

## Old London, City of Poverty, Is King of Santa Claus



Special Correspondence.

LONDON, Dec. 9.—London is a city of the most violent contrasts. Upward of 2,000,000 of its inhabitants are on the verge of starvation; 122,000 of its children attend its public institutions in a semi-starved condition; it has an unemployment problem the like of which the world probably never has seen before; and broken, blasted, desperate men and women parade its streets in thousands, cursing the country that gave them birth and wildly threatening the powers that stand between them and open riot and anarchy.

Yet London, hard-hearted and cruelly unresponsive as it may seem at other times of the year, is a fairy prince of charity at Christmas time. It plays the role of Santa Claus with a more lavish hand than any other city in the world and distributes its Tuletide cheer with a munificence that almost is wicked. Of the \$50,000,000 spent in charity in England in the course of a year more than 15 per cent is accounted for on Dec. 25; of the 122,000 starving schoolchildren in its schools, no one goes without his feast; of its thousands of poor cripples, bedridden or imprisoned within the four walls of their mean homes, it is this city's proud boast that no one goes uncheered by the almost unlimited bounty of Father Christmas. On this day of days, when London really merits its oft quoted title of "the most generous city in the world," upward of 50,000 sumptuous dinners are given publicly by one society alone, and no one knows the enormous amount of private giving. More than 250,000 destitute children share in the food, the clothing, the blankets, the boots and shoes, the coal and the endless variety of good things that go to make the pack of old Santa Claus the most wonderful, the most mysterious and the most welcome bag in all the world.

### POOR FEASTED AT HOME.

To those who are unable to attend the innumerable public feasts in person the Christmas dinner actually is delivered to the homes. In fact, there are a number of charitable societies which make a specialty of delivering free Christmas dinners to the homes of the poor who cannot manage to get to the public banquets. For weeks previous to the coming of Christmas day these societies are busy collecting money; and few appeals from them remain unanswered. Several of these organizations have been in existence many years, some of them having been regularly endowed in the wills of charitable persons. Even in the workhouses—the dreaded last resort of the poor—"good cheer" prevails, and the poor law guardians administer "relief" with a leniency far beyond what the law usually allows.

### COUNTY COUNCIL PROVIDES.

In London, among the children of the poor, Christmas is the one big event in their hungry little lives. At Christmas each school gets up a "feast" and every child receives a substantial "tuck-in" at the expense of the local authorities. Though the London county council does not give an official banquet to children on Christmas day, it sanctions the payment of money out of its funds to various schools for the purpose of providing "Christmas dinners." It also provides for the delivery of thousands of dinners at the homes of crippled children unable to attend the public feasts, in some cases

even sending special "invalid" carriages for those who prefer to go to the festivities.

As if not to be outdone by the county council in their attempt to play the part of Father Christmas, the city aldermen and lord mayor of London make heavy contributions out of the London funds for a great banquet given to children belonging to the so-called "Ragged Schools." In addition to this, on Christmas day the lord mayor's fund is called upon for \$2,500 for special Christmas "purses" given to widows. As each purse contains \$1.25, no less than 2,000 widows are thus benefited. Tickets for these grants are issued by the court of common council, attached to the lord mayor's office. Another fund of a similar character for widows is granted by the court of aldermen, though the sum is much smaller—only \$1,250, divided into "purses" of \$2.50 each.

### SIR TRELOAR'S BOUNTY.

In addition to the lord mayor's banquet, the London county council fund and other official donations, a number of prominent public personages take it upon themselves to play the good Samaritan among the poor at Christmas time. Former Lord Mayor Sir William Treloar, for instance, has constituted himself the special Santa Claus of crippled children in London, and during the festive season gives away no less than 7,000 baskets or hampers

containing the ingredients of the best of dinners. Each hamper contains a goose or turkey, a cake and the necessary constituents of a plum pudding. Though these hampers are sent to the children, it, of course, is understood that the whole household is to share in the wealth of the good things provided and thus many of the London poor who seldom taste meat of any kind are able to regale themselves with delicacies usually confined to the tables of the rich.

Sir William Treloar's Christmas Hamper fund is by no means the only one of its kind, however. The Christmas Dinner association, St. Giles' Christian mission, the "Happy Christmas" society and similar bodies have lists of thousands of names to which they send the welcome parcels which make the home of the poor glad on their arrival.

