

'benevolent assimilation,' as he calls it."

"What does that mean?"

"'Benevolent assimilation' — ah — well, it's rather difficult to explain it so that a boy of your years can understand. 'Assimilation' means to make similar, to make alike. For instance, we have in this country all kinds of people. We have Germans, and Irish, and Scandinavians, and so on, who are quite different from one another when they arrive in this country, but after they've been here for awhile and become acquainted with our form of government and take up with our customs and habits they assimilate, as it were, and all become Americans, and they're very much alike after awhile. Now if we crush the rebels in the Philippine islands we will send large numbers of Americans over there to develop the industries of the country and help along the process of 'benevolent assimilation.'"

"Then they'll all be Filipinos, the same as the natives, won't they?"

"Oh, my, no! You don't understand at all."

"But all the people who come into this country get to be regular Americans, don't they?"

"You must remember, my son, that when white men, Anglo-Saxons, we may say, go into a country which is occupied by one of the dark races, which is inferior in intelligence and has not kept pace with the modern advancement in commerce and the useful sciences, the white man naturally dominates. He runs things. That's always the case. The enterprising and intellectual white man becomes the real power in the country. You can see that right here in the United States. The Indian hasn't been able to compete with the white man."

"Has he had that, what is it you call it—benev—ben—"

"'Benevolent assimilation.'"

"That's it — benevolent assimilation?"

"Well, the rule holds good, as I said. The Indian is lazy and lacking in enterprise and it's natural that the white man should beat him out and take his place. It was never intended that this great land of ours should be overrun from one end to the other by packs of savages who never built any towns or made any roads or laid out any farms, or did anything else to develop the country."

"Did the Indians live all over this country once, papa?"

"Yes, my son, they had their camps right here where Chicago stands."

"What's become of all of them?"

"There are some of them left out west, but, naturally, they are disappearing. In a little while they will be gone—all of them."

"This—what you call it—assimilation didn't seem to help them much."

"Of course assimilation doesn't improve a people unless the people turn in and assimilate."

"Maybe these Filipinos are afraid that they'll get crowded out the same as the Indians."

"Oh, pshaw! What do those Filipinos know about the history of the American Indian? No, the only trouble with them is that they want to govern themselves. After we get that fool notion knocked out of them and get plenty of troops over on the islands I don't think there'll be any more difficulty. Now don't ask any more questions. They ought to keep these complicated questions out of the public schools. Children can't understand them. They ought to be left to statesmen."—George Ade, in The Chicago Record.

THE PROBLEM OF THE GREAT UNWASHED.

For The Public.

This article was written with especial reference to pending legislation in New York relative to public bath houses; but it will be of interest wherever the public water supply is municipalized.

City growth produces conditions faster than fitting solutions; these latter follow slowly and not without friction. It is best so, for if changes were made lightly, confusion and great injury would frequently ensue.

Many honest investigators, who by diligent study and examination discover undoubted evidences of corrupt or inadequate municipal machinery, propose to substitute changes that if adopted would work greater injury than the abuse displaced.

Any change from a confessedly bad system is not necessarily a betterment. There are innumerable bad methods; there can be only one right way.

A true conservatism will insist upon reasonable assurances that a proposed change is for the better before altering forms that are through long experience in a measure bearable. This sentiment, however, should not be pushed to the absurdity of preferring defective service to proper methods.

No function of municipal organization is more important than the supplying of water, for it touches our health and our lives, while most others only affect our convenience or our property.

1. Importance of Water Supply:

We cannot, if we would, avoid contact with the great unwashed. They meet

us at every turn. They produce the clothes we wear and handle the supplies we consume. They ride with us in the same cars and live in the same atmosphere that all breathe; and, therefore, ordinary selfishness impels us to eradicate the evil in order to escape the danger. Crowded and congested cities make a common brotherhood of all men; and if not for ethical reasons, then for the preservation of health we must abolish uncleanness. All contagious diseases are filth diseases, and epidemics are impossible where cleanliness is observed. The tenement house commissioners' report of 1894 presented a phase of the situation worth considering; they said:

The freer use of water by the tenement house population would aid them very materially in their struggle for existence by assisting the elimination from their systems of the poisons absorbed in their sunless and airless dwellings. That several hundred thousand people in the city have not proper facilities for keeping their bodies clean is a disgrace to the city and to the civilization of the nineteenth century. These facilities have been used and are abundant in many enlightened nations, and they are being increased in every way possible. The amount of money annually spent in charity in this city amounts to millions; and the question arises whether it be not greater economy to spend more for the preservation of health and the prevention of disease, because less would then be required for the support and care of the sick and helpless.

