

## RELIEF WORK CARRIED ON IN THE WELLS MEMORIAL INSTITUTE.

(UNDER THE MANAGEMENT OF DENISON HOUSE, BOSTON).

The Wells Memorial Sewing Rooms were opened during the winter of 1893-94 by the Boston College Settlement (Denison House), to provide temporary work for women thrown out of employment by the financial crisis of last winter.

During December the residents of Denison House were so impressed by the suffering among their neighbors (especially among the tailoresses and other working women), to whom they could suggest no means of finding work, that the Denison House Committee determined to try this method of relief. The object of the experiment was to help self-respecting women, unused to receiving charitable aid, especially skilled workwomen, such as tailoresses and dress-makers, by furnishing them with work until they could get into regular employment again.

It was decided to give relief, as adequate as possible, to a few women rather than to give inadequate relief to a larger number of women for whom, because of the help obtained from us, the community might feel no longer responsible.

The Citizens' Relief Committee, appointed about the same time, had already planned a sewing room for women, besides outdoor work for men. The Denison House plan seemed to them, however, to supply a need that could not so well be met by their work-rooms at Bedford street, and they offered to contribute toward it the salary of the manager and the wages of the workwomen as well as some of the materials. The work-rooms, lighted and heated, were given rent free by the managers of the Wells Memorial Institute. All other expenses, including materials (outside those given by the

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Citizens' Committee), and all payments for salary or wages after March 24, when the subsidy granted by the Citizens' Committee ceased, were met by contributions either privately offered or given in answer to an appeal published in the Boston papers of Saturday, February 24, 1894.

The plans having been decided on by December 23, all preliminary arrangements were made with great dispatch. On December 26, the rooms were opened for cutting, etc. On December 27, thirty women, personally known to the residents of Denison House, were received at the work-rooms. Within a few days this number increased to sixty, and within two weeks to 150 working in two shifts, each shift being employed for half a week, at a uniform wage of seventy-five cents a day (\$2.25 a week). The number was limited to 150 each week, but under great pressure occasionally reached 175. The work was in charge of a general manager, assisted by a cutter, three forewomen and a janitor. When necessary an assistant cutter was employed. A department for investigating and admitting applicants, finding employment and giving relief in special cases, was also organized.

The garments manufactured were the simplest style of undergarments for adults, children and infants, plain dresses of both wool and cotton for children of all ages, wrappers and other useful articles for invalids, men's shirts of outing flannel, girls' and women's cotton shirt-waists, and bed linen.

Machine work was put into very few garments; the sewing was for the most part well done, though a teacher, who was also an examiner, was regularly employed later on to assist those workers who were unskilled in this line of work.

About 500 yards of material were consumed each week, making a total aggregate of 10,000 yards, supplied from the following sources: Citizens' Relief Committee, Boston City Hospital, Sea Island Relief Committee, Dedham Boys' Home, Home for Aged Men, Children's Friend Society,

New England Hospital, Girls' Friendly Society, Denison House.

In all 3522 garments were manufactured and disposed of as follows:

Citizens' Relief Committee . . . . .	1137	Sisters of Charity (Harrison Avenue) . . . . .	104
Sea Island Sufferers . . . . .	597	St. Vincent's Asylum . . . . .	67
Boston City Hospital . . . . .	607	Girls' Friendly Society . . . . .	15
Dedham Boys' Home . . . . .	102	Miss M. C. Jackson (for distribution) . . . . .	123
Home for Aged Men . . . . .	96	Roxbury Fire Sufferers, private orders and miscellaneous gifts . . . . .	483
Children's Friend Society . . . . .	37		
New England Hospital . . . . .	8		
Baldwinville Hospital Cottages . . . . .	58		
Salvation Army . . . . .	67		
Travelers' Aid Society . . . . .	21	Total . . . . .	3522

It will be seen from this list that competition with trade was as far as possible avoided, the product of the work-rooms being neither put on the market nor disposed of to ordinary consumers. It was not the aim to manufacture goods for individuals so much as for institutions which do not employ the regular shops for the grade of work done at Wells Memorial: for example, the orders filled for the City Hospital were for garments usually made by the nurses in their spare time in the institution, and the taking of the work at Wells Memorial deprived no shops or other work-rooms of orders.

