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ADDRESS

DELIVERED AT THE OPENING OF THE FIRST NEW YORK
STATE CONFERENCE OF CHARITIES AND CORRECTION,
HELD IN THE SENATE CHAMBER, ALBANY,
NOVEMBER 20, 21, 22, 1900,

BY

WILLIAM PRYOR LETCHWORTH, LL. D.,

PRESIDENT OF THE CONFERENCE.

ADDRESS.

The first National Conference of Charities and Correction held in this country convened in New York City in May, 1874. This meeting, originally intended for a conference between the supervising boards of charities of New York, Massachusetts, Connecticut, Rhode Island, Pennsylvania, Illinois, Michigan, Wisconsin, and Kansas, resolved itself at the outset into a general conference of organizations and persons engaged in charitable and reform work. The boards of four of the States named were represented by written communications instead of delegates. Hon. John V. L. Pruyn, President of the New York Board of State Commissioners of Public Charities,* presided over the Conference, and Mr. F. B. Sanborn, member of the Massachusetts Board of State Charities, discharged the duties of Secretary. It was my privilege, as a member of the New York Board, to take part in the proceedings of this Conference, and I have had the satisfaction of participating in nearly all of the twenty-six annual Conferences that have since been held in the different States and in Canada. The first Conference awakened great interest in charitable and reform work, and made it manifest that such meetings, with their papers and discussions, were to become a medium of education and an important element in advancing the interests of humanity. Aside from the benefits conferred upon this country by the holding of these Conferences, the practical influence of their published proceedings has been widely felt in other countries.

But a few years elapsed before the deepening interest in the National Conferences made the gatherings so large, and the subjects presented for discussion so numerous, that the limited opportunities for the expression of individual opinion caused disappointment to many who came from long distances to attend them, and the organization of State Conferences working on the same lines as the National Conferences became

* Name changed in 1873 to "The State Board of Charities."

necessary. Moreover, it was found that, while there were general principles which were applicable to every State, there were others that needed modification to adapt them to peculiar local conditions, and that these could be dealt with more satisfactorily and exhaustively in a State Conference than in a National one.

It should be mentioned in this connection that in this State there have been held annual conventions of the Superintendents of the Poor, organized so long ago as 1871, that in Michigan similar conventions had a beginning in 1874, and in Pennsylvania there have been held annual State conventions of Directors of the Poor from 1876 to the present time. These conventions have accomplished much good and have greatly improved the administration of public charitable relief. To their action in this State may be largely attributed the creation of what is termed the State Pauper Law, in the execution of which a very large number of homeless and destitute persons have been returned to their places of legal settlement, and many of them to industrious activity and independence, while several million dollars have been saved to the State. Although these conventions and their discussions have always been open to benevolent organizations in general, it has been demonstrated that something broader is needed than their name implies to meet the requirements of a large and populous State. The conventions in this State have been chiefly attended by the most intelligent and enterprising officers of the poor rather than by those most likely to be benefited by the knowledge they might thus obtain. It is gratifying to note the warm interest shown in this Conference by leading Superintendents of the Poor, and it is hoped that by their participation in these conferences they may be able to add still greater interest to their future conventions.

To Wisconsin belongs the credit of organizing the first State Conference of Charities and Correction, which was held at Madison, February 10 and 11, 1881. The first annual Conference of County Agents and Convention of the Board of Corrections and Charities in Michigan convened at Jackson, in December, 1882. These conferences have been held in different parts of the State each year since, the eighteenth having

met at Detroit in December, 1899. A committee of the Charity Organization Society of Denver, called the first State Conference of Charities and Correction of Colorado, which was held at Denver in June, 1890. One of the leading objects of this meeting was to secure the establishment of a State Board of Charities, which was accomplished the following year. Indiana was but a few months behind Colorado, a State Conference having been held at Indianapolis in October, 1890. Ohio adopted such means of advancing the charitable and correctional interests of the State in 1892, and since then conferences have been organized in the following States: Minnesota, Delaware, Illinois, Maryland, Iowa, Nebraska, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Missouri, and Kansas. In some States the conferences have been held at irregular intervals; the general rule has been, however, to hold them annually.

