

Books in Our Alcove

The Abundant Life

THE GOAL OF SOCIAL WORK, by Members of the Massachusetts Conference of Social Work, Swampscott, 1925, edited by Richard C. Cabot. 234 pp. Houghton Mifflin Company. Price \$2.50 postpaid of *The Survey*.

DOCTORS seek health, policemen seek order, manufacturers aim to supply the world's material needs. But what do social workers aim at?" This was the challenge with which Dr. Cabot, as president, opened the meeting of the Massachusetts Conference of Social Work at Swampscott in November, 1925.

The challenge was accepted and answered—answered magnificently. In a series of papers, remarkable for their spiritual insight and for the depth of their religious feeling, thirteen men and women there set forth the faith by which they work. These papers have now been published under the title, *The Goal of Social Work*. Dr. Cabot as editor of the symposium, has written the preface and the concluding chapter, this last containing a summary of the proceedings and his reflections upon the discussion.

The contributors to the book are old friends to those who are familiar with the literature of social work. They approach the subject from four directions, each speaker starting from the background of his own experience:

The Goal of Social Work for Children: Edith M. H. Baylor, Hans Weiss, Joseph Lee, George P. Campbell;

The Goal of Social Work for Adults: William Ernest Hocking, Ethel Ward Dougherty, Elliott Dunlap Smith;

The Goal of Social Work for the Aged: Annie Lockhart Chesley, Christine McLeod, Francis Bardwell;

The Goal for Social Workers in Training: Lucy Wright, Eva Whiting White, Katharine D. Hardwick.

However varied the approach, all the speakers arrived at the same conclusion. The goal of social work is the liberation of the human spirit so that it may have life and have it more abundantly. To quote Dr. Cabot, it is "the relief of misery and unhappiness so that people's enfranchised and organized desires can find their expression in the social relationships which are part of their natural outlet." It is, however, not all suffering but only that which enslaves against which the social worker campaigns. "The mile-runner at the three-quarter point is suffering acutely in body and often in mind also. But he wants no aid and would never think of himself as entangled. He is freely carrying out his own will and, if he is in the lead, would not change his lot for any other's."

The purpose of social work in freeing people is to enable their "fundamental desires to seek and find their full satisfaction" in cooperation with their fellows.

These fundamental desires—Dr. Cabot speaks of a central Master Desire—are variously defined. Mr. Campbell quotes a boy who said, "I want to be of some account in the world," "I want to be great." Dr. Cabot describes the Master Desire as the desire to be "in it, to find one's place and to do one's part and thereby to be somebody." Mr. Lee says that "the North toward which the human soul is set is beauty." Mr. Bardwell finds that "our real quest is to find the life of God in the souls of men, each of us helping in his own way to remove various obstacles, so that the doors of the kindred soul may be open to the outer vision."

Each of the contributors, indeed, has his own way of describing the goal and the Master Desire so that it would be surprising if out of this variety of approach the reader could not find that expression which would coincide with his own feelings. *The Goal of Social Work* is to be recommended as a source book of inspiration both to social workers and to others interested in the religion of social work.

KARL DE SCHWEINITZ

Family Society of Philadelphia

Poorhouse Sweeney

POORHOUSE SWEENEY, by Ed Sweeney. Boni & Liveright. 178 pp. Price \$2.50 postpaid of *The Survey*.

HERE is a unique and interesting book, written and illustrated by an inmate for six years of an almshouse in one of the central states. The writer, a cripple, unable to earn his own support and unwilling to be a burden upon relatives with small means, applied for admission to the county poorhouse, which he obtained after long and irritating delays.

Many official reports have described the squalor, misery and unhappiness which afflict the more intelligent and decent inmates of many almshouses. The Loyal Order of Moose has recently published a book on *The American Poor Farm and Its Inmates*, by Harry C. Evans, which describes wretched conditions in hundreds of poorhouses in all parts of the country; but it fails to give credit for the kindly spirit and the ameliorative conditions which prevail in a considerable number.

But *Poorhouse Sweeney* is the first autobiography ever written by a poorhouse inmate, and he has produced a gripping story in which for the first time is revealed the actual experience of a human soul subjected year after year to the conditions under which Sweeney lived—a story equally interesting to the social



The new inmate is welcomed. From Poorhouse Sweeney, Boni & Liveright

student and the reader who is looking for unique aspects of human life.

