

LIVE QUESTIONS.

A Series of Articles Contributed to These Columns by Advanced Thinkers.

NUMBER VI.—PRACTICAL MEASURES TO MAINTAIN SELF RESPECTING MANHOOD.

To maintain self respecting manhood should be of paramount importance to an enlightened government, and while I am profoundly convinced that radical and fundamental reforms, which comprehend the abolition of class privileges and special legislation, are essential to the solution of the great problems which are now pressing upon the intelligence and conscience of our civilization, yet I fully realize that to peacefully accomplish these splendid triumphs for a higher manhood, will require patient, earnest and persistent education and agitation which will stir to its depth the conscience of the people. But this will necessarily require time, and during this period wise statesmanship no less than true philanthropy demands that practicable, palliative measures be vigorously pushed. One of the most real and imminent perils which face the government today is the gradual loss of hope and the spirit of independence among multitudes of our people, due to adversity and unjust conditions, which are transforming yearly a large number of our citizens from sturdy, independent, self supporting individuals to objects of charity or tramps. I hold that it is impossible to too strongly emphasize the fact that anything which lowers the essential manhood or takes an iota from the self respect of the humbler citizens is a very real injury to the whole people. The unheeded cry for work, which is the cry of self respecting manhood and is the antipodes of an appeal for charity, is bittering thousands of American citizens, while it is forcing other thousands into environments of moral death; it is resulting in driving numbers of men, women and children to drink, crime, suicide and immorality. And these irreparable calamities may, to a certain extent, be averted if our nation, our states and municipalities awake to the importance of maintaining or restoring the manhood of citizenship and holding the loyalty of the people by bands woven of love and wisdom.

In view of these facts, any measures of a practicable, common sense character which restores self respecting manhood, should receive the cordial support of thoughtful and earnest men and women. Perhaps the most striking illustration of this character which has been introduced in recent years is the famous innovation inaugurated by Mayor Pingree of Detroit. It would seem almost incredible that so practicable, common sense and reasonable a plan as that outlined by Mr. Pingree should have received the general ridicule, contempt and opposition which it encountered. It was treated at first as a huge joke or something too absurd and amusing for serious thought, while persons who were dispensing charity, without stimulating men and women to work and regain a grip on life, were being applauded by an unthinking conventionalism. The result of Mayor Pingree's eminently practicable measures, however, so far exceeded the most sanguine expectations of those who appreciated the wisdom of his plan that New York and many other cities have already inaugurated the Detroit plan, and perhaps even those who first ridiculed the "Pingree potato patch" may be interested in the following facts relating to the magnificent results—even when considered from a superficial point of view—which have attended the experiment during the past two years in Detroit and during the past year in New York city.

The winter of 1893-4 found great numbers of laboring men and women in Detroit, as in every other city of the Union, vainly seeking work and finally driven to ask for charity, while numbers of persons who had hitherto been self respecting, independent, hardworking men, finally abandoning the hope of obtaining employment, became tramps. The mayor of Detroit did not believe the popular cant that anybody who desired work could obtain it. He felt confident that a large percentage of those who were sinking into the Dead sea of want and becoming hopeless paupers or confirmed tramps were being reduced to these most pitiable conditions through inability to obtain work, and holding these convictions he determined to put the question to a practical test.

Within the area of Detroit there were over 6,000 acres of land lying idle, much of which was tillable, and Mayor Pingree and his conferees petitioned the holders of this land to permit those who were willing to work to use it, and in this manner reduce the great outlay which the city and individuals were being put in order to support the starving "out of works." The land was promptly secured. The next problem was to raise sufficient funds to plow, harrow and stake off the lots for the applicants to purchase seed. Owing to the absurd opposition, the ridicule and contempt offered on every hand to this wise and common sense proposition, no aid could be expected from the city council, but \$3,600 was raised by subscription. This enabled the committee appointed to carry on the work in a limited way, and 975 families were given portions of land to till, although the applicants who desired to thus earn a livelihood were far greater in number than the committee were able to accommodate. The value of the crop raised by the favored families amounted to between \$12,000 and \$14,000 more than the amount invested, if the minimum value of the crop be considered, or, over \$10,000 more than the outlay, if the maximum value of the harvest be considered.