In order to form a just conception of the possibilities of this important meeting and its bearings upon the interests of the State, we must have in mind that the population of the State exceeds seven and a quarter millions and that its metropolis is the principal entry port of North America for foreign immigrants, including among their numbers broken down, indolent and vicious persons from the despotic governments of the Old World. The number of immigrants that arrived at the port of New York during the year ending June 30, 1898, was 178,748, which was 77 per cent. of the entire number that arrived in the United States during that period, or more than three and a half times the number that arrived at all the other ports. It is generally overlooked that the vigorous and thrifty immigrant passes on to the West, while a large proportion of the destitute and debilitated, with their enfeebled progeny, remain in this State, a continuous and increasing burden upon its municipalities and its benevolent citizens.

The number of dependents under institutional care in this State, including the insane, on October 1, 1899, was 86,893; the number of offenders, juvenile and adult, supported at the public expense was 12,063, making a total of 98,956 persons. The sum expended by the State, municipalities and counties for charitable purposes, and for reformatories and prisons, including that for buildings, during the year ending September

30, 1899, was \$9,768,515.00, the amount expended by private charitable organizations was \$18,517,782.00, making a total of \$28,286,297.00.*

It seems relevant to consider at this time what are some of the fundamental principles that should govern us in dealing with the immense aggregation of the dependent and offending classes for whose proper care we are held responsible.

In the institutional care and custody of these classes little or no attention was given at the outset to classification. Every type of unfortunate and debased humanity, including the infirm, the disabled, the sick, the insane, and criminals, of both sexes and all ages, as well as homeless children, were indiscriminately housed in almshouses and prisons. Among the earliest movements towards classifying the incongruous elements with which we had to deal may be mentioned the founding of the New York Hospital for sick and disabled persons, which was chartered in 1771. Out of this institution, with accommodations for two hundred patients, was developed a further and important classification by the creation in 1806 of a department for the insane. There was also founded in 1806 the Orphan Asylum Society of New York for homeless children. From these beginnings the process of classification has been going on as our knowledge and experience increased until we now have special provision for the blind, for deaf-mutes, for the feeble-minded, subdivided into educational and custodial divisions, homes for the aged, baby nurseries, general and lying-in hospitals, hospitals for crippled and deformed children, an asylum for destitute Indian children, a colony for epileptics, and various other charities that have grown out of the philanthropy and generosity of the citizens of the State. Not only have the sexes been separated in some institutions, but the young have been separated from the aged, the children, the insane, and epileptics removed from the poorhouses, and important subdivisions made in some classes.

By progressive steps we have reached a limited classification of offenders against the law. The Bertillion system of identifi-

* For valuable statistics embodied in this paper I am greatly indebted to the State Board of Charities, the Lunacy and Prison Commissions and other State departments.

cation has made practicable an extended classification in our State Prisons, based on the number of terms the inmates have served imprisonment for felonies. Separate provision has been made for insane criminals, for younger and more hopeful offenders there is the famous Elmira Reformatory, and for short-term prisoners we have the district penitentiaries or workhouses. Thanks to Mrs. Lowell, for women formerly lodged in jails we have Houses of Refuge, and for girls and young women requiring reformation there are also houses of the Good Shepherd under the care of devoted Catholic Sisters; for juvenile offenders, the Society for the Reformation of Juvenile Delinquents, the State Industrial School at Rochester, the New York Juvenile Asylum, and the Catholic Protectories.

Notwithstanding all that has been done, there are certain dependent and offending classes, which, for humane and economic reasons, require subdividing.

Our jails and city prisons are usually designated by penologists as schools of crime. Nearly three-quarters of a century ago De Tocqueville emphatically declared that the county jails of this country were the worst prisons he had ever seen. In 1880, Dr. E. C. Wines, speaking with a comprehensive knowledge of the subject, said that the jails showed little marked improvement since the days of De Tocqueville, and added that the entire county jail system of the United States was a disgrace to our civilization. The Executive Committee of the Prison Association of New York has expressed the opinion that if an institution were established in every county in the State in which the processes corresponded with the inscription on the entrance door—"Vice and Crime Taught Here"—the work of manufacturing criminals could hardly be done more effectually than it is done by our county jail system.