The publishers have printed the book in its original misspelled and ungrammatical form and have illustrated it by a series of cartoons, without artistic merit but both funny and illustrative, drawn by the author. The crudities of the book intensify its human interest and its verisimilitude. It portrays the every-day life of the mongrel group which populates the place: the victims of misfortune, the cripples, the imbeciles, the senile, the worn-out drunks, the retired criminals, the vicious women, the victims of loathsome diseases, herded together without classification. The author pictures the superintendent and his staff: incompetent, untrained, ill-paid, overworked; made responsible for the most difficult and hopeless people in the community, whose proper care and discipline would tax the wisdom of the most competent administrator.

The story is sordid, often vulgar, yet Sweeney as raconteur is interesting, at times fascinating. There is much that is likeable about the little man, for, although he is full of egotism and always portrays himself as hero in the incidents he describes, he shows a human quality and a chivalrous spirit in the care he gives to some of his fellows who are worse off than himself; and he shows a manly disposition to do his part in the work of the institution notwithstanding his handicap.

Open the book where you will and you will find something immediately arresting and often exceedingly amusing. Humor and pathos are close together. The tales here unfolded tax the credulity of the reader, but the writer of this review has witnessed similar conditions in many almshouses, and Mr. Evans' recent book reveals corresponding evils even at this date. Theodore Dreiser read the proofs of *Poorhouse Sweeney* and was moved to write a foreword in which he characterizes it as "a human document . . . not only interesting but refreshing. A great book? No. Yet a very exceptional one. And but for the lack of poetry, a great one."

HASTINGS H. HART

Russell Sage Foundation

On Probation

PROBATION AND DELINQUENCY, by Edwin J. Cooley. *Catholic Charities of New York*, 477 Madison Avenue, New York. 544 pp. Price \$3.00 postpaid of *The Survey*.

THAT the probation service offers, or should offer, a profession of great dignity, one calling for special knowledge and for the exercise of high abilities, has long been recognized by all who have studied its problems. And yet the writings having to do with this work have been only fragmentary, dealing generally with its principles or with certain of its more specific details. No other department of social endeavor has so lacked expression. The publications of the National Probation Association have been practically the only source of authoritative knowledge, either of practice or theory—there has been no one book to which one might turn for a complete exposition of the probation ideal. But this book has now arrived. Moreover, the presentation of Probation and Delinquency is that of a realized ideal; it is the description of a practice that has transcended the usual stultifying influences and is now in actual operation.

Through the generosity of the Catholic Charities of New York, advised by the wisdom of His Eminence, Cardinal Hayes, and assisted by the latter's able secretary, the Rev.

Robert F. Keegan, there was developed in the Court of General Sessions of New York a department of probation with one end only in view, namely, that of testing fairly the probation theory. This work was given entirely into the hands of Edwin F. Cooley, Professor of Criminology at Fordham University and Chief Probation Officer of the Magistrates' Courts of Greater New York, a former President of the National Probation Association, a man with some twenty years of experience in the organization and direction of probation work. The choice was a happy one. Indeed, the two year experiment of the Catholic Charities proved so successful that now, with the endorsement of all concerned, judges and observers, its accomplishments are being continued, under the same chief, as an integrated and permanent part of the city's administration of the criminal law.

Mr. Cooley is to be congratulated. His task has been no easy one. Here was a court, the oldest criminal court in North America, dealing only with the most difficult of criminals, with adults under indictment for felony, and yet he has succeeded. And his book tells how. In its over five hundred pages, all aspects of adult probation practice are covered, along with much of delinquency in general, its causes and prevention. There are analyses of environments and studies of personalities and of methods of adjustment, all illustrated by carefully presented case studies from the department's records, and there are descriptions of organization and administration, given in detail. Nor does it matter that such a highly elaborated and perfected system is possible only to a few of our larger communities—even the solitary probation worker in a rural district will gather from this book both inspiration and suggestion. And it is all encouraging. Here is proof that excellence may emerge even in a land so politics-ridden as is ours. If a court in New York can actually accomplish so great a social advance, there should be a general revival of hope and endeavor.