But, above and beyond the mere monetary considerations, this experiment was vastly more important in that (1) it demonstrated that a large percentage of

those who were forced to ask for charity were eager to earn a livelihood. (2) It has proved a magnificent agricultural education for those permitted to earn their year's food. (3) It infused hope into the hearts and brains of nearly a thousand citizens of Detroit during the memorable year in which the plan was inaugurated. (4) It set an example for thoughtful, earnest and conscientious workers whereby practical palliative measures could be carried into execution to maintain self respecting manhood, promote industry and materially reduce the draft on charity, which has of late become appallingly large in the great cities.

The experiment was such a pronounced success that last year (1895) the common council of Detroit appropriated \$5,000 to aid in the work, which enabled the committee to accommodate over 1,500 applicants for lots. Twelve hundred and fifty-eight of these had been on the books of the city poor commission. The crops harvested, according to the report of the committee recently rendered to the common council of Detroit, was as follows, with prices which the committee regard as a conservative estimate for the average price. Thirty thousand dollars is in the judgment of the committee a fair estimate of the output:

Table with 2 columns: Crop and Price. Includes Potatoes, Beans, Turnips, Beets, Corn, Cabbage, Squash, and Pumpkins.

Total, \$27,792

*From report of committee rendered to the common council of Detroit Nov. 25, 1895.

Thus, we see, as a result of the second year's experiment, with an appropriation of \$5,000, crops have been raised and successfully harvested by persons who would otherwise have been dependent upon public charity amounting from about \$27,792 to \$30,000, or a profit of between \$20,000 and \$25,000 over and above expenses, while, as has been observed, the financial aspect is in reality the least important.

The committee in their report observe that "no difficulty was experienced in getting people to take lots, and it was even necessary for want of sufficient land to refuse some who applied. It is an error to suppose that because people are poor and needy they refuse to help themselves where an opportunity offers. From the experience of the committee such is seldom the case."

Another favorable result is found in the fact that several of those who have successfully tilled the various lots have now secured small farms for market gardening and are commencing life anew with renewed hope.

Other cities have followed the Detroit plan, but space prevents me noticing any, save that conducted in New York during the past year in a limited way by the Society For the Improvement of the Condition of the Poor. The society secured 300 acres of vacant lots in Long Island City, employed competent gardeners to instruct the 80 families which the funds of the society were enabled to accommodate, and as a result the following crop was harvested, according to the figures given in the New York World, from authentic sources:

Table with 2 columns: Crop and Quantity. Includes Potatoes, Beans, Tomatoes, Peas, Turnips, Carrots, and Corn.

The value of the crop in dollars and cents was \$4,000 more than the outlay, but here again the benefits to the individual and the state were far greater than any mere dollar and cent computation. One family alone cleared over \$400 on the tract allotted them and now propose to farm independently next year. When the season opened, the family were \$200 in debt and nothing to hope for before them; when the crops were harvested, they had \$200 in the bank. This case illustrates a fact of great importance for social reformers, as does this important and practical palliative means to maintain and sustain self respecting manhood. B. O. FLOWER, Boston.

NUMBER VII.—THE KIND OF LITERATURE PEOPLE WANT.

Too many writers seem not to be aware of the fact that people want clear, direct and definite discussions and statements of facts. Indeed good literature is very much like a well dressed man whose clothes are at once so simple and becoming that you never notice how he is dressed. So the best literature is so simple and straightforward that it loses itself in the thought it contains.

Good literature is also nonpartisan. We must have parties and partisans. These are always more or less useful. We have an able and progressive press that upholds the various party opinions of the day, and this is well and good, but it does not follow that the literature of political papers must be partisan. To take a concrete illustration: Two papers, one advocating free trade and the other protection, can deal with candor, fairness and directness in discussing the merits and demerits of their respective systems, and however they disagree they can always be luminous and suave.

Exaggeration is easy and cheap, and it is always easier physically to guess at a fact than to verify it. But in the final adjustment of affairs the facts stand supreme and determine the destiny of issues and of men. It is a generally admitted fact that the journalism that contributes to the solid progress of the country is that which builds on sober ways and honest progress. In this way every journal becomes a power, a center of moral energy, whose influence is felt far and wide. This is the kind of writing people want. Reading is usually done in the quiet hours when men disapprove of rancor and narrow partisanship. Here it is that the fair and manly spirit makes its successful appeal to all reasonable men, and this is the opportunity for him who has a message to deliver it with effect. J. W. C.

GEN. ALGER'S FORESIGHT.

How the Michigan Millionaire and Politician Made His Fortune.