To these county and city institutions there were committed during the fiscal year of 1899 upwards of 70,000 persons. In these places of confinement are found those who have been tried and found guilty as well as those who are suspected of wrongdoing. Many are young men who are easily influenced, but who are not of the criminal type. They are here brought into association with the incorrigible criminal and made familiar with every phase of deception and trick of

crime. Old offenders against the law take pride in instructing the novice in ways of wickedness, and awaken his enthusiasm by recounting deeds of daring and hairbreadth escapes. It has been demonstrated in other States that it is practicable to construct jails so as to prevent an injurious association of inmates. The object desired will be promoted if prisoners who have been proved guilty are sentenced to the district penitentiaries instead of continued confinement in the county jails.

The principle of classification is worthy of greater consideration than it now receives in connection with our system of reforming juvenile offenders. Children are too indiscriminately committed to correctional institutions. Many are sent there on the most trivial charges. I have known of a boy being sent to a House of Refuge on a charge so ridiculous as that of stealing his father's trousers and a girl for stealing a ribbon from her mother. There are some parents who seem desirous of throwing off the responsibility of caring for their offspring; others, too rigid in their discipline, make home life disagreeable, and their children become rebellious. Many high-spirited boys, through wild associates or lack of proper home influences, become wayward, but do not require institutional training.

To the Reform School should be committed only such children as have proved themselves to be incorrigible, and my heart goes out in earnest sympathy to the host of little fellows who, through an exuberance of youthful spirits or lack of the discipline of a good home, are consigned to the monotony of institution life and the companionship of hardened offenders. It is an offence against humanity to deface unnecessarily the escutcheon of a boy with a criminal record, the effects of which can never be effaced. There can be no doubt but that a large percentage of the youths who are now committed to reformatories might have been corrected outside of an institution and put in the path leading to good citizenship by simpler and more effectual means. Let us give these wild and sometimes reckless boys, among whom is some of the best material for making brave men, a little better chance—more of supervision under the family rule and less of institutional confinement and restraint.

It has been demonstrated that a far more successful and less expensive way of dealing with juvenile offenders is that whereby the State provides special agents to protect their interests. Such an officer is obliged to attend the trial of every child under sixteen years of age who is charged with crime and present to the court such information as he has been able to obtain respecting his history, in order that a just decision may be reached as to the kind of care and discipline best suited to his reformation. The parents may be fined for neglect of duty and the child returned to them with a reprimand, or he may be held under suspended sentence and placed on probation with his parents, or boarded by the agent in a family apart from his former environment. If it is found impracticable after repeated attempts to correct the delinquent in the family he is then placed in a reform school. And even here the principle of classification is applicable. In every reformatory for boys there are those who have become adepts in crime, and who, like their elders in jails and city prisons, instruct the new comer in the secrets of criminal practices. For this reason a reform school should be conducted on the cottage plan and the boys separated into small groups according to their different characteristics — say not more than twenty in one family.

As an additional means of classifying the feeble-minded, it has been recommended that special classes be established in connection with our public school system for the instruction of teachable feeble-minded children not capable of being benefited by ordinary school methods, thus relieving our overcrowded institutions and at the same time affording this class of defectives the benefits of instruction suited to their capabilities without depriving them of the wholesome influences of home life. Such a system has been in operation in Germany for many years, an auxiliary class for children who could not be taught the ordinary school curriculum having been established at Halle in 1863. Auxiliary schools gradually grew out of this and similar classes, and there are now upwards of fifty such schools in Germany with an estimated attendance of 6,000 pupils.

In Norway similar work has been carried on for twenty years or more. Belgium and Switzerland have special schools

for the instruction of feeble-minded children, and Dr. Bourneville has recently recommended for the benefit of such children the establishment of special classes in connection with the primary schools in Paris and throughout France.

Such means of instruction was adopted in England in 1892, first at Leicester by the School Board, and a few months later by the London School Board. In 1896 a Governmental committee was appointed to inquire into the systems for the education of feeble-minded and defective children and to advise as to any changes that might be considered desirable. As a result of the recommendations of this and other committees appointed by different influential organizations, an act was passed in 1899, authorizing the creation of special classes in public elementary schools and the establishing of special schools for these children. Provision was also made for boarding children in private homes conveniently accessible to such classes or schools. It is gratifying to observe that a similar system is regarded with favor not only in New York, but in several of our American States.