But this book should be read by all who are socially curious—not only by the social workers of the court. As it seems to the reviewer, probation has been rather sadly neglected by the general social-work world. Here is a department of welfare having to do with the failures of the other departments. When children's aid has failed, and parental guidance, and "better homes," and "better housing," and "better schools," and "better health"—then probation steps in. Surely, the study of one's failures should be valuable, and surely, too, one should be interested in knowing this final effort of society, this which aims to prevent these failures from needlessly passing through the hope-abandoning portals of our prisons. Surely, without such knowledge one can legitimately claim only a partial education.

CHARLES PLATT

The Immigrant and Business

MIGRATION AND BUSINESS CYCLES, by Harry Jerome. *The National Bureau of Economic Research*. 256 pp. Price \$3.50 postpaid of *The Survey*.

THE first of a series of investigations relating to the economic phases of immigration and emigration, this study by Dr. Jerome deals with but one phase of the subject—that is, the relation of immigration and labor supply to the varying needs of industry. In hearings before the House Committee on Immigration and Naturalization held in 1920 when the question of restrictive immigration legislation was being discussed, it was testified that there was a labor shortage in practically every industrial activity amounting to not

less than 5,000,000 men. On the other hand, in 1921, with the enforcement of the first Quota Law and the advent of a period of industrial depression, it was necessary to call a conference on unemployment to consider measures for the relief of from "four to five million unemployed." Such paradoxical incidents demonstrate the need for the series of studies contemplated by the National Bureau of Economic Research.

Dr. Jerome has set out to ascertain a solution to two very important issues, namely; to what extent fluctuations in migration are attributable to fluctuations in unemployment, and to what extent fluctuations in immigration are ameliorating or aggravating influences in employment and unemployment situations.

It may seem a bit obvious to comment upon the amount of careful statistical analysis which an intensive study of this nature requires and which Dr. Jerome has so adequately contributed in an effort to arrive at safe and scientific conclusions. Students of immigration who feel as if they have, during this post-war period, been living in a cyclonic whirlwind of emotional and racial prejudice will welcome with relief the moderate, coolly analytical statements which summarize Dr. Jerome's findings.

That there are both strong cyclical and seasonal movements in immigration and emigration, and abundant evidence that when immigration is not restricted, the character of the cyclical variations is closely similar to the cyclical variations in employment opportunity in the United States, is one conclusion which is clearly demonstrated according to Dr. Jerome. Similarly, a period of depression in the United States is automatically accompanied or closely followed by a decline in immigration and an increase in emigration; and a period of prosperity by an increase in immigration and a decline in emigration. However, there are various exceptions and qualifications found which must to some degree modify these conclusions. . . . On the whole, the changes in migration are more erratic and more violent than those in industry.

To the reviewer, it would seem that even in a study which is restricted to migration and labor supply, other social factors must be taken into consideration, namely; to what extent the domestic factor—that is, family relations—affects migration; political and cultural upheavals, too, necessarily play an important role. This is evidenced by Dr. Jerome's finding that even in periods of depression, when employment is slack and immigration falls off materially, it never ceases entirely.

Lastly, Dr. Jerome concludes that migration is a contributory factor to the evils of unemployment and that in those portions of depression periods in which there is a net immigration, even though there is a decline in immigration, migration is putting into industry more men than it is taking out. He therefore concludes that the very fact of a known source of additional labor available through increased immigration in boom periods has probably lessened the pressure for regularization of industry. If the United States continues its present policy of restrictive immigration for another decade or two, only then will it be possible to ascertain whether industry can be regularized with a static labor group, for as long as there is emigration and immigration, the labor supply is constantly changing to the detriment of industrial conditions.

CECILIA RAZOVSKY

National Council of Jewish Women

Breaking Ground

THE second anniversary of New York's Welfare Council emphasized the fact that its first task has been to bring the social service agencies into its membership by enlisting them in appropriate functional sections. It is in these functional groups that discussion of common problems takes place. There are twenty-seven sections grouped in four divisions. When the council's membership is complete it will include a total of approximately twelve hundred agencies. To date it reports 332 organizations in 10 sections. Announcement was made by Robert W. de Forest, president of the council, of the chairmen for these sections so far as they have been selected: Frances Taussig, family service; John T. Little, care of seamen; William H. Matthews, care of aged; Dr. Haven Emerson, health education and administration; Elizabeth Stringer, public health nursing; and Mrs. John S. Sheppard, medical social service.