#### STATEMENT OF FUNDS RECEIVED AND EXPENDED.

To cash received:

Citizens' Relief Committee . . . . .	\$4,743.68
Contributions through Denison House . . . . .	2,810.02
	—————
	<u>\$7,553.70</u>

By sundries:

* Wages (\$.75 a day) . . . . .	\$4,836.89
† Salaries and miscel. wages . . . . .	1,189.01
Work given out in the homes . . . . .	187.30
Expert statistician . . . . .	47.10
	—————
	\$6,260.30

\* "Wages" were paid to women on the regular shift.

† The permanent staff, also persons out of employment, consisted of seven. Of these the man employed as a cutter received the largest salary—\$12.00 a week.

By amount brought forward . . . . .	\$6,260.30	
Sewing machine . . . . .	\$20.00	
Bradford, Thomas & Co., C. F.		
Hovey & Co. (materials) . . . .	413.35	
Stationery, expressage and sun-		
dries . . . . .	101.53	
		534.88
* Employment at Denison House .	\$223.97	
Given to Relief Work at Rev. E.		
E. Hale's church . . . . .	50.00	
Returned to Citizens' Relief Com-		
mittee . . . . .	84.60	
		358.57
Balance in hand of Denison House to be		
used for employment . . . . .	399.95	
		<u>\$7,553.70</u>

In regard to applicants for work the facts are as follows:

Of 692 recorded applicants, 100 were not investigated and 268 were refused after investigation, though never without an attempt to refer those in need to other sources of help. In some cases work was found for applicants.†

\* Employment at Denison House was in the form of extra domestic service, carpentering, painting, sewing, shoveling of snow, etc., ways in which every householder may give work-relief.

† APPLICANTS REFUSED.

Of 268 applicants refused:

- 37 had found regular employment (or some member of the family had done so).
- 66 had found work at other relief rooms.
- 32 had been referred to other relief rooms, but failed to secure work, because not suitable.
- 14 were referred with notes to the Associated Charities.
- 24 were referred with notes to other charities.
- 12 were referred to Women's Educational and Industrial Union for house-work. Of these three are known to have obtained work.
- 20 could not be found at address given.
- 24 did not appear to need relief work.
- 5 were otherwise cared for, *e. g.*, had fare paid to home had a home found in country, were sent to hospital, etc.
- 6 were outside of city limits.
- 12 were of unfit class, as beggars, peddlers, persons wholly unable to sew and others.
- 16 were refused for cause not stated.

*Résumé.* 268 persons refused; of these 106 found work elsewhere; 40 found regular employment, and 66 found temporary work-relief in other rooms.

Of the total number of applicants no record was kept. During the first two days alone 300 persons applied, many of whom were so evidently not of the class for whom the work was intended that they were turned away without registration, though not without some suggestion or advice. Though the demand for work was not so great after the first, the recorded number probably represents not more than half of the total number of applicants.

Investigation was at first informal; if the case was pressing the applicant received work-relief immediately. About January 15, the work was so systematized that it became possible to investigate every case before admission. A printed form was employed on which the condition, viz., name, age, trade, time out of work, number of dependents in family, and other useful facts were recorded. This information was verified by a visit to the home, and often further authenticated by a call at the office of the former employer, the more pressing cases, of course, receiving immediate attention. The investigation was completed by sending every card filled out to be compared with the Associated Charities' records. Among all the applications only four or five cases of conscious fraud appeared.

The 324 applicants who were investigated and accepted were classified under the following heads:\*

Class 1. Women working at trades, out of employment because of the hard times, but expecting work in the spring . . . . .	161
Class 2. Housewives forced by the hard times to become wage-earners . . . . .	62
Class 3. Copyists, saleswomen, seamstresses, cleaners, etc., whose lack of work was due to the hard times . . . . .	85
Class not stated . . . . .	16
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Total number of workers . . . . .	324

\* The following tables are based on one or the other of two totals: either, 324, being the number of workers; or 592, being the number of applicants and workers taken together. Those tables and remarks that are starred are drawn from the Twenty-fourth Annual Report of the Massachusetts Bureau of Statistics of Labor and are computed from the total of 592.