During the last two decades great advances have been made in the care and treatment of the insane through the scientific researches of medical men, in the adoption of improved methods, in providing systematic training for attendants and better hospital equipments, and especially by that reform ever to be gratefully associated with the name of Miss Schuyler, whereby the insane were taken under the protection of the State. The steady advance thus made warrants the belief that the tendency of the times is towards still further progress in the care and treatment of this class.

The insane in the care of the State on the first of October, 1900, numbered 22,088, an increase during the year of 714. The average annual increase for a number of years has been sufficient to require the construction each year of a large hospital or its equivalent. But why not apply to the insane the principle of classification and, instead of adding to our already overburdened institutions or constructing more like them, provide for the acute insane small hospitals near the large cities, where they may have the advantages which such institutions so located are capable of affording? It is claimed by high medical authority

that more cures can be effected in the small institution under an individualized system of treatment than in the large one, where the medical superintendent is overwhelmed with the innumerable details incident to its business affairs. To minimize the popular odium attached to the commitment to a hospital for the insane an institution of this kind might be called a sanatorium or designated by some other title of a general character. Voluntary admission under proper regulations might be permitted, in order to encourage early treatment of acute cases. Under such conditions the dread of commitment to an asylum for the insane would be largely dispelled, and the sanatorium would be entered as freely as our general hospitals. With the number of the insane so great as to nearly paralyze our energies there is danger that the importance of early treatment of acute cases may be overlooked. The Lunacy Commission estimates that "the ultimate charge for every patient admitted to a State hospital who is not discharged recovered or improved amounts to about \$6,000." Surely we are warranted in exhausting every reasonable resource in treating the acute insane and in dealing with insanity in its earlier and premonitory stages.

In the extension of provision for the insane I would suggest for careful consideration the establishment of State district colonies for chronic cases and the transferring thereto from our immense hospitals such as are specially fitted for colony life. These colonies should be conveniently and healthfully located on goodly-sized tracts of land and provided with simple, inexpensive cottages to accommodate say from twenty to thirty patients each, the colony not to exceed altogether from 300 to 500 patients. Here the insane could be given healthful employment, be classified according to their various conditions, they could have more freedom, enjoy a more natural life, and be more economically maintained. I am clearly of the opinion that such a system would tend to a larger percentage of cures even among the chronic insane than is possible under the restraints and confinement incident to an immense, overcrowded State hospital.

The new theories that have come to be accepted through the researches and writings of distinguished physicians regarding tuberculosis lead to the conclusion that the victims of this

disease should be separated from other patients in all charitable, correctional and penal institutions. It is claimed by those who have large knowledge of the subject that pulmonary tuberculosis, if not strictly contagious, is communicable. This being the case, some of our large institutions, as at present organized, are most favorable for its development. Especially is this true of our hospitals for the insane, the inmates of which on account of their malady are not strong to resist bodily disease. It is reported by the superintendent of an English lunatic asylum that since the erection some years ago of separate buildings for the tuberculosis insane in the institution under his charge the number of deaths from phthisis has been reduced nearly fifty per cent. A large percentage in the reduction of deaths from this disease has been effected by founding a separate cottage for tuberculous female patients at the Illinois Southern Hospital for the insane. In the wards and infirmary departments of our almshouses we sometimes behold a shocking disregard of needed separation of tuberculous cases from other inmates. Whether a person is serving a penal sentence or is a ward of the State on account of illness or from other cause, it is unjust and inhuman to subject him to the contaminating influence of a dangerous disease. We shall look forward with interest to the result of legislation in 1899, authorizing the establishment by cities of the first class of hospitals for the treatment of pulmonary tuberculosis and of the action of the Legislature of 1900 in establishing an experimental hospital for the treatment of incipient pulmonary tuberculosis.