### JOHN KIRK, SANTA CLAUS.

A close rival to Sir William Treloar in this battle of charity is Sir John Kirk, director of the Ragged schools of London. The carrying out of the work of Sir John's program each year brings Santa Claus into the homes of thousands. The Ragged schools, of which he has charge, are situated in the most congested districts of the city and are attended only by children whose parents are too poor to properly clothe and feed them. Upward of 4,500 voluntary teachers direct the schools, and they are in touch with more than 100,000 children. The nature of the Christmas dinners and hampers which they send into the homes of poor children through the Ragged schools alone is estimated at nearly \$50,000.

Perhaps the most sumptuous of all

the Christmas feasts given by the organizations affiliated with the Ragged schools is that which takes place at the Guildhall, where a special dinner is provided for about 1,500 little ones. This feast is prepared with all the pomp and ceremony possible, in order that the minds of the children may be impressed with the grandeur of the unforgettable occasion. Real aldermen don aprons and wait upon the tables, to the amusement and delight of the youngsters. After the dinner, whatever remains of the banquet is distributed among the waiting poor outside the doors. The dinner at the Guildhall is an almost international affair, for the reason that several of the English cities send substantial donations to the expenses. South Australia sends every year, through its Ragged School society, known as the "Sunbeams," the sum of \$750; while British Columbia contributes an equal amount.

Speaking of the widespread activities of the Ragged School union for the purpose of providing dinners to the London poor, Sir John Kirk said:

### AUSTRALIAN SUNBEAMS.

"Many distinguished people have enrolled themselves as members of these different societies. For instance, Lord Roberts is proud of being a 'Sunbeam,' and takes a deep interest in seeing that the poor children of London have a good time at Christmas. He has been present at several of the festivals in the past and is very popular among the children. The South Australian Sunbeam society grew out of the efforts of two Australian newspaper workers. One is known to the children as 'Uncle Harry' and the other as 'Auntie Mary.' When they first started getting contributions to send to England for a Christmas dinner for poor children, Mr. Finlayson and 'Uncle Harry' met with

ready response. They now have about 13,000 subscriptions to their fund, and though the money is often sent in the form of 5 and 10 cent pieces, they have managed in the course of a few years to remit to this country not less than \$20,000. The South Australian 'Sunbeams' have not limited their funds wholly to Christmas dinners, but have raised money for convalescent homes for children, fresh air funds and similar work.

### URCHINS IN FAIRYLAND.

"When we give our dinners in London each year," continued Sir John Kirk, "we try to make the occasion a memorable one for the little ones. At the Guildhall everything is done as impressively as possible. There are splendid bands of music, the place is gorgeously decorated, and to poor children, placed right out of the worst slums, it must seem like fairyland. Of course, as the Guildhall does not hold all the children, there are other dinners in various places. As to those others, there are many slums, and the overcrowding is terrible, and so on. A year or so ago we gave one of our largest dinners in the People's Palace, in Whitechapel, the institution with which Sir Walter Besant was so long connected."

### THE ROBIN FUND.

Another very large Christmas dinner association in London is known as the Robin fund, which looks out for the Christmas enjoyment of upward of 20,000 children. Sir John Kirk is trustee of this fund also, and probably his name is more closely associated with the poor at Christmas than that of

any other person in England. It is his prominence in and close touch with this work that have made his name so well known among the poor. Last year King Edward, in recognition of this fact, conferred a knighthood upon him.

A very popular form of providing for the poor man's Christmas in England is what is known as the "goose club." Poor people, by contributing from one to two cents per week, are enabled to assure for themselves a Christmas dinner including goose or turkey. There are several philanthropic societies which "assist" goose clubs in their provision of Christmas dinner. That is, if the club saves up sufficient to provide dinners for 500 persons, the charitable fund will "assist" an additional 250 to get a Christmas hamper or make up whatever funds are short.