The following miscellaneous tables show various facts concerning the workers in these rooms, but it must be remembered that general conclusions can scarcely be drawn from so small a number of persons. Owing to the fact that the investigating department was not organized immediately, the results obtained are usually based on a proportion only of the whole number of workers.

Of the number supplied with work-relief the native born were 126, the foreign born, 120; total number stated, 246; number not stated, 78; making a total of 324. Of the 324 workers, 269 stated length of residence in Boston as follows: 179, ten years or over; 37, from five to ten years; 40, from two to five years; 5, between one and two years, while only 8 had been in Boston under one year, showing that by far the greater number of workers were old residents of Boston. The total number helped, including families, was 1060 persons.

The following table shows trades of workers:

Sewing trades.	{	Dressmakers and seamstresses, 75	
		Tailoresses . . . . .	75
		Allied trades . . . . .	24
		—	174
Domestic work . . . . .			27
Saleswomen . . . . .			5
Housewives . . . . .			62
Factory help . . . . .			14
Other occupations . . . . .			12
Occupation not stated . . . . .			30
			—
Total . . . . .			324

This table shows that we succeeded fairly well in our first aim of helping tailoresses and skilled workers.

The time during which 229 of the 324 workers had been out of work averaged three and seven-tenths months. Twenty-seven of the men in the families of the 324 workers received from the City Work Relief during the winter, a

total of \$324.27. In the families of 160 there were no men (unless dependents). Fifty-six of the women received from other relief rooms a total of \$435.27. This does not mean overlapping, as in most cases the work was given at different times. These facts show how little the other relief work affected the special families helped by the Wells Memorial Rooms.

The table on page 68 classifies the occupations as shop work, home work, and domestic and personal service:

\*“This table also shows the average weekly earnings under each classified occupation head, as reported by the applicants, and presents a classification with respect to each of the items included in the table under the head of native born, foreign born, and birthplace not given, with aggregates.

“The average amount of work-relief furnished to the persons previously engaged in shop work was \$15.11, while those who had been engaged in work at home received \$17.05, and the persons previously engaged in domestic and personal service, \$14.69. The grand average amount of work-relief supplied to all applicants in the aggregate was \$14.93; while the grand average weekly wage previously earned by the applicants, in the aggregate, was \$5.29. They therefore received an amount nearly equivalent to three weeks' wages at the rate of earnings previous to being thrown out of employment.

“The proportion which the amount of work-relief furnished the different classes of workers shown in the table bears to average weekly earnings does not in most cases vary from the proportion which applies to all applicants in the aggregate. In some cases, however, it rises as high as four weeks' pay, and in others falls to about the amount previously earned in two weeks.”

\* See foot note, p. 65.

* CLASSIFICATION.	NATIVE BORN.				FOREIGN BORN.				BIRTHPLACE NOT GIVEN.				AGGREGATES.			
	WEEKLY EARNINGS.		VALUE OF WORK-RELIEF.		WEEKLY EARNINGS.		VALUE OF WORK-RELIEF.		WEEKLY EARNINGS.		VALUE OF WORK-RELIEF.		WEEKLY EARNINGS.		VALUE OF WORK-RELIEF.	
	Number Reporting.	Average.	Number Supplied.	Average.	Number Reporting.	Average.	Number Supplied.	Average.	Number Reporting.	Average.	Number Reporting.	Average.	Number Supplied.	Average.	Number Reporting.	Average.
1 Shop work,	89	\$5.34	93	\$15.69	95	\$5.41	86	\$15.81	28	\$4.87	13	\$6.29	212	\$5.31	192	\$15.11
2 Home work,	8	5.69	24	20.01	11	5.57	41	17.81	3	6.67	10	6.88	22	5.76	75	17.05
3 Domestic and personal service,	7	5.43	8	16.55	13	4.08	14	17.21	5	4.61	5	6.17	25	4.56	27	14.69
4 Not given,	5	5.80	5	10.05	8	5.97	6	15.44	15	4.97	19	4.65	28	5.40	30	8.67
5 Totals, . . .	109	\$5.40	130	\$16.33	127	\$5.32	147	\$16.49	51	\$4.98	47	\$6.19	287	\$5.29	324	\$14.93

\* See foot note, p. 65.



