

# An Uncommon Philanthropy

**Darius O. Mills a Public Benefactor Through the Medium of a System of Cheap Hotels**



Mills Hotel No. 3



D. O. Mills



Mills Hotel No. 1



Restaurant of Mills Hotel No. 3



Entrance of Mills Hotel No. 2

**D**ARIUS OGDEN MILLS does not look or appear like a man of eighty-two, but he does not deny that he has been in the flesh since 1825. He ignores his age quite as decidedly as it seems to ignore him. He keeps right on in his application to business, and he shows not the slightest relaxation in his unique manner of benefiting his fellow man. The recent opening of Mills Hotel No. 3 makes that fact apparent.

Mr. Mills does not like to be classed among philanthropists. If you should apply the term to him in his presence he would dissent immediately and positively. "I have not earned the right to be called that," he would say. "The Mills hotels are not charitable institutions and were never intended to be such. The returns from the investment are simply sufficient to pay running expenses, and they are conducted on rigid business principles."

"These hotels were not built to house the tramp, but for the benefit of the self-respecting man who cannot earn money enough to supply the physical comforts that he ought to have. It was my intention to encourage the shiftless or to hurt any man's pride. My idea is to give to every man who

is willing to accept them the conveniences of a good modern hotel at nominal prices. It would not be fair to the patrons at these hotels to call me a philanthropist. They pay for what they receive, and there is no suggestion of charity about it."

This is Mr. Mills' ingenious and modest way of putting it, but the fact remains that his three great hotels are a practical working out of a very clever and far-reaching scheme to benefit a class of needy humanity which has been neglected sadly. In a great city there are many men who cannot earn more than \$5 or \$8 a week, and it is for such unfortunate men that the Mills hotels have been established.

It is not especially to the point to ask why this is so—why it is that so many men of correct habits are so incapable of getting on in the world. Some of them lack force. Some of them are men who have obtained a college degree, but are destitute of a practical viewpoint. They are quite

as sensitive as the rest of their fellows, and Mr. Mills has taken that fact into consideration. It is that one thing that makes his unique charity-philanthropy a nobler and more dignified sense than mere giving—so attractive and so successful.

#### The Proposition as It Stands.

Twenty cents for a room, 5 cents for breakfast, 15 cents for a dinner in courses, 5 cents for supper—this is the proposition that Mr. Mills has made possible for a man whose depleted purse makes it necessary for him to restrict his daily expenditure to the half dollar limit. To the man who can afford to pay \$10 a day for a room at one of New York's palatial hotels this is an absurdity. To him the opening of a new Mills hotel means more than the opening of a free soup house or the quarterly report of a sum mission. To the man who, if he ever speaks of it, will call it a "great philanthropy" and let it go at that.

Hotels No. 1 and No. 2 represent a

capital of \$1,300,000 and pay 2 per cent on the investment. The great new hotel opened recently cost \$1,000,000, and it is expected that it will yield a similar income. Their owner declares that in providing them he has been actuated by only two motives—first, to conduct them on a strictly business basis, and second, to put a roof over the head of an unfortunate man without either pauperizing or humiliating him.

Mr. Mills devoted years to the elaboration of his scheme before he fixed on a definite time to launch it. Some of his friends and business associates were vastly skeptical as to the successful outcome. One of these doubters was John L. Cadwalader, the eminent lawyer who was assistant secretary of state under Hamilton. Fish.

Mr. Cadwalader saw no merit in the cheap hotel idea, and he made a good deal of sport of the matter. On one occasion the lawyer was contributing to the gentility of a club dinner by rallying the banker on his fad.

"What class of men do you expect will patronize your hotels?" he asked, with a chuckle.

The banker replied indignantly: "John," he smiled, with admirable good humor and the naivete of a schoolboy, "I should like to see a thousand lawyers in my hotel—a thousand lawyers who can't earn more than \$5 a week."

A visit to one of the Mills hotels—No. 1 on Blauvelt street, No. 2 on Livingston street or No. 3 on Seventh avenue and Thirty-sixth street—will convince the most skeptical that the

aged capitalist made no mistake in his estimate of the needs of a certain class of poor humanity. There will be found in the large and comfortable reading and smoking rooms and the unsumptuous and regular outbreak of the stum, but the comparatively well dressed citizen of the world with well preserved evidences of gentle breeding.