The council has established for the social agencies a research and fact-finding bureau under generous grants from the Laura Spelman Rockefeller Memorial and the Commonwealth Fund. The major project of the Health Division is an inventory and stock-taking of the public health work being done under private auspices. A joint committee of the United Neighborhood Houses and of the Welfare Council is setting up a plan for a study of the work of the settlement houses in the city.

One of the by-products of the council's study on how persons in need of help reach the sources of assistance has been the conviction on the part of the agencies issuing specialized social agency directories, some ten in number, that a consolidation of directories would be desirable. Through the cooperation of the Charity Organization Society this consolidation is now going forward. As a result there will be published one directory of all the social resources of the city, amplified in such a way as to be useful to the citizen and the social worker alike.

The Family Service Section has a number of significant achievements to its credit. The initiation of the study of the homeless, the consideration of the desirability of amalgamating the two Social Service Exchanges, and a plan for better cooperation between public and private agencies are among the most conspicuous. For some time a distinct need has been felt in the city for a central information bureau which could direct people to the resources of the city for the care of the aged. At the request of the council's Section on the Care of the Aged, such a bureau is being established. A joint committee representative of six sections of the council is considering the problem of the care of the chronic sick. Another committee representative of three sections is dealing with the question of how clinics and family service agencies can improve their joint services to their clients. The section of the Health Division on Administration and Education is cooperating in city-wide plans for a toxin anti-toxin campaign. The section on Public Health Nursing is developing a plan of study of maternal care.

William Hodson, executive director of the council, pointed out at the anniversary meeting that "if it were possible to assemble in one spot the entire problem of the 1,200 social agencies of New York City it would be seen that we are confronted here throughout the year with a disaster as great as that extending up and down the Mississippi Valley today."

THE SOCIAL WORK SHOP

What Is a Social Work Executive?

III. Efficiency

By ROBERT W. KELSO

EFFICIENCY involves activity: but that is not its sole ingredient. Everyone has seen the ubiquitous little executive who is always sputtering about with a show of activity—like a pup with more fleas! The average workman is a slave to his job. He hates it: lives for the hours he has away from it. Yet it is a thing he must do to live. It is hard, therefore, to keep charging along with powerful, continuous stroke: and it is but human that the boss in a factory should pass along the aisle as a keel goes through water, creating in front and about him a great show of froth and activity which closes in behind him, however, and lapses quickly into a state of suspended animation.

To this observation of man in general, the social worker is no exception. If he differs at all it is perhaps in the possession of a little less sullenness, a greater desire to please those whom he serves; a greater unwillingness to be thought idle or lazy; and, to that extent, a little livelier conscience. So he too belongs to the ranks of the fearful and will go down like a great northern diver if the boss but turns his head.

But bosses differ. In the world of industry the boss is himself a servant to a corporation which in turn serves investors. That boss must turn human skill and energy into dividends. He is a driver. When he speaks, the gang must jump. The corporation holds his job in the balance. If he makes dividends he may stay; if not, he is fired.

In the social work field the picture is different. The corporation becomes only that indefinite organization which we call Society; which, though it sometimes exacts a terrible reckoning, is for the most part indifferent and forgetful of the boss's very existence. The driving spur is removed. The social corporation director is himself a volunteer, making no pelf or profit out of his service, doing a turn for Society in his spare hours, giving a divided attention and only a remnant of time. Very few directors ever even call upon their executive. Few read his reports, and often enough he must follow his notices of meetings with a round of urging over the telephone in order to muster a quorum. It is a perennial jest of non-profit-making organizations that quorums are always so small. It must be apparent, therefore, that the urge to sustained activity in the social executive must come largely from himself.

And there is a still greater difficulty.

The business director knows what his workmen should be turning out. Likely enough he has himself been a workman and knows the whole gamut of his industry. The social work director does not often visualize the job which his executive is performing. "It is a sort of benevolent undertaking, and blest if I know how the secretary finds enough to do!" The trouble is a failure to see a picture of that undertaking in terms of the public welfare. Hence it is that almost every social work executive is teacher of an ungraded class—his directorate. This is his first task, to be kept at relentlessly from day to day and from year to year. If he is so minded he can make a sufficient showing of his husbandry, with a little camouflage. If he is conscientious he must teach his board how to appreciate his worth. He initiates method to be translated by his directors into corporate decree, for him in turn to execute through himself and staff.