The cultivation of the habit of personal cleanliness has a favorable effect, also, upon character, tending to self-respect and decency of life. Says Dr. Jane E. Robbins, of the College Settlement:

It may be distinctly understood that the men and boys living in crowded tenements, as a rule, do not take baths during the winter.

2. Tenement Houses:

The facts reported by the tenement house commissioners are not mysterious; anyone with eyes open can observe them. Consider the appalling conditions that prevail. They report that out of a population of 225,033 affected by their inspection, only 306 persons have access to bathrooms in the houses in which they live.

Facilities for bathing must be provided if we would have a clean people. How shall these facilities be provided is the problem. This is readily supplied by the commissioners who drafted a legislative measure which provided for the erection by the municipality of public baths.

They evidently were of the opinion that if bathing facilities were at hand personal uncleanness would disappear; for they report "that it is evident

that the bathing habit is growing among the masses of the people, and it is also evident that the practice stands greatly in need of encouragement by means of increased opportunities;" therefore, to furnish this important essential to personal cleanliness, they reported that in addition to the free floating baths, maintained in the summer months, the city should open in the crowded districts fully equipped bathing establishments on the best European models, and with moderate charges. The committee makes the above recommendation in the interests of the public health. Hundreds of thousands of our population are without sufficient bathing facilities, while it is evident that the bathing habit increases among them in proportion to the opportunities afforded. Here then is your proposed remedy—public bath houses.

### 3. The Proposed Remedy:

I do not believe in the plans proposed by the commissioners. I am opposed to them most earnestly because they are not sufficient, necessary or desirable.

The spirit animating the commissioners and most others, who, after consideration, propose municipal bath houses, is the aristocratic sentiment that "we must do something for the poor." A gracious consideration for those below by a superior class. I confess that I have little patience with this view, which threatens alike the independence of the citizen and the security of a republican government.

### 4. Its Drawbacks and Shortcomings:

It has a Roman "bread and circus" flavor that is repugnant. The evils of the plans proposed are greater than the evil itself. Picture to yourself one of these institutional bathing establishments. A waiting crowd in line, those already admitted are hurried through their ablutions. We file in with the impatient crowd. Scattered about are attendants, men with a "little brief authority," who yell instructions to us. The gong is soon enough sounded which notifies us to make way for the next crowd.

Certain days and hours are allotted to women. The plan is truly institutional; much like a soup house in spirit. We have had enough, and if we continue dirty for the rest of our lives never again shall we venture to take a public bath—not unless we become hardened paupers. Nor have we washed the babies. No public bath scheme can meet their necessities; and for them the problem presses as hard as ever.

### 5. Objections on Economical Grounds:

Neither is the proposed scheme of public bath houses economical either for the bathers or the municipality. The initial outlay for the purchase of a site in a crowded district where land is necessarily valuable, and for the construction and equipment of suitable buildings, the continuing expense of maintenance, repairs and supplying water, are additional burdens in added taxes. There is, further, the individual personal expense for towels and soap, loss of time consumed in going to the bath and home again, etc.

### 6. Its Impracticability:

Besides this method is not immediately practicable. The constitutional requirement that bonded debts of municipalities must not exceed ten per cent. of the assessed valuation makes it almost certain that no bonds can be issued for a long time in the future for any purpose not already projected and authorized; because we have now almost reached the limit of our debt creating power under the law.

### 7. The True Remedy:

The plan of public bath houses is closed, it seems to me, by considerations of efficiency, economy and practicability. What then is the remedy? How do the folks who observe personal cleanliness manage to do it? Surely not by public baths. They bathe in the privacy of their homes, in their own tubs, at their own pleasure. The solution is simply to extend the plan already in successful use by those who usually propose public baths; and that is, bath tubs in every suite of living apartments.