The next table shows the value of work-relief as classified under amounts varying from \$3.00 and under to \$53.25.

Classified Value of Work-Relief.	Number of Per- sons Receiving.
Under \$3.00 . . . . .	32
\$3.00, but under \$12.00 . . . . .	130
\$12.00, but under \$18.00 . . . . .	49
\$18.00, but under \$25.00 . . . . .	57
\$25.00, but under \$35.00 . . . . .	35
\$35.00, but under \$45.00 . . . . .	17
\$48.75, but under \$54.00 . . . . .	4
Total . . . . .	<u>324</u>

\* Of the total number of 592 applicants the number stating usual weekly earnings was 287. Of these 122 (eighty-seven of whom had worked in shops), had previously received less than \$5.00 per week, 153 had received \$5.00 or more, but less than \$10.00, while 12 had received \$10.00 or over.

The number of our workers who had been previously aided by the Associated Charities was investigated with the following results: Of 324 workers, 86 were found to be recorded at the office of the Associated Charities. But of the 86 recorded, 15 cases were registered, but were not known to have received aid; 32 cases had been helped for the first time this winter (1893-94); 25 had been helped previously, numbers of whom had received aid only once, or perhaps during one past winter, and 14 were chronic cases. This leaves, out of 324 workers, only 39 who were known to have received charitable aid before the past winter.

The table on page 70 relates to rent and brings out the following facts: The number of applicants reporting the amount of rent paid by the families to which they belonged was 306; 209 made no report as to rent, while 77 were boarding. The 306 who reported rent paid, represented 1129 persons who occupied 833 rooms and paid a total monthly rent of \$3,182.48. The average monthly rent per room ranges from \$2.04 in Ward 2 to \$6.87 in Ward 10; the last sum,

\* See foot note, p. 65.

however, represents but a single case and is much above the average in any other ward, the next highest being \$5.18 in Ward 9, an average representing reports made by 7 persons.

In general, the monthly rent per room does not rise above \$5.00 nor fall below \$2.50. The average number of persons to a room was highest in Ward 6, where it reached 2.29, and lowest in Ward 21, where it was 0.65. A high average number of persons to a room (more than 1.50) appears in Wards 2, 5, 6, 7, 8, 11 and 17.