In the management of our charitable institutions the same principles should be observed that govern a successful business enterprise. There should be brought into play the same rules of economy, the same care should be exercised in recording receipts and disbursements, in purchasing supplies, in inventorying and caring for property, and in attending to all details. Order, system, and propriety should reign throughout, cleanliness and sanitary laws should be strictly enforced, profanity and the use of spirituous liquors forbidden, religious services observed, trained nurses provided for the sick, and kindness and gentleness, instead of unnecessary force, should be the governing principle in controlling and disciplining the inmates.

We are warned by the large amounts annually required for buildings for the accommodation of the dependent classes and the embarrassment of the Legislature in meeting these demands, that the utmost economy consistent with humane care should be observed in providing for these classes. It seems to be a chronic habit of the State to expend on its public edifices larger sums than are necessary for the purposes for which they are designed. This is usually the result of architectural ambition, the pressure from local pride, and the beginning of important enterprises without estimating their completed cost. It certainly behooves us to build more plainly. It is not necessary to adopt an elaborate municipal style for our State charitable institutions and county almshouses, nor do we require the extravagant outlay sometimes made in their interior construction. An expenditure commensurate with that made by the citizen of average means for his family is better than the luxurious appointments we are prone to adopt. Simplicity and economy in building need not stand in the way of securing pleasing exteriors and comfortable interiors, and if buildings are properly located, the grounds about them may be made attractive at a moderate expense.

Over the extended and complicated system of the charities and corrections of a great commonwealth it is imperatively necessary that the State should have its supervising departments, through which the Legislature and the people may derive intimate knowledge of the operations and management of all the institutions and organizations for the care of the dependent and the offending classes. Such supervision is required in order that correct opinions may be formed as to the needs of these classes and that the means provided for their support may be properly applied. To this information the tax-paying citizen and the benevolent persons who contribute gratuitously towards the support of charitable and correctional institutions are entitled. To the extent that charitable corporations are relieved from taxation to that extent they are supported by the public and are beholden to it. Furthermore, State supervision over these institutions is necessary, not only for the protection of the inmates, but also to protect those responsible for their care against slanderous charges sometimes made against a most

worthy charity. In order to meet these requirements as fully as practicable State supervising boards or commissions have been created. The utility of such organizations has been demonstrated in the great reforms that have been effected by the State Board of Charities during the last thirty-three years, by the Lunacy Commission during the eleven years of its existence, and by the Prison Commission since its creation in 1895. To these commissions all institutions and officials connected with charitable and reform work should furnish such information of their operations as may be required. The archives of these departments should be repositories of statistical, general, and particular information relating to the charity and reform work of the State and of all obtainable information from other States and countries. They should also contain building plans of noteworthy institutions, with illustrations of their systems of lighting, water supply, disposal of waste, etc. By these means the different systems and theories for affording public relief and effecting reforms can be analyzed and compared and wise legislation for the dependent and offending classes promoted. Whether it be in the projection of a county poorhouse, a State hospital, reformatory, or prison, through the agency of these boards should be available all necessary information applicable to the establishment of these institutions on advanced principles.

It has long been a mooted question whether State charity boards should exercise simply visitorial powers and report to the Legislature upon the condition and needs of the institutions coming under their inspection, with such recommendations as they deemed desirable, or whether they should be administrative in their character, or should possess both visitorial and administrative functions. The Kansas and Wisconsin boards are illustrations of the last-named plan, while Massachusetts and New York are examples of the combined method. As to this State, the advantages that have been derived from the execution of the State and alien pauper laws, which naturally comes within the jurisdiction of the board, would probably never have been realized had not the board possessed some administrative as well as visitorial powers.

For obvious reasons, the approval of plans for the construc-

tion of buildings is a function which should be lodged with supervising State boards; but whether it is wise to centralize the management of the State charitable institutions in any of the State boards or departments may well be questioned. The managers of these institutions are appointed by the same power and in the same manner as are the commissioners of these supervising boards, and like them, are selected from the most intelligent, conscientious and public-spirited citizens of the State. It would seem that, with the advice and counsel of a supervising board and the assistance of a competent superintendent, a board of upright, intelligent managers should be able to control and direct the affairs of the institution they represent. To the extent that local boards are relieved of their responsibilities by a central executive department of the Government, to that extent the State loses the coöperation of the philanthropic citizens composing such boards and the benefit of a concentration of the thought of many minds upon vital questions affecting the welfare and happiness of the wards of the State. Furthermore, in the distribution of patronage, the centralization of large powers in one bureau is fraught with danger, and the tendency under such a system is towards a lower level and a show of economy which is not real if the purposes and aims of the institution are fully considered.