This is the natural, rational method of procedure. Is this plan practicable?

### 8. Abundance and Waste of Supply:

The cost of New York city's water system, including all expenditures for plants in use, abandoned and dismantled, from 1836 to January 1, 1895, as given by Edward Wegmann in his recent work on the water supplies of the city of New York, is \$71,719,148.30. The present system gives us a storage of seventy thousand million gallons, insuring a daily supply of 280,000,000 gallons. The total consumption in 1894 was 183,000,000 gallons, or an average per capita of one hundred gallons per day, which is far in excess of actual consumption.

The late Colonel Waring, in an article in Harper's Weekly, February 6, 1897, declared that it is a fact well known to those who have made a study of the matter, that less than one-third this amount per capita would suffice for the most liberal needs of any community.

He then, upon the authority of Sir Frederick Bramwell, who made an investigation of water waste, showed that more than half the consumption is pure waste which never reaches the consumer, but is lost in the mains and pipes by leakage which, with some small effort, can be prevented. We have, therefore, a liberal water supply which, if rightly conserved, is sufficient to meet the requirements of a population exceeding 8,400,000.

### 9. Vexatious System of Charges:

With this more than superabundance of water, we pursue a policy, in its distribution to the people, based on the plea of a constantly threatened water famine. The water is doled out under regulations of the Public Water Works' Department, which imposes a charge based upon the front width of houses with an additional charge for every additional story and family, and a further charge for every additional water closet or urinal, as but one water closet is allowed to each house. Besides this, there are charges for bath tubs, stationary washtubs, fish stands, saloons, barber shops, and, after a number of other vexatious charges, to cap the climax of injustice, a charge on bakeries for the average daily use of flour, of three dollars a barrel per annum.

### 10. Political Abuse of Discretionary System:

Should the commissioner believe, however, that the water consumed is not fully charged for, by these regulations, he in his discretion may compel the owner to attach a meter at his own expense, and all water registered thereon is charged for at the rate of ten cents per hundred cubic feet. The commissioner is vested with too much discretionary power. I will not charge that this power is abused. I do not know that it is, but it does afford him the opportunity to deal severely with political opponents, and exempt friends and favorites. Vesting a public official with such absolute powers, makes possible the corruption of city government.

### 11. How Its Cost Can Be Met:

There is enough water. The solution of the problem is to be found in the most matter of fact conclusion that the water ought to reach the intended user who is, under the present system, denied this because of the direct charges made for its use. Economy in use means economy in expenditures; therefore this whole difficulty may be overcome by abolishing the direct rates and substituting a tax on real property.

The theory that charges should be

imposed according to use, is made to apply to water consumers alone. In the matter of police, schools, parks, fire departments, the administration of justice, public highways, street cleaning and illumination, a different principle is acted upon; if these municipal utilities were, like water, charged to the landlord, according to the use the tenants made of them, it is certain there would be other social problems demanding investigation and solution. What far reaching effects this simple change in the levying of the rates would have, is illustrated in the development of the modern office buildings, which supply light, heat, water and elevator and janitor service, for one charge included in the rent. Office buildings that cannot furnish these accommodations are fast becoming vacated or altered.

If the charge for water were included in the tax levy, it would not profit a landlord to save water, and therefore he would make ample provision for tenants. This would compel the owners of rookeries, lacking in water accommodations, to either put them in or build anew, on penalty of vacancies.

#### 12. How It Will Benefit Labor:

But this change in the incidence of the water tax would be beneficial not alone to the tenants of overcrowded and congested residential districts. The average health of the whole community would be bettered, and the danger of epidemics reduced—to the advantage of all the inhabitants.

Further than this, it would attract manufacturers to the city, thereby furnishing employment to many whose demands for dwellings and for storekeepers to supply them with necessaries, would create a greater demand for real estate, which in turn, would increase real and taxable values.

