

NOT A GOOD SCHEME.

The Idea of Boarding-Out Paupers Fails to Take Very Well.

IT WOULD BE A LOSING VENTURE,

And in a Great Many Instances Entirely Impracticable.

THE CHIEF TALKS OF THE BROWN FARM

The question of abolishing the Poor Farm project and adopting a system of boarding-out paupers has been advanced by several persons. The idea sprang from the report of a lady professor of domestic economy giving the cost of good substantial living at \$1 25 per week for each person.

It has been estimated that this system could be carried out for about the interest on the cost of the farm and buildings. It would seem that such an arrangement might be done with a philanthropic motive, but the opinion obtained from most people spoken to yesterday was that nothing short of self-abnegation quite rare, and a genuine love for helpless humanity would be like to produce the result to be obtained—the utmost economy consistent with the comfort of paupers while in the pursuit of life, liberty and happiness.

Too Much for Charity.

While a pauper might be supported with good food, clothing and medical attendance for about \$75 a year—something less than half what it costs to maintain one at the Poor Farm, with all the loss of interest on cost of plant added—yet it is not at all likely that anyone will be found willing to undertake the keeping of such boarding houses for sweet charity's sake alone. In addition there are the insane poor to be considered, and they could scarcely be made to support themselves and observe the amenities of social life necessary even in a boarding house of the kind suggested. If an institution must be maintained for the care of the insane poor, it would seem like economy to combine the two.

It is further considered that, no matter how unpalatable, no party nor sect can be trusted to manage eleemosynary institutions altogether properly where there are temptations thrown in the way of the management. Many people were spoken to on the subject yesterday, among them several caterers, but they refused to give decided opinions. Only one who would allow his name to go with his views. This was John Hucksstein, of Allegheny.

Says It Is Not Feasible.

He says the boarding plan would not work at all, as it could not be managed without colossal scandal, and he gave incidents within his own mind to support his stand. Mr. Hucksstein's idea is that there should be just enough land connected with a poorhouse to give the inmates a chance to raise their own vegetables and as much more in the way of food as would profitably employ their labor, but no more, as, if they are employed to raise stuff to sell, irregularities are almost certain to creep in at intervals.

He says that only those who have been in public position in connection with the sale of property to municipalities know the amount of pressure brought to bear in such matters. In this connection there has been a story afloat for nearly 20 years that the price paid for the Allegheny City farm was \$250 an acre more than what the seller got. But the deal prevailed notwithstanding its opponents alleged that there was not a spring on the farm whose water was fit to drink, and objection was also made that it was too near the workhouse. Influence put the deal through, however, it is said, with the middleman's profits known to some who had the matter in hand.

Maintenance a Side Issue.

But while our plants are expensive in both criminal and eleemosynary institutions and the labor performed there is generally rather unremunerative, the reports show that the matter of maintenance is a comparatively small one, aside from interest or investment. For instance, in the penitentiary the cost of keeping an inmate, including clothing and medical attendance included, is but about \$12 a year, or \$2 30 per week. It is not likely that a jobber in poor boarders would care to undertake to keep a man in fighting condition and clothe him for twice \$2 30, and then the recipient is supposed under our present system to earn a part of his keep, if able to work at all.

According to Superintendent Warner's report of the workhouse management for 1890, the daily average prison population was 702, and their daily average cost for maintenance 33.63 cents, which was reduced by their earnings to 14.97 cents. Here these people were fed, clothed and doctored for their work for less than \$1 05 per week, exclusive of interest on plant. Superintendent Warner says: "In computing the cost of maintenance I include the cost of maintaining paupers in the Home at \$1 04.17 per week. This includes hospital care. In the insane department the cost is \$2 17 and a fraction per week. The insane paupers are the only ones whose earnings are considered worth reporting. It is found beneficial to the insane to employ them. Two of them did all the calculating last year, in addition to scraping and cleaning the walls. The insane are also found useful as farm laborers, to themselves as well as to the public.

Looked at from every point of view attainable it does not appear probable that there can be much financial improvement in the management of the poor, aside from economy in the construction of buildings and the purchase of land. It is asserted that half an acre to the inmate would be as much or probably more than would be worked profitably, and rough land that could be bought very cheaply would serve the purpose so far as the monetary aspect is concerned just as well as highly tilled land. And as to location, any place within the county and convenient to a railway station is considered to answer the purpose as well as any other place.

Says the Farm Is Worthless.

"The farm offered to the city by Captain Sam Brown is not worth a dollar," Chief Elliott said yesterday. "When we were inspecting farms several months ago we visited the Brown farm, and it was the verdict of our party that it would be of no service to us at any price. The farm has not changed any, and we have no reason to change our minds."

"My offer of the Shaw farm to the city for \$50,000," said Captain Brown, "is bona fide, but no individual can get it for that money. It has been reported that the farm contains 238 acres. This is incorrect. It contains a little over 200 acres. The price at which I offer it is equivalent to a gift on my part of at least \$25,000 to the city."

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PREDICTS A REVOLUTION.

Mr. Shearman Thinks a Revolt Is Coming in Mexico—President Diaz Expected to Run for a Second Term in Violation of the Constitution.

B. Reed Shearman, of Caracas, Mexico, is stopping at the Schlosser. He is a young man engaged in railway construction in the old land of the Aztecs. At present he is attending the Consistory of the Scottish Rite Masons in Pittsburgh. Mr. Shearman thinks it is only a question of a year or so before Mexico will be in the throes of a revolution. President Diaz wants a second term, which is forbidden by the Constitution. He is popular with the masses, but distrusted by some of the older Mexicans, because he is too progressive for them. It is believed that when the time comes that Diaz will defy the Constitution, and a revolt will result. There have been rumors of an expected revolution, but the reports have been denied. Mr. Shearman says Diaz is a very honest man, while the Mexican politicians are probably the most corrupt on earth. The President is all powerful, and the Government is practically under the control of the military. Diaz could be elected again seven years from now, which is the length of the Presidential term, but he is ambitious for his country and dislikes seeing his work discontinued by a possibly less able successor.

"Mexico is a coming country," continued Mr. Shearman. "On the surface the people are polite and profess considerable love for Americans, but in talking with the older inhabitants I often discover an undercurrent of bitterness against the Yanks. We conquered them once by the sword, and now we are overrunning them with railroad. Railway construction has progressed wonderfully in Mexico. The Vera Cruz, Mexican Southern, on which I am engaged now, and the Inter-oceanic lines are owned by English capitalists. The Mexican Central, the National and International lines are now on a paying basis. In the old days of pack trails a number of small cities were developed as distributing points for the surrounding country. The railroads have a tendency to centralize the business in a few places, like Mexico and Puebla for example. The trade of the smaller cities has decreased and this makes the people sore against the railroads. A man like Frank Carpenter, who never went into the interior, wouldn't learn much about the Mexicans, State and city. With such an arrangement it would be hard to establish reciprocal relations with the central power."

The Mexican Southern is projected to run from Puebla to Tehuantepec on the Pacific side. At present the road is being built through a canyon to reach the Caracas Valley, which Mr. Shearman thinks is one of the richest in the world. Three crops yearly are possible with little cultivation or expense. In the City of Mexico considerable American capital is invested. Around the leading hotels Mr. Shearman says English is spoken extensively. Most of the Mexican purchases are made in Europe, and there is a great opportunity down there for the Yanks if reciprocity could be arranged.

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