While it may be claimed that there are some advantages in applying to all the State institutions the same rule for the purchase of supplies and requiring that each item shall pass in detail the ordeal of approval by a supervising board or department of State, there are also some disadvantages in this course. Over so broad a field it is impracticable for a single bureau to determine the widely different daily needs of all the various institutions. Among other things, their wants relate to food, medicine, surgical instruments, farm seeds, stock, farming implements, machinery, tools, etc. Correct judgment respecting the kind and quality of many of the articles requires varied and expert knowledge not likely to be possessed by one individual, and if it were, it could hardly be made available as occasion required. In regard to medicines, it would seem that none other than a physician could judge in every instance as to what the quality should be, and the advice of a practical farmer

would doubtless often be of advantage in the purchase of farm supplies.

If, however, a decentralized plan is followed and the supplies of an institution are purchased by the managers through their superintendent it is necessary that accounts should be kept at the institution in such a manner as to show the expenditure for each kind of supply, as is now done by our Comptroller's Department and by each of the State institutions of Illinois. From such records, the daily average number of patients being given, not only the per capita cost of maintenance, but the per capita cost of each kind of supply is readily obtained. By means of such statistics the Legislature can determine the actual cost in every detail of operating a State institution and can compare the cost of every kind of supply one institution with another. The different institutions are thus brought into competition, a spirit of emulation is aroused, and the ingenuity of the managers is directed towards turning to advantage all the resources at their command. Pride is also awakened to show the best results from the expenditures as to comforts provided, remedies supplied, and improvements effected.

In order that the supervision of a charitable system may be complete, the inspection of its institutions, whether by the commissioners or by their agents, should be thorough. If the inspector is not qualified for his position, the office is belittled and the inspections, instead of being helpful, are harmful and misleading. It should be borne in mind by those charged with this delicate duty, that the administration of the affairs of a large establishment, with always some irresponsible employees, is attended with many vexatious details, that it is not always practicable to bring subordinates up to the standard set for them or to find those who are capable and faithful. Therefore, when it is found that an institution does not rise to its own standard, but it is manifest that there is an honest and conscientious administration, nothing will be lost by exercising a spirit of charity and forbearance in making criticisms. The benevolent intention of those directing the work, and their ambition to have it fulfill its aims and the expectations of the public, should be kept in mind, and such deference and courtesy shown officers in charge as will dignify their positions and

enhance the reputation of the institution. Many of the superintendents and matrons of our charitable and correctional institutions have had much practical experience in their work, and have acquired distinction in their several professions. One of the objects of inspection is to enable the entire State to profit more largely by the experience and wisdom of such officials.

It is not necessary that inspections should be frequent. One thorough inspection is better than many partial ones. Too frequent visitation becomes an annoyance and creates an impression that there is a lack of confidence in the managers and lessens their respect for the supervising commission. If an institution is not properly managed, defects are soon apparent to a careful observer. The difficulty lies not so much in discovering abuses as in correcting them afterwards.

It is believed that when serious faults are found to exist in an institution an advantage will be gained through a conference of the supervising commissioners with the board of managers. In this way an opportunity is afforded for a friendly interchange of views. The commissioners can state more clearly than otherwise the ground of their complaint; the managers, on the other hand, may point out embarrassments in the way of their administration of which the commissioners were not aware: and by mutual coöperation obstacles may be overcome and a reform or change of policy promptly brought about. The commissioners have thus created a coöperative agency in their good work, and the managers are made to realize that they have friends in those whom they imagined were unsympathetic and perhaps overcritical. The aim of supervising boards should be to foster, protect, and render more effective all true agencies of relief and reform coming under their supervision.