Mr. Mills has made it possible for these men between whom and the almshouse there was only the barrier of a few pennies to retain their self-respect. He kept at it until he found a way to accomplish it. Had he opened a hotel which depended on charity for its maintenance he would have failed of his object. Had it been on the lines of a slum lodging house it must have been equally unsatisfactory. What he wanted was a hotel for men who were poor indeed, yet not depraved; men who were on the poverty line, but for whom the ability to pay their way had not lost its charm. So it is that the Mills hotels are not for the vagabond, nor, strictly speaking, are they for the workman. That is the reason that they are unique, and that they are lightening the burdens of a class that has been receiving very little attention from those who are on the lookout to discover objects worthy of experimentation.

#### Worthy of Experimentation.

It is now about ten years since the first Mills hotel was opened for business. It did not take long to prove that the theory of its originator was sound and practical. The late George Franks Train was a guest of No. 1 for more than seven years and died there. Many others who have seen affluence are living at these hotels today happy in the consciousness that although their riches have taken unto themselves wings they are able still to pay their own way—the sweetest solace that a man of independent spirit may ever feel.

The eccentric Train always declared that the happiest years of his life

were spent in the Mills hotel. That meant that wealth, power and society were less than an existence which cost him not more than a cent a day. At this latest period of his eventful life he had an income of \$25 a month, doled out to him by a distant relative who was not in sympathy with Train's invincible optimism. Out of this pittance the pensioner managed to save \$10 a month and in the time of his death he had several hundred dollars in bank.

#### His Ideals Realized.

Asked recently as to whether or not his ideals concerning the hotels he has established have been realized, Mr. Mills replied:

"Yes, I can safely say that they have. I find that the air of respectability about these hotels—cheap though they are—has resulted beneficially. Men who are thereby cheered that other patrons of the hotels have a respectable appearance, and emulation follows. And, best of all, there is that air of independence that I was so anxious to establish. That it has resulted in thrift is shown by the desire that patrons evidence to retain their good standing with the management, so that they may be assured of keeping their rooms for which there is always a great demand from those waiting to get in. And this desire to retain their rooms has led many of the patrons to be thrifty in financial matters. The mere fact that a man is thrifty about signs of improvement from a sociological viewpoint, for the man who saves something from his earnings—no matter how small it may be, if only 25 cents a week—has laid that first important step toward a competency and perhaps toward the building of a fortune."

Then he smiled broadly as he added: "Remember, too, there is no philanthropy about it. It is a business proposition."

#### The Man Himself.

Darius Ogden Mills is a product of Westchester county, and the present city of New York is extending rapidly toward his birthplace, North Salem. When he was born the population of the city was only a few hundred thousand, and the Erie canal was opened that very year. At an early age he went to the city and entered a mercantile house, in which he remained several years. Then he went to Buffalo and remained long enough in a bank to acquire a substantial interest in the business.

When gold was discovered in California Mr. Mills sold out and went to the new Ophir, embarking in a general store and exchange business at Sacramento. It was a great success from the first, and it soon made him a rich man according to the estimate of those times. In 1857 he was one of the wealthiest men on the Pacific coast. He helped organize the Bank of California, was interested in the Comstock lode and had a hand in most of the financial enterprises of the state.

Although it is now almost a generation since Mr. Mills settled in New York city, he still retains many important interests in California. His home on the Pacific coast, Millbrae, near San Francisco, is one of the most beautiful residences in America. His New York real estate holdings are privately, and his California property makes him a power in that community.

And now, after an active career of more than sixty years, he is still a leader in the game of financial expansion, but it cannot be said of him that he has neglected to cultivate the deeper or more humanitarian side of his life. The Mills hotels alone would establish the fact that Darius Ogden Mills is not out of tune with humanity.

ELLIS STEPHENSON.