Gen. Russell A. Alger made his fortune through the foresight which he displayed in buying up timber lands in Northern Michigan just after the war. He had little capital and most of his purchases were made with borrowed money. The winters of 1867 and 1868 he spent in a log camp in the woods with his family, in order to get a full insight into the details of the lumber business.

He first introduced railroads to go into the logging business and finally built a lumber railroad of his own. He has seen some of his pine lands double in value in a single week, and owned so much timber that he could make contracts for 50,000,000 feet of logs at a time. He also owns timber land in California.

JAPAN'S NAVAL STRENGTH.

New Battle Ships Building and Swift Torpedo Boats Ordered.

Japan's prospects as a naval power continue bright. The programme of the Government at present includes the building of four new battle ships—the largest being of 15,000 tons—nine protected cruisers, four torpedo catchers and ninety torpedo boats. The battle ships and cruisers alone will have a total displacement of 125,000 tons. The former are to do 17.5 knots. They are to be armed with four thirty-centimetre guns each, on barbette, and twelve fifteen-centimetre, quick-firers, besides thirty guns of smaller calibre. The cruisers are to be of 7,500 tons each, with a speed of 21 knots. Their armament will consist of two twenty-three centimetre guns, ten fifteen-centimetre quick-firers, and some smaller pieces. The torpedo boats are to do 21 knots and the torpedo catchers 40.

ABOUT PROFESSIONAL PEOPLE.

Mrs. Sarah Grand is described as a tall, slender woman, with big, blue gray eyes, whose habitual expression is one of sadness rather than vivacity. Her hair is brown and waving, and it is dressed in a way peculiarly becoming to her oval face, being drawn back and held in one loose curl at the nape of the neck. Mrs. Grand is a charming hostess and possesses that "excellent thing" a low, well modulated voice.

It is said of Mme. Ristori that no foreign actress ever excited so much sincere admiration among French people as she did. Dumas declared that to see her act was worth all the lessons in elocution in the world, and the last lines de Musset ever wrote were dedicated to Adelaide Ristori—a fragment that was found on his writing table after his death.

Joseph Jefferson is an especial favorite with college girls. His audiences on the occasions when he lectures at one of the women's colleges are very enthusiastic and demonstrative. At Smith, the rather conservative girls fairly raved over their distinguished visitor. They greeted him with applause and waving of handkerchiefs, and dismissed him in the same way; each class sent him emblematic flowers.

Though there are now four Duchesses of Marlborough, the mother of the young Duke is not and never has been one of them. Her husband succeeded to the title after the divorce decree between them had become absolute, keeping her Lady Blandford. The four are, therefore, Consuelo, the reigning and latest Duchess; Lillian, also Lady Beresford; "Fanny" Duchess, the mother of the late Duke, Lord Randolph Churchill, and six sisters all married to peers, and "Jane, Duchess," a venerable woman, wife of the sixth Duke, who is still living.

Mrs. Craigie, "John Oliver Hobbes," the English novelist of American birth, confesses to a fondness for dress. "I like beautiful gowns just as I like beautiful surroundings of any sort," she says. She also sensibly thinks that limited means need not preclude taste of and becoming dress. "It does not cost any more to dress in good taste and a due regard to neatness than it does to wear gowns in a slovenly way," is her dictum.

A Tiny Cycler.

The smallest bicycle ridea in the country is claimed by San Francisco. Her name is Valentine Larook Cornwell. She is but three years old and can manage her wheel, which was made especially for her, with as much skill as any veteran.

It took her all of two weeks to grasp the principles of equilibrium. She says it came to her suddenly, and throwing aside the hands that steadied her she commenced to cut figures of 8 and grapevines on her own book. Her little red knickerbocker suit is tailor made; a sailor waist, trimmed with white and a jaunty little red cap, completes one of the cutest little figures seen on the boulevards and drives around San Francisco.

Mothers and Mothers-in-Law.

Is it not a fact that a wife and her mother have more privileges than the husband and his mother? In nine marriages out of ten the wife's mother lives in the same house and enjoys all the comforts of the family. Would the wife care to have her husband's mother living with them? Not much.

Again: The wife goes shopping with her mother, attends theatre, visits, etc.; in fact she enjoys the same liberty that were hers before marriage. Suppose the husband were to do all these things. We can imagine how the wife would object. Yet what is fair for one ought to be fair for the other.

What is the why and wherefore of all this anyhow? Alma Tadema's Artistic Thumb. Alma Tadema, when asked by an ardent young admirer for a sight of the tool with which he had modelled his beautiful Venus, showed the muscle of his broad thumb.

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