

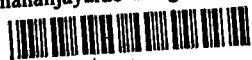
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VOLUME II

LONDON

CONTINUED.

EDITED BY CHARLES BOOTH.

WITH MAPS AND APPENDIX UNDER A SEPARATE COVER.

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CONCLUSION.

CONCLUSION.

OUTLINE OF FURTHER WORK.

At an early stage in my work, when asked by one from whom I sought information—"What is the good of it all?" I had to admit that I walked in faith. This attitude of mind had changed but little when I reached the end of the first volume. I was indeed satisfied that the problem I sought to solve involved the divorce of poverty from industry, and it seemed that the attainment of this solution carried with it the elimination of Class B. I showed that this helpless class hangs fatally round the necks of the classes above it, and especially of those but just above it, and I pointed out that it is industrially valueless as well as socially pernicious. I also showed that its numbers are not so very great as to render the expense of dealing with it in some semi-socialistic fashion, in the interest of self-supporting labour, a crushing burthen to the community. It is not, in fact, expense which bars the way, but the difficulty of employing any means, or devising any scheme, which would not tend to increase the numbers to be dealt with. Finally, I advocated an extension of Poor Law action as worthy of trial, but was not prepared to make any very definite suggestions.

The conclusion of a second volume leaves my position unchanged. An extension of the area of inquiry from East London to the whole of London has enlarged the wilderness of figures but has not done much to make the path more clear. It is no less evident than before that Class B is the *crux* of the situation, but it is not more easy to see how it should be dealt with. To the proposal for a revision of the Poor Law I shall return, but not until I am better equipped for its practical discussion. Anyone who studies the detailed accounts of sample London streets given in the foregoing pages, will learn how various are the circumstances even of those who can only be considered as "very poor," and can hardly fail to perceive how multiform are the remedies which the troubles of poverty demand. What is less evident, and more unheeded, is the extent to which multiform remedies, wise or unwise, are now being applied. Before attempting to decide what further, or other action should be pursued, we need to take stock of all that is being done now, so as to trace the effects of the agencies actually at work upon the existing state of things; to compare the principles by which they are guided, one with another, and the condition of districts left to themselves on account of the lack or lapse of such agencies, with that of others in which religious or philanthropic enthusiasm is active; and so gather into one focus a mass of varied experience. This I shall try to do.

On the other hand, looking at the subject from the industrial side, I propose to attempt a description of the condition of the people, grouped according to their trades, as was partially done for East London. To this undertaking (the figures of the census of 1891 being made its basis) my next volume will be devoted.

If I can accomplish all that I have laid down, so as to show not only where poverty exists in London and in what degree, but also something of its relation to industry and of the manner in which it is affected for good or evil by

existing social action of various kinds, I conceive that the knowledge may be of real value, making it more possible than it is now to avoid the wrong and choose the right path onward.

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