### HOSPITALS REMEMBERED.

Not only do special societies provide Christmas cheer, but nearly every church has its "festival" for the poor. Upward of 11,000 additional dinners are thus provided by various churches. Separate associations look after bringing the maximum amount of happiness into the London hospitals. Five different organizations have this work in hand, while a number of private philanthropists take a personal interest in the work. Leopold de Rothschild sends each year about \$15,000 worth of flowers to the London children's hospitals, and also donates such luxuries as the children are permitted to have. He sends literally tons of toys to the children's wards, many of these being of the most up-to-date mechanical pattern, and some of great cost. Of course, with the hospitals the providing of plum pudding and turkey would scarcely be conformable to "doctors' orders," but most of the societies devoted to alleviating the condition of the suffering

have Christmas trees in the hospitals, where various useful presents are given away. Thousands of cripples are provided fires with crutches and instruments which they would be too poor to pay for. Most of the hospitals are beautifully decorated, while even the convalescent and attendants are not forgotten.

### BOROUGHES ALSO BUSY.

In addition to the Guildhall banquets and funds for giving the London poor feasts, goods and money, it must be recalled that each London borough has a mayor of its own, and most of these functionaries are not to be outdone by the central authority. Each mayor is supported by aldermen and councilors, and most of these assist their chief in providing the poor of their districts with free meals, coal, blankets and other things. In fact, a species of emulation in showering benefits upon the poor at Christmas takes place among the various London boroughs. So extensive has this conferring of gifts become in London in recent years that there is always at Christmas time a mysterious increase of population in some of the poorer sections of the city, which increase, by the way, cannot be accounted for simply by the ordinary surplusage of country cousins who have come to town for the holidays.

### UNSCRUPULOUS "REPEATERS."

As a matter of fact, so many Christmas dinners are given away in London, and the poor come in for so many benefits, that it almost "pays" for the poor to come to London from their own homes, in order to participate in the shower of largesses. Careful watch has to be kept over "repeaters." One man boasted last year that, despite every precaution, he managed to provide himself and family with seven Christmas hampers and obtained tickets to 11 different Christmas feasts. These he distributed among his friends with liberal generosity. While it may be possible for "repeaters" to work the societies in such a way that they can obtain a number of tickets, there is no doubt that the genuine poor at Christmas received most of the benefits.

It is this play of unstinted generosity which makes it so difficult to make an impression on London when it comes to instilling the sense of economic wrong. The people are, as it were, pauperized by the upper classes, who, not only at Christmas, but during various political contests, manage to distribute their favors so skillfully that the "gospel of discontent" has scant hearing.

If the weather at Christmas time in England be at all cold, it seems to operate still better for the cause of the poor. Managers of the various dinner societies and Christmas coal and blanket distribution agencies, reported recently to the writer that they needed a "sharp cold spell to open the purses of the rich."

### "HUNGER MARCH" HORDES.

Owing to the great unemployed problem this year, Christmas charity will probably be drawn upon more extensively than any year in the past, with the exception, perhaps, of the Irish famine year. It is estimated that upwards of 70,000 unemployed, "hunger marchers" and other destitute people are "on the streets" in England just now, and all these will, of course, receive their share of Christmas dinners. One of the "hunger march" leaders recently, in discussing this question with the writer, said: "Our men all expect turkey this Christmas. I understand that different societies are arranging to look after us. There are about 5,000 regular 'hunger marchers'—that is, people without any fixed abode unless you call the workhouse their home. Most of these people do not care to go to the workhouse, but rather sleep out in doorways, passages, yards and on the benches on the embankment."

During the recent investigation conducted by the London county council, it was found that upwards of 10,000 people were sleeping in the shelters provided for them by such organizations as the Salvation Army, Church Army and similar bodies. All these people will be looked after on Christmas day, though the additional strain on the charity of the community will be very heavy.

W. B. NORTROP.

## Issues Vital to Utah's Progress

By Governor-Elect William Spry



THE people of Utah have more to gain by working together now than ever before. A market for their resources is at hand, and the need for their development is pressing.

In a general way therefore the state government should, and will, take a lively interest in everything that tends to promote co-operation among all the people, and the gaining of a better understanding of the needs of each section by the whole state. I am glad of such organizations as the Utah Development league for they may perform a vital work for the state, and can assist in a definite way the work of the governor and legislature.