*THE CITY AND WARDS.	APPLICANTS.				APPLICANTS REPORTING RENT PAID.				AVERAGES.	
	Reporting Rent Paid.	Not Reporting Rent Paid.	Boarding.	Totals.	Number.	Number of Persons.	Number of Rooms.	Total Monthly Rent Paid.	Monthly Rent per Room.	Persons to a Room.
THE CITY OF BOSTON . . .	306	209	77	592	306	1129	833	\$3,182 48	\$3 82	1.36
Ward 1 . . .	—	5	1	6	—	—	—	—	—	—
Ward 2 . . .	2	2	2	6	2	16	10	20 42	2 04	1.60
Ward 3 . . .	5	—	—	5	5	23	21	60 50	2 88	1.10
Ward 4 . . .	—	1	2	3	—	—	—	—	—	—
Ward 5 . . .	4	2	3	9	4	15	9	35 25	3 92	1.67
Ward 6 . . .	6	4	1	11	6	39	17	70 33	4 14	2.29
Ward 7 . . .	7	6	3	16	7	32	18	61 00	3 39	1.78
Ward 8 . . .	11	4	7	22	11	50	28	142 26	5 08	1.79
Ward 9 . . .	7	5	2	14	7	25	19	98 42	5 18	1.32
Ward 10 . . .	5	1	1	7	5	11	8	54 99	6 87	1.38
Ward 11 . . .	20	11	8	39	20	87	55	275 67	5 01	1.58
Ward 12 . . .	54	18	5	77	54	136	101	467 02	4 62	1.35
Ward 13 . . .	24	12	6	42	24	124	83	232 67	2 80	1.49
Ward 14 . . .	8	7	3	18	8	30	30	69 00	2 30	1.00
Ward 15 . . .	9	7	—	16	9	35	35	91 83	2 62	1.00
Ward 16 . . .	55	46	11	112	55	188	142	570 25	4 02	1.32
Ward 17 . . .	32	24	7	63	32	116	77	307 34	3 99	1.51
Ward 18 . . .	11	6	3	20	11	23	19	89 90	4 73	1.21
Ward 19 . . .	19	8	4	31	19	71	57	217 15	3 81	1.25
Ward 20 . . .	12	8	4	24	12	52	45	144 41	3 21	1.16
Ward 21 . . .	5	3	2	10	5	11	17	57 66	3 39	0.65
Ward 22 . . .	3	4	1	8	3	17	12	30 75	2 56	1.42
Ward 23 . . .	5	4	1	10	5	17	18	58 66	3 26	0.94
Ward 24 . . .	2	4	—	6	2	11	12	27 00	2 25	0.92
Ward not specified . . .	—	17	—	17	—	—	—	—	—	—

\* See foot note, p. 65.

Attempts were made to ascertain the former savings of applicants. Nothing fit for tabulation could be gathered, but the impression received was that these work-women, as a whole, had never been able to save except for some temporary emergency, which soon enough occurred. When it is remembered that 160 of these women had no active men in their families to help bear the burden of support, that their average weekly wage, when in regular work, was \$5.29—and that “regular” work in any occupation is seldom steady throughout the year—it will be seen that there was usually small margin for saving. Instances were not rare of women, who, during a large part of their working lives, had supported sick or aged relatives.

Inquiries as to indebtedness were made (except as to insurance policies and pawn tickets) with the result that 189 persons reported debts varying from \$2.00 to (in one case) \$400. Much the largest part of the indebtedness was for rent. Though many women could not pay anything toward rent from the sum earned at the work-rooms, very few were evicted by landlords. On the other hand, there were few cases where, to our knowledge, the weekly rent was reduced because of the hard times.

The workers were accepted with the understanding that earnest and constant effort must be made by them to secure legitimate work in the regular trades. The employment department furthered these efforts with more or less success, sometimes placing the workers in their own trade if not with their former employers. Advertisements were answered, and those women who were able to take domestic service were registered at the Women’s Educational and Industrial Union.

In the work-rooms the women were divided into three grades according to skill, each grade in a separate room, and each under the care of a forewoman. The day’s work lasted seven hours, and fines were exacted for tardiness; one hour was allowed for dinner, and at this time the

women were given the use of a hall and piano in the building. A hot lunch was sent in from the New England Kitchen for those who desired it, at a cost of about eight cents each. Cheap as this was, most of the workers preferred to save by bringing their own lunch of bread and butter, with perhaps some cold tea. The forewomen did much teaching, and in the room of the least skilled workers a second teacher was also constantly employed. This element of training helped to raise the standard of the work. Many improved, and some (among them married women with children) thanked the managers afterward for the opportunity of learning to sew. While there were idle, careless and incompetent workers, and while the standard suffered somewhat from the criterion of employment being need and not good work, still the spirit of the work-rooms was, on the whole, one of industry and ambition. Women were heard to boast that the articles from these work-rooms were better finished than in shops for ready-made goods, and showed their own work in proof of the fact. A rough estimate was made of the competence of each woman in the work. This is scarcely a fair gauge of general competence, as the work was confined to sewing, in which many women well trained in some other direction might not be proficient. The fact was shown, however, that 72 of our women were utterly incompetent seamstresses, that 127 did work of medium grade, while 125 did excellent work.