Not only should there be harmonious coöperation between our various private charitable and correctional organizations, but the same should exist between these and our public system. It is for the interest of the State and the municipalities to encourage voluntary benevolent work. The amount of capital invested in private charitable organizations is estimated to be not less than ninety-nine and a half million dollars, and the amount expended by such for charitable purposes during the year ending September 30, 1899, was upwards of eighteen and

a half million dollars. It is not possible to give the number of persons engaged in one way and another in this work who receive no pecuniary compensation, but they number many thousands. Surely, such valuable auxiliaries should be utilized, as their work relieves taxpayers of large burdens that must otherwise be borne by them. Moreover, much of the work wrought by private charities, especially in the care and training of the young, cannot be done so successfully by public officials or salaried agents as by those who are governed entirely by motives of pure benevolence.

In administering relief, the advantages that public authorities may derive from the coöperation of voluntary benevolent agencies like Charity Organization Societies in cities is often overlooked. The information obtained by such societies at no small expenditure of time and means is often of great value in distributing relief in the best interests of the applicant and the public, and it would be wise to accept it when proffered.

The care of dependent children is such an important subject that it will receive large consideration by this Conference. The benefits that have been shown to result from the early placing out of homeless children in families have been so manifest that there is a strong and growing tendency to make available to a greater extent than heretofore the family home as a saving agency. The large accumulation during recent years of children in orphan asylums, and the long retention of many of them in these institutions, have strengthened the opinion expressed in some quarters that we should do away with the asylums altogether. A measure so radical, if it were practicable, would result in immeasurable disaster. The saving work performed by earnest men and women through these institutions is incalculable, and the State and the public are greatly indebted to these devoted workers. We still need the orphan asylums and the coöperation of the benevolent spirit sustaining them.

A mistaken idea exists in regard to many of these institutions, particularly those in the smaller cities and rural towns, it being thought that all their inmates could be placed in families if the managers would consent to do so. The facts are, that there are a great many children in the asylums who have been placed there temporarily to tide families over mis-

fortune, and prevent them from breaking up and falling into the dependent class; and there are many homeless waifs for whom the door of a respectable family is not readily opened, the time required to fit them for family life being longer or shorter according to their habits and previous environment. Some children are in a condition to be placed out as soon as they are supplied with comfortable clothing, others require more or less training and discipline before they are welcome in a good private home.

The primary aim of orphan asylums is to prepare children for family life, and their usefulness is measured in a great degree by the activity of their placing-out system. It would therefore, seem well for these institutions to consider the best means of reducing their numbers to the most desirable limit. Whether the children be placed out by agents of the asylum or by coöperation with other agencies, it is important that the State should exercise supervision over them. The neglect and cruelty from which some children have suffered by an injudicious selection of homes warn us that great watchfulness should be exercised over them after they are placed in families. I cannot forego the opportunity this occasion affords of earnestly recommending that not only the dependent but the delinquent children of the State be guarded by a special State agency, in which shall be vested ample statutory powers to extend over them such protection as it has been found practicable to exercise in Massachusetts, Michigan and elsewhere by this means.

In looking back through the last quarter of a century I can see that grand results have been accomplished in the field of charity and correction, but there is still formidable work before us. We can hardly hope to lessen our burdens until some of the causes of degradation and wretchedness are removed. While the forces that produce public dependence and crime are largely beyond the reach of organized charity workers, some of them are within the grasp of legislation and public sentiment. The consequences of intemperance must be borne until the temptation to partake of spirituous liquors, everywhere placed before the people, is removed. The number of licenses granted to sell intoxicating beverages during the last year was 31,530, of which 14,516 were issued for the city of New York.

This legal indorsement of a great evil is an incalculable source of pauperism and crime. There are other obstacles in our way which require patience and energy to overcome, but we have much to encourage us. There could be no more hopeful sign for the future than is manifest in the assembling here of so many earnest workers whose hearts are filled with sympathy for the unfortunate, and whose lives are devoted to the alleviation of human misery and educating and correcting the erring. We will hope that the influence of this Conference will not only strengthen the establishment of our charitable and correctional system on a scientific and philanthropic base, but that the information diffused through the papers, discussions and deliberations of this body will tend to a reduction of pauperism and crime through wise legislation and the creation of a wholesome public sentiment.