## The Head of a Unique American Corporation; For Forty-five Years Rector of Old Trinity Parish

**D**ISREGARDING all invidious distinctions, it cannot be wide of the mark to call Dr. Morgan Dix, rector of Trinity parish, New York city, the most picturesque and interesting ecclesiastical figure in America. Others there are who have secured for themselves wider fame in the pulpit and on the platform, but the white haired octogenarian who for upward of forty-five years has been both spiritual and temporal head of the most important parish organization in America is invested with a pre-eminence that is all his own.

Morgan Dix is the son of a father so distinguished that his son's career, had it proved to be less conspicuous than it has been, must have suffered almost total obscurity. To have begun life as the son of a man who had served as a cadet on the Canadian frontier through the war of 1812 was a distinction that so good an American as Morgan Dix has always appreciated. One of the unkindest things ever said of the rector of Trinity parish was a reflection on his Americanism, an imputation as absurd as it was uncharitable.

He comes from the most uncompromising Puritan stock long established at Boscawen, N. H. At the age of thirty his father resigned his commission as captain and settled in Cooperstown, N. Y., where he studied and began to practice law. Two years later he was adjutant general of New York and a successful politician. Thereafter honors fell abundantly. Secretary of state, United States senator, secretary of the treasury under Buchanan, major general in the Union army and governor of New York—all of these positions were filled most acceptably by the father of the rector of Trinity.

and his tutorship may have modified somewhat the intense Americanism of this son of a patriotic Granite State Yankee—the man whose loyalty to his country was once attested by the famous command, "If any man attempts to haul down the American flag shoot him on the spot!"

It would be almost impossible for a mortal career to run more smoothly and more certainly toward the realization of an early ideal than has that of the rector of Trinity. As a young man he was brought directly under the influence of the bishop of the diocese, the well beloved Horatio Potter, who predicted great things for him.

"If the choice were yours, Morgan," the bishop asked him one day when they had been discussing the young man's prospects, "which would you prefer to be rector of Trinity parish or to be my successor?"

"I'd rather be rector of Trinity parish than to be archbishop of Canterbury," the young student confessed frankly.

"You will have to be very careful, Morgan, or they will make a bishop of you before you know it!" the prelate warned him laughingly.

The good bishop's words were prophetic, and Morgan Dix has had occasion to recall them more than once. There is probably no man in the Episcopal church today who has been given more opportunities to enter the episcopate than has the man whose earthly ambition has been satisfied to the utmost with the stewardship of old Trinity parish.

Graduated from Columbia in 1848, Morgan Dix entered upon his theological studies at once, becoming a candidate for orders at the General Theological seminary. At the completion of the prescribed three year course in that institution he was received into the diaconate at St. John's chapel, one of the city missions of Trinity parish. A year later he was ordained priest by Bishop Alonzo Potter of Philadelphia, father of the present bishop of New York, with whom he remained for a short time as a mission worker.

The call to Trinity came speedily, and the young priest did not hesitate. It was the one spot on the ecclesiastical horizon upon which his eyes were fixed expectantly. It was only a curiosity, but it was distinction in abundance for Morgan Dix, who even at that early stage of his career had developed that personal disregard for worldly preferment which has been so marked a feature of his character. In

1859 he was made assistant rector, and three years later, on the death of Dr. Berrian, he became rector.

Competent man of affairs that he has

proved himself to be, it may be said of the man who has been at the head of Trinity parish for forty-five years that he has no worldly side. Perhaps

it would be more accurate to say that the spiritual in his nature is so largely in the ascendant that the material is completely overshadowed. To those

who have lived under his mild and benignant rule he appears always as one who has succeeded in putting behind him the grossness of the human existence and is already drawing copiously from the wells of spiritual victory.

As a churchman Dr. Dix has always maintained a consistent attitude of conservatism. One of his fellow workers has spoken of him as "standing for the principles of evangelical truth and catholic order." His regard for the latter became apparent immediately on his accession to the rectorship of old Trinity. In that parish the rector is absolutely in matters of purely ecclesiastical import. When the business interests of the corporation are under discussion the rector counts as a single voice, albeit an influential one, but when the decision as to the form of worship is to be made the corporation leaves everything to the discretion of its rector.