Of women belonging to the sewing trades the proportion of skilled and unskilled workers is shown in the following table:

	Competent.	Medium.	Poor.
Dressmakers and seamstresses . . . . .	46	20	9
Tailoresses . . . . .	31	31	13
	—	—	—
Totals . . . . .	77	51	22

Or 77 competent, against 73 medium or poor.

On May 5 the rooms were closed, few applicants having

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been received during the previous month, and the number of workers having been gradually reduced by discharge.

The following table shows the conditions under which workers left the work-rooms:

Obtained regular employment . . . . .	172
Of these 40 were known to be poorly placed, and 28 to have entered domestic service.	
Referred to other work-relief rooms . . . . .	8
Referred to domestic service . . . . .	17
Found not to need the work . . . . .	16
Provided with other aid . . . . .	3
Placed in care of Associated Charities . . . . .	11
Referred to other charities . . . . .	4
Discharged for intemperance . . . . .	2
Needing only temporary aid . . . . .	8
Miscellaneous . . . . .	24
Unprovided for at closing of rooms . . . . .	59
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Total . . . . .	324

Twenty-five of the persons discharged were placed by us in positions. This number, however, scarcely shows the amount of employment found by us, as numbers of temporary places, especially at seamstress work, are not recorded. We hoped that some of these might lead to permanent work, and in some cases this happened. When the work proved only temporary, the women were re-admitted. Certain employers recalled their work-women after a correspondence with us. (It was remarked that most employers seemed glad to provide for their work-people when they could, and anxious to speak well of them.) Ten were reported as placed by the Employment Bureau of the Women's Educational and Industrial Union, but this number also is probably understated, as persons placed often sent us word merely of the fact, without telling through what means their positions had been secured. One hundred and thirty-seven of the workers, as far as known, placed themselves. Whenever a worker ceased to come in, a card was sent her asking to know the cause of her absence, and whether she had found

work. Volunteer assistants visited and helped persons requiring special relief. In all about 100 such visits were made, upon about thirty persons—the assistance given being of various sorts.

Of the fifty-nine persons left unprovided for at the closing of the rooms, a large proportion belonged to the four following classes:

1. Bread-winners—so tied by burdens at home that they could not seek employment elsewhere (as, *e. g.*, in domestic service).
2. Housewives (not the usual bread-winners), whose husbands were still out of work.
3. Tailoresses, incompetent in general work, trained only in one branch of their work and knowing no other way to make a living.
4. The sickly and incompetent.

So much is said about the constant demand for household servants that it has seemed worth while to roughly analyze the list of our workers, and if possible show the reasons why not more than twenty-eight out of 324 were placed in domestic service.

#### CLASSIFICATION OF WORKERS IN RESPECT TO DOMESTIC SERVICE.

Kept at home by dependents . . . . .	104
Physically unable . . . . .	30
Superannuated . . . . .	20
Skilled workers in other trades . . . . .	24
Jews (who could serve only with Jews) . . . . .	12
Ignorant and slovenly . . . . .	11
Total unfit for domestic service . . . . .	— 201
Obtained other employment . . . . .	25
Untrained . . . . .	10
Unwilling to enter service . . . . .	18
Willing “ “ but not placed . . . . .	17
Placed in service . . . . .	28
Total fit for domestic service . . . . .	— 98
Unclassified . . . . .	25
Total . . . . .	324

It is quite true that there is among many workers a prejudice, more or less unfounded, against domestic service, and

those women who refused suitable places were discharged from the work-rooms. In all other cases there were substantial reasons why the majority of our workers did not enter domestic service.

The reluctance to enter service, even when the worker has no dependents to absolutely prevent her, may be traced to some of the following reasons:

1. Family affection; the worker is unwilling to leave her home and relatives. Allied to this is her attachment to her church.

2. The fact that domestic service is never done; mechanics, shop-workers, etc., have a definite number—usually not more than ten—of working hours, after which they are free, but in most families a domestic is expected to be on duty from twelve to fourteen or even sixteen hours daily. True, she may not be at work all this time, but her time is at her mistress' disposal.