Efficiency in the social work executive, then, demands more than mere technical skill. He must have loyalty to a high degree, and it is not enough that it be merely loyalty to a cause in which he has faith. No executive has ever been worth his salt who had no faith in his job and did it only for the compensation. One can make widgets that way—not so well of course, but it can be done. The public welfare cannot be so served. The artisan there must possess a keen appreciation of the trust imposed in him by Society. Though persons in authority may never come near him, he must serve at the utmost of his skill, his loyalty, his conscience. If he lets down, his work shows quickly the deadening effect. Given a man of vision, with the ability to lead, it is reasonably certain that efficiency in management will

prove also to be one of his qualities: yet the technical side of his qualifications needs careful analysis.

The social work executive, like the doctor, must keep himself posted to the minute on new thinking and new development in his field. An able executive reads constantly, grounding himself in the philosophy of his operation. What is the nature of the problems with which he deals? What is the basic reasoning of the social order which he is working to defend and improve? It is a sad comment upon the intelligence of a self-governing people that the most perfect zone of silence in America today is the non-fiction library! The habitue of a special collection of serious books is sure to have the habit of

This is the third in a series of three articles on the Social Work Executive by the executive secretary of the Boston Council of Social Agencies. The first, Vision, was published in the Midmonthly of March 15; the second, Leadership, April 15. In later issues there will be discussion in this Department of Group Insurance for Social Workers, and Sick Leaves and Vacations.

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LIGHT FROM THE NORTH!!!

You remember those Graphic articles about the
Peoples' High-schools in Denmark: The Plastic
Years, The Open Mind, etc.! Many readers asked
for reprints of these articles. Well, here they are!
Dr. Joseph K. Hart, the author, wrote a fourth
one in the series, and an extensive personal intro-
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whiffing the dust off the top of each volume as he takes it
down. Careful observation in social service libraries will
reveal the fact that most of the readers are students driven
by a sharp-eyed nemesis, and that workers from the field-
executives in particular, seldom come in. This failure he
lays up to the cares of a long day and the need of some
recreation in the evening. But that plea is not enough; as
a mere excuse it is as lame as that age-old freshman alibi,
the draw in the Harvard Bridge. Those who have a will
to keep themselves informed, do surely find time for serious
reading.

YET reading is not enough. Problems of public welfare
are clarified greatly by discussion. The executive who
does not keep up with the important conferences in his
field soon fades into the background as an initiator of ideas
and a developer of efficient and economical methods. He
needs the test of criticism from those who know his sort of
job. Great corporations call their captains together from
the very ends of the earth for frequent conferences that the
policies of the organization may be known and the efficiency
of its several units improved by an exchange of ideas. This
is a need in modern business. It is preeminently so in social
work.

Obviously it is the lesser part of efficiency to be able to
run the office smoothly. The ablest executive is not one
who makes work merely for work's sake. Some secretaries
will say, "But I must keep the clerical staff busy else they
will grow lazy and maybe insubordinate." This is easily
thinkable, but it may be noticed that the best managed offices
show loyalty in the force, and a quiet procedure on the day's
job without bustle and chatter so common to the idle who
are making merely a pretense at industry. The same rule
holds with the field staff. Case workers must be trusted to
a high degree in the matter of time used and speed on the
job. Final results are the only test, and these do not always
reveal the whole picture. In either group, the executive
who assigns work merely to produce activity marks himself a
little fellow on the job.

THE social work executive often shows a weak side in
the matter of the business relationship of his office, par-
ticularly in the purchase of office supplies and the set-up of
annual and other reports. His first need is to realize that
he is handling trust money, and that in the spending of it
he should use more care even than he would use with his
own. With such an appreciation the superintendent of a
sizeable orphanage would stop ordering butter by telephone
at current rates for the fancy article, say 68 cents per pound,
and would consider how he can make the size of his institu-
tion and its proximity to other homes pay a dividend by buy-
ing jointly at the right season and storing for future use,
at say 34 cents including cartage. The secretary of a relief
society would pause when sending his annual report to the
printer to consider whether his format is the most economical
that he can get up for the purposes in mind, and whether
the twenty-five dollars which the printer they have always
employed contributes each year to the society, is really a
guarantee of low prices and good work. Experience with
purchasing bureaus shows that savings of 15 to 60 per cent
in the cost of annual reports can be made over present indi-
vidual methods at any time that social agency executives
will get together in ordering their printing. The average
executive is not keen on savings. He is not familiar with