Public opinion is to be welcomed, and the more aggressive it is the better, for the more clearly public officials can then sense the needs of those they serve. Personally I feel that the people of Utah do not want their state to be a mere tenant in a county's building, and that they will want a building commensurate with the needs of the new Utah for a home for the state government. Just how a capitol building can most expeditiously be built I am not yet certain, but that everything practicable to build it will be done I feel confident.

We have the money in the public building fund of the land board as a nucleus. Then we may petition Congress for an additional grant of the public domain to assist us still further with money from public lands. If necessary I believe the people will vote to bond the state, and it may be that the legislature will submit such a proposition to them.

The only question in my mind as to a state capitol is that as to whether it takes precedence over the matter of good roads. The people want good roads, it is certain, from the agitation of the present year, and they seem agreed that a main state highway is the first problem to solve, to be followed by the solving of others for special localities. With such laws as will secure

efficiency in administration, I favor a liberal appropriation for highway building. Perhaps here again, congressionally, in the form of a land grant can be secured.

### STATE PARKS.

Utah should not leave all the problem of saving our natural resources to Congress. There should be state parks and reserves where they are necessary. I favor the creation of a Strawberry state park, to include the headwaters of the streams in that portion of eastern Utah. To secure it a commission would have to be appointed, and it would have to be ready to take over the control of the park, should Congress vote to grant it out of the public domain. Then there is the San Juan country. The natural wonders of this section should be protected from vandalism, and this can only be done through making a state park of it.

The government is to be commended for its interest in the Buckskin plateau country, and once a game preserve is created there it has possibilities to become more famous than even the famed Yellowstone, for the Grand canyon of the Colorado has more scenic beauties than are located in the park, the geysers excepted, and it is well known that travelers who have been through the Yellowstone rate its geysers as secondary in importance to its canyon and its waterfalls. It may not be long before we will be reforesting our hillsides according to plans laid down for us by a government department that is now rapidly passing its experimental stages. State activity should co-operate with national activity on all these lines as rapidly as possible.

### COST OF LIVING.

The food supply is an important problem on which the state cannot afford to remain inactive. A high cost of living means little immigration, and Utah needs more people. Butter costs too much, and so does almost every other kind of food. For that reason the state should encourage in every practical way the raising of dairy cows and the feeding of the ranges, and the development of orchard growing and truck gardening.

### STATE AIDED RESERVOIRS.

Reservoirs to open through irrigation, the sugarbeet areas return many times the values of their cost to create. In the advance in taxable valuations. The

poorest country Utah has is its sagebrush, and every force that invades this sagebrush and helps to uproot it is to be feared and discouraged for the means are at hand through dry farming or irrigation projects to drive the desert completely out of the state.

I favor assisting irrigation projects where they are known to be good, and I also favor appropriating money to drive wells in arid regions to demonstrate whether water for culinary purposes can be located. The one stumbling block in the way of dry farming's rapid advance through our arid valleys is the problem of securing water enough for the steam traction engines that run the pumps, and for the teams that are required to haul fuel. Money spent in locating such water is spent to as good advantage as any money the state may appropriate.

### THE DIXIE COUNTRY.

The people of Utah, if they fully knew the value of Utah's Dixie country, would almost co-operate to raise funds to run a railroad into it. Such a road could not help but pay. I hope to see the Salt Lake Route extend a branch road in that direction, and I will foster and help any such movement. The Dixie country is a splendid country, and it is well known that California to us, and all that is needed is better transportation facilities.

### THE GRAND ARMY.

Much better than sending our products abroad to have people look at them is to have them made available to such a throng as will assemble here for the Grand Army encampment. Both for the lesson in practical patriotism it can teach and for the good that it is sure to bring to the state, I favor a liberal appropriation for the Grand Army encampment. It will serve to indicate the pride of outside sections in Salt Lake for its enterprise in bringing this encampment here, and in every way will be worth serious consideration on the part of the legislature.

Neither Salt Lake nor the outside towns can afford to foster a spirit that is unfriendly or narrow. The Grand Army encampment is a splendid opportunity to show what co-operation can do, and I am glad to see so much headway being made in this direction. The problems of the state as a whole are of development and expansion, and the problem of the administration will be to carry these matters forward as fast and as far as public sentiment and resources will permit.