3. Closely allied to this is the lack of liberty. A shop girl or seamstress has her evenings and all Sunday to herself. A domestic has but one afternoon a week with, perhaps some part of Sunday. It must not be supposed that the girls necessarily wish free time for idleness or demoralizing pursuits; they merely share the desire we all feel to do our work in a definite time and then be free.

4. The need for some social life: most families keep but one servant; she does not and cannot share the family life. She has but the one afternoon in which to make acquaintances, and she is necessarily lonely; more especially when her employer lives in the country. This is felt the more because girls of the class from which domestics usually come have few resources within themselves. The sociability of shop work, moreover, is in marked contrast to domestic work.

5. Class feeling: rightly or wrongly a certain stigma attaches to domestic service, and a girl who becomes a "servant" loses caste among her former associates.

6. Lack of training: many who would be willing to enter service have had no training whatever, and know that to undertake it in their present state of ignorance is to invite constant fault-finding and "nagging" from their mistress.

Such are some of the reasons which keep working women away from household service. There are cases in which women, well-fitted to do so, refuse to go into service, preferring to be supported in whole or in part by charity, and these deserve neither sympathy nor aid, but they are the exceptions. It must be noted that the objections to domestic service are not in themselves ignoble; but in harmony with the democratic tendency of the age. Notwithstanding the fact that wages are higher in domestic service and that positions are plentiful, women choose the more crowded and more poorly paid occupations. This indicates that in the minds of the workers the objections are rather serious. The problem of how to remove them is a perplexing one. The adoption of the following measures would help in the solution:

1. Establishment of training schools, through which domestic service should be raised to the rank of a skilled occupation.
2. Establishment of definite and moderate working hours for servants, outside of which their time should be their own, overtime being paid for.
3. More opportunity for social intercourse, not confined to their own sex.

#### GENERALIZATION.

Whatever success may have attended our venture is due to having picked workers and not many of them; to the friendly personal relations between workers and managers who often knew intimately the condition of the workers; to the element of training in the work, a high standard being preserved by conscientious forewomen, and to the plan of assuming a definite responsibility for a limited number of



the unemployed. The persistent effort to place the women in regular employment has maintained the temporary and supplementary character of the work. Three hundred and twenty-four women were enabled to earn a sum averaging three weeks' wages during the six weeks of severest stress last winter. During this time these women were saved from the demoralizing results of complete idleness and from that degradation of character which comes from receiving aid without giving a return; while self-respect, and, to some extent, physical strength were preserved until they could return to ordinary work. In some cases this work alone saved them from utter discouragement. Workers were not attracted to these rooms from outside the city, but the work was given to citizens of Boston who, by rough calculation, had an average residence of eighteen years. The persons helped were, moreover, largely those who had never received charitable aid to any extent. The work was paid for in money, which has gone back into the natural currents of trade. When our work-rooms were closed fifty-nine women were turned adrift with no prospect of immediate employment, but many of these could not take regular positions. Some who were housewives still needed temporary aid in their homes till their husbands could find work; others, incompetent or disabled, required permanent relief. We could congratulate ourselves that 172 former workers had found regular employment, and altogether 199 were known to be past their worst need.

Furthermore the articles produced had been well made and had found their way into serviceable channels. So far as we can see the larger share of the product of our shop has not come into competition with the output of business enterprises.

We hope, moreover, that the lessons learned in our experience may have a certain value to those contemplating such undertakings for the future. The following cautions are suggested:

1. The method of advertisement of relief work is a perplexing question. On the one hand the plan of application at the rooms has the disadvantage of raising hopes which often cannot be satisfied, and of attracting unsuitable applicants; while on the other hand, by the plan of giving out admission tickets to churches, charitable societies, trades unions and other agencies the independent trade workers are often not reached. When the first method was used our experience showed that superior women applied for work.

2. Investigation of applicants should be organized at the beginning of the work, as few questions as possible should be asked, and from the first the workers should be admitted only after previous investigation, including comparison with the Associated Charities records.