#### 13. Who Will Fight the Proposition:

This reform will find loud and lusty opponents. Men who own unimproved real estate, at present exempt from contributing toward the maintenance of the water service, will protest on the ground that since they do not consume any water they should not be compelled to pay for water service of whatsoever kind.

But vacant lots no more require highways, police, fire, schools, parks, elections, etc., than they do water. The absurdity, the injustice of the objection is clearly manifest. For every rational man knows that the taxable value of land results from these public improvements.

#### 14. Antique Methods:

Time was when a householder of what is now New York was obliged by municipal regulation to illuminate the highway by hanging a lantern before his door; when he had to clean the streets and pay toll to private companies for using the highway. We have developed since those days, and now permit the free use of these utilities, meeting the expense by a general tax upon the property of the inhabitants.

Shall we proceed along this line of development, or return to the old-fashioned, clumsy and inefficient plan, when each man carried in one hand a lighted lantern to pick his way home at night, while with the other hand he grasped his sword ready to defend himself against the assaults of highwaymen? If, however, we want to maintain an advanced civilization, we will abolish as rapidly as possible all tolls, fees and special charges now levied upon the individual user of public benefits, and collect the revenue necessary for the proper maintenance of these utilities, from the real estate within the benefited area.

#### 15. Equities:

The present system practically gives a bonus to the owners of properties lacking in this great essential—water. Vacant lots are almost entirely exempt. But a city is not made up of vacant lots. They are an abuse in a city so overcrowded as this. Water and other municipal benefits are provided that they may be used. If the owner of vacant lots neglects his opportunities, that is his own loss and should not be made a burden upon the activities of other people. These vacant lots would have no value whatever were it not for the benefits the municipality offers to its citizens. As a piece of land they are without value; as a place whereon one may enjoy the benefits and security of good government they have a value proportioned to the benefits that can be enjoyed and the number of people competing for the chance to enjoy them.

You can readily judge whether the municipal water works is of benefit to these land owners by inquiring what the effect would be on the value of their lands if water were to be had only by the owner's private enterprise and expenditure of money. They would object most strenuously, from purely selfish motives, to the disestablishment of the police water works, or any other useful municipal institution.

#### 16. Cost of Maintenance:

It now costs about \$500,000 a year to maintain a water bureau for the care

and collection of the water revenue. This would be saved. To raise the same revenue by a general tax that is now collected by a tax upon water consumers, would increase the tax rate less than two mills on the dollar of taxable value of real estate.

It is the custom to value unimproved real estate at about one-third its true value, and improved real estate at about sixty per cent. of its true value, for the purpose of taxation. If valuations were made in conformity with the law, at full and true value, the shifting of the water tax from consumers to real property, would not increase the tax rate one mill on the dollar.

To make a concrete illustration, take a "double decker" tenement with a complete water supply throughout. The water rates would amount to about \$150 per annum; whereas, if the cost for water were included in the tax levy, it would cost the property assessed at 60 per cent. of true value, (or about \$12,000), \$24 per year. If the tax valuations were legally made at true values, then one mill on the dollar would make the additional charge for water only \$20, and this whether the water was or was not used. As against this, consider the case of a private mansion, valued at 60 per cent. of true value, and taxed on \$1,000,000. The water tax would add \$1,200 to the general tax, whereas such a mansion now pays in direct charges for water less than \$150 per year—another instance of the poor paying the taxes for the rich.

BENJAMIN DOBLIN.

We no longer view human problems from the standpoint of how to escape from overwhelming evil. Men have adopted a better civilization and better organization of life as a last resort, rather with a view to achieving incoming and overwhelming good. We no longer view the problems of human society simply as matters of escape from wrong. The question is, How can we with some degree of finality establish a basis of positive, economic and social right?—Prof. Geo. D. Herron, in Chicago, Mar. 6.

I believe that any society, which desires to found itself on a high standard of integrity of character in its units, should organize itself in such a fashion as to make it possible for all men and all women to maintain themselves in reasonable comfort by their industry, without selling their affections and their convictions. At present we not only condemn women to attach themselves to "bread winners," licitly or illicitly, on pain of heavy privation and disadvantage; but we have the great