly perplexed, later illumined, and made the study absorbing and vital. The dry-as-dust student, who formerly excelled, is now replaced by the man who possesses insight as well as accuracy, — who holds his mind open to receive every suggestion which growth implies. He can, how-

ever, no longer use as material the dried plants of the herbariums, but is forced to go to the spots in which plants are growing. Collecting data in sociology may mean sorrow and perplexity and a pull upon one's sympathies, just as truly as collecting data in regard to the flora of the equatorial regions means heat and scratches and the test of one's endurance. Human motives have been so long a matter of dogmatism that to act upon the assumption that they are the result of growth, and to study their status with an open mind and a scientific conscience, seems well-nigh impossible to us. A man who would hesitate to pronounce an opinion upon the stones lying by the wayside because he has a suspicion that they are "geological specimens," and his veneration for science is such that he would not venture to state to which period they belonged, will, without a moment's hesitation, dogmatize about the delicate problems of human conduct, and will assert that one man is a scoundrel and another an honorable gentleman, without in the least considering the ethical epochs to which the two belong. He disregards the temptations and environment to which they have been subjected, and requires the same human development of an Italian peasant and a New England scholar.

Is this again a mark of our democracy or of our lack of science? We are singularly slow to apply the evolutionary principle to human affairs in general, although it is fast being applied to the education of children. We are at last learning to follow the development of the child; to expect certain traits under certain conditions; to adapt methods and matter to his growing mind. No "advanced educator" can allow himself to be so absorbed in the question of what a child ought to be as to exclude the discovery of what he is. But, in our charitable efforts, we think much more of what a man ought to be than of what he is or of what he may become; and we ruthlessly force our conventions and

standards upon him, with a sternness which we would consider stupid, indeed, did an educator use it in forcing his mature intellectual convictions upon an undeveloped mind.

Let us take the example of a timid child, who cries when he is put to bed, because he is afraid of the dark. The "soft-hearted" parent stays with him simply because he is sorry for him and wants to comfort him. The scientifically trained parent stays with him because he realizes that the child is passing through a phase of race development, in which his imagination has the best of him. It is impossible to reason him out of demonology, because his logical faculties are not developed. After all, these two parents, wide apart in point of view, act much the same, and very differently from the pseudo-scientific parent, who acts from dogmatic conviction and is sure he is right. He talks of developing his child's self-respect and good sense, and leaves him to cry himself to sleep, demanding powers of self-control and development which the child does not possess. There is no doubt that our development of charity methods has reached this pseudo-scientific and stilted stage. We have learned to condemn unthinking, ill-regulated kind-heartedness, and we take great pride in mere repression, much as the stern parent tells the visitor below how admirably he is rearing the child who is hysterically crying upstairs, and laying the foundation for future nervous disorders. The pseudo-scientific spirit, or rather the undeveloped stage of our philanthropy, is, perhaps, most clearly revealed in this tendency to lay stress on negative action. "Don't give," "don't break down self-respect," we are constantly told. We distrust the human impulse, and in its stead substitute dogmatic rules for conduct. In spite of the proof that the philanthropic Lord Shaftesbury secured the passage of English factory laws, that the charitable Octavia Hill has brought about the reform of the London

tenement houses, and of much similar concurrent testimony, we do not yet really believe that pity and sympathy, even, in point of fact quite as often precede the effort toward social amelioration as does the acceptance of a social dogma; we forget that the accumulation of knowledge and the holding of convictions must finally result in the application of that knowledge and those convictions to life itself, and that the course which begins by activity, and an appeal to the sympathies so severe that all the knowledge in the possession of the visitor is continually applied, has reasonably a greater chance for an ultimate comprehension.

For most of the years during a decade of residence in a settlement, my mind was sore and depressed over the difficulties of the charitable relationship. The incessant clashing of ethical standards, which had been honestly gained from widely varying industrial experience, — the misunderstandings inevitable between people whose conventions and mode of life had been so totally unlike, — made it seem reasonable to say that nothing could be done until industrial conditions were made absolutely democratic. The position of a settlement, which attempts at one and the same time to declare its belief in this eventual, industrial democracy, and to labor toward that end, to maintain a standard of living, and to deal humanely and simply with those in actual want, often seems utterly untenable and preposterous. Recently, however, there has come to my mind the suggestion of a principle, that while the painful condition of administering charity is the inevitable discomfort of a transition into a more democratic relation, the perplexing experiences of the actual administration have a genuine value of their own. The economist who treats the individual cases as mere data, and the social reformer who labors to make such cases impossible, solely because of the appeal to his rea-