3. Relief, other than work, if necessary at all, should be supplied from some other source than the work-room, since the giving of such relief tends to turn the room, in the minds of the workers, from a place for obtaining honest work to a relief agency. Extra work for some especial need may, however, be given.

4. Competition with regular business is a serious danger, but by taking pains this can be avoided with reasonable completeness as long as the work of the world is not all done, as long as there remain consumers who have no money to buy goods through the regular channels.

5. The employment of housewives rather than the usual bread-winners is a mistake. It takes the women from their proper work of caring for their families and leaves the husband or other bread-winner in idleness. It may be necessary to help the women when the men can obtain no work, but when work-relief is organized the men rather than their wives should be employed.

6. As for the incompetent they should be weeded out of the work-room as soon as possible, and sent (by some wisely exercised compulsion, if need be), to a place where they can be trained to do some useful work. Those whom it is

impossible to train in this way should be provided with some work, but certainly not in the same work-room with those who are unemployed on account of industrial depression, since their needs are of a different nature. A work-room freed from the presence of the incompetent would be relieved of some of its most serious dangers.

7. The danger of depressing wages by work-relief is very great. An employer knowing that his work-people are willing to work where they can earn only \$2.25 per week thinks they should submit to any terms he may make. Numbers of our women went from our rooms to poor places, *e. g.*, tailoresses returned to us in despair from shops where they earned by piece-work \$.70, \$1.75 and \$2.30 for a week's hard work. The same thing holds true in regard to domestic service. Not infrequently last winter applications were received from employers who expected to secure trained servants for their board and lodging. There is the same danger, too, in any investigation of applicants through the former employer, as the depressed condition of his workers is thus made known to him. It was noticed that the work-people themselves dreaded this and were chary of letting their employers know their present condition. On the other hand, such investigation sometimes moved employers to call back their workers from motives of pity or justice. Whatever is done in this line should certainly be very carefully managed. Employment bureaus should not be started in connection with work-relief rooms, though they might with advantage be maintained in close communication with them. They should not be for the unemployed alone, and they should be confined to those workers who are competent in some direction.

8. The workers should feel that the work given them is useful and real employment.

9. There is danger when work-relief is started that the community may consider it adequate and throw off all personal responsibility. The impossibilities that relief work

should give employment to all should be emphasized. It must be admitted that no organization can meet the need, that every private individual must do what he can in helping, especially in using his money to give extra employment.

It is often argued that work-relief attracts people from regular lines of employment. If the incompetent are excluded, this danger may be largely avoided. Indeed there should be little fear of skilled workers being attracted by a low wage at half time. \$2.25 per week is far below a living wage.

The above consists, in the main, of reports prepared by Miss Helen Cheever and Miss Laurette Cate, who, with myself, had practical charge of the work. The managers agree in the opinion, confirmed by their experience in these work-rooms, that whenever aid must be given to able-bodied persons it should be in payment for work done under conditions conducive to self-respect.

It is, however, not inconsistent with this opinion to hold that such rooms as we have described are but the slightest palliative for unemployment. In the first place they are inadequate. In the second place they are wasteful of money and labor.

It is hoped that a condition of affairs such as we passed through last winter may not return, but should such conditions tend, under the present system, to become chronic, then relief work is about as adequate as a shelter of boughs against the equinoctial storm.

Granting that relief work is economically unsound, that we "put in a dollar and take out thirty cents," that if carried on incautiously it may involve other classes in distress through competition, that there is danger of attracting the shiftless and of taking away some incentive for individual exertion, that in fact some may "dare" be lazier because of relief work, still the fact remains that there are honest and industrious men and women in the community who cannot get work, who have nothing to live on but the current

proceeds of their work, and who cannot be helped through any charitable methods unless it be by work-relief. There are many who prefer work but will, under stress of need, take direct charity and then be forced into the pauper class.

If we condemn work-relief, what then is the alternative? Surely not starvation, surely not aid without work, but some more radical treatment of the evil. What this may be let the sociological expert point out to us. Meantime is there any temporary palliative which will do less harm than work-relief?

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