son, may have to share these perplexities before they feel themselves within the grasp of a principle of growth, working outward from within; before they can gain the exhilaration and uplift which come when the individual sympathy and intelligence are caught into the forward, intuitive movement of the mass. This general movement is not without its intellectual aspects, but it is seldom apprehended by the intellect alone. The social reformers who avoid the charitable relationship with any of their fellow men take a certain outside attitude toward this movement. They may analyze it and formulate it; they may be most valuable and necessary, but they are not essentially within it. The mass of men seldom move together without an emotional incentive, and the doctrinaire, in his effort to keep his mind free from the emotional quality, inevitably stands aside. He avoids the perplexity, and at the same time loses the vitality.

The Hebrew prophet made three requirements from those who would join the great forward-moving procession led by Jehovah. "To love mercy," and at the same time "to do justly," is the difficult task. To fulfill the first requirement alone is to fall into the error of indiscriminate giving, with all its disastrous results; to fulfill the second exclusively is to obtain the stern policy of withholding, and it results in such a dreary lack of sympathy and understanding that the establishment of justice is impossible. It may be that the combination of the two can never be attained save as we fulfill still the third requirement, "to walk humbly with God," which may mean to walk for many dreary miles beside the lowliest of his creatures, not even in peace of mind, that the companionship of the humble is popularly supposed to give, but rather with the pangs and misgivings to which the poor human understanding is subjected whenever it attempts to comprehend the meaning of life.

Jane Addams.

THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF A REVOLUTIONIST.

SIBERIA.

I.

IN the middle of May, 1862, a few weeks before our promotion, I was told one day to make up the final list of the regiments which each of us intended to join. We had the choice of all the regiments of the Guard, which we could enter with the first officer's grade, and of the army with the third grade of lieutenant. I took a list of our form and went the rounds of my comrades. Every one knew well the regiment he was going to join, most of them already wearing in the garden the officer's cap of that regiment.

"Her Majesty's Cuirassiers," "The Body Guard Preobrazhénsky," "The Horse Guards," were the replies which I inscribed.

"But you, Kropótkin? The artillery? The Cossacks?" I was asked on all sides. I could not stand these questions, and at last, asking a comrade to complete the list, I went to my room to think once more over my final decision.

That I should not enter a regiment of the Guard, and give my life to parades and court balls, I had settled long ago. My dream was to enter the university, — to study, to live the student's life. That meant, of course, to break entirely with my father, whose ambitions were quite different, and to rely for my living upon what I might earn by means of lessons. Thousands of Russian students live in that way, and such a life did not frighten me in the least. In a few weeks I should have to leave the school, to don my own clothes, to have my own lodging, and I saw no possibility of providing even the little money which would be required for the most modest start. Then, failing the university, I had often thought lately of enter-

ing the artillery academy. That would free me for two years from the drudgery of military service, and, besides the military sciences, I could study mathematics and physics. But, with the wind of reaction that was blowing, the officers in the academies had been treated like schoolboys; a severe discipline was imposed upon them, and in two cases they had revolted and left in a body.

My thoughts went more and more toward Siberia. The Amúr region had recently been annexed by Russia; I had read all about that Mississippi of the East, the mountains it pierces, the sub-tropical vegetation of its tributary, the Usurí, and my thoughts went further, — to the tropical regions which Humboldt had described, and to the great generalizations of Ritter, which I delighted to read. Besides, I reasoned, there is in Siberia an immense field for the application of the great reforms which have been made or are coming: the workers must be few there, and I shall find a field of action to my tastes. The worst was that I should have to separate from my brother Alexander; but he had been compelled to leave the University of Moscow after the last disorders, and in a year or two, I guessed (and guessed rightly), in one way or another we should be together. There remained only the choice of the regiment in the Amúr region. The Usurí attracted me most; but, alas, there was on the Usurí only one regiment, of infantry Cossacks. A Cossack not on horseback, — that was too bad for the boy that I still was, and I settled upon "the mounted Cossacks of the Amúr."

This I wrote on the list, to the great consternation of all my comrades. "It is so far," they said, while my friend Daúroff, seizing the Officers' Handbook,