From his earliest experience in the ministry Dr. Dix has been a profound student and disciple of what has been termed the Oxford movement in the Episcopal church—an advocate of the restoration of much of the ancient doctrine and ceremonial which, when abandoned during the trying political times subsequent to the English reformation. One of his first official acts was to introduce to old Trinity a much more elaborate form of service than had ever been seen in that ancient temple. In the face of existing tradition it was an innovation that broke great courage on the part of the new rector, and a few convincing men whom Morgan Dix must have suffered shipwreck. It speaks eloquently of his force of character that all of his suggestions, strange as they must have seemed at that time, were accepted without organized opposition and that they have become one of the most cherished and distinctive features of the Trinity of today.

In appearance and even in manner Dr. Dix is the typical ecclesiastic. It would be impossible to mistake him for anything else than a priest. The expression of his face is full of dignity and suggestion of that peace which the world alone cannot give. His life has been that of the priest, but not that of the cleric. He is a man of marked domesticity and is not a stickler for the ecclesiastical life for the clergy. He did not marry until he had reached the mature age of forty-seven in his "Life of John A. Dix" he speaks

#### AN ENGINEERING GENIUS.

In all parts of the world are to be found monuments of the genius and skill of Sir Benjamin Baker, the famous English engineer, who recently died. There are two, however, which illustrate more forcibly than anything else his wonderful ability—namely, the Forth bridge and the Aswan dam. The latter is a massive artificial embankment thrown across the Nile a mile and a quarter in length and 125 feet high at its deepest point. It is an enormous reservoir of water, bounding all Egypt. The whole cost was under \$10,000,000, and already it has paid Egypt many times that amount in crops.

For his services as joint engineer with Sir John Fowler of the Forth bridge Sir Benjamin was knighted. The work took seven years to complete, and during that time Mr. Baker was on the ground early and late and had to solve every difficulty as it came up, as there was no experience of a similar structure to guide him. During the three storms which tore along the Forth estuary he would leave his bath and dash ashore on the Hawes brow and venture on the wind swept platforms perched high in the air to observe how the cantilever arms withstood the blast. Often he had to hold on for dear life at unfenced portions of the bridge.

#### TOO MUCH TITLE.

Chulalongkorn I.—this does the king of Siam sign himself. Those, however, who address his majesty in legal documents and the like use the following description, which is very fine and large indeed: "Most high, illustrious, invincible and powerful monarch, crowned with 121 golden crowns, each adorned with nine species of precious gems, greatest, purest and most divine master of immortal souls, who sees all things; sovereign emperor, under the shadow of whose wings lies the rich and innumerable kingdom of Siam; king to whom is subject the most fruitful of all lands lit by the sun, greatest of lords, whose palace is of fine gold and gems; divine master of the golden throne and of the white and red elephants; sovereign god of the nine kinds of gods; king who is like unto the sun at his zenith and like the full moon in his decline; whose glance is more dazzling than the orb of the moon; who is above all emperors, monarchs and potentates of the universe from the rising to the setting sun."



DR. MORGAN DIX, RECTOR OF OLD TRINITY, NEW YORK.

#### BITS OF NEWS.

Some of the great Atlantic liners employ 150 firemen.

London's public playgrounds are the envy of all other cities.

A chimney 115 feet high will swing ten inches in a strong wind without danger.

For \$5 a man will do work which would cost \$500 if done by hand.

There are now 282,000 Sunday schools

in the world, with a total of 26,000,000 pupils.

Sharks were practically unknown in the Adriatic till the Suez canal was opened. Now they swarm.

Apples as large as small melons are now being imported from Tasmania. They cost 6 cents each wholesale.

In China it is not possible for a father

to leave more property to one son than to another. All must share equally.

There is more variation among the divorce laws of different nations than among the laws governing any other matter.

Last year the Austrian government derived \$150,000 from the tax on playing cards. Austrians are inveterate gamblers.

The firemen of Berlin wear water

jackets, which are filled from the hose and afford a great protection from the flames.

Swiss farmers prefer singing milkmaids. It being held that the melody soothes the cows and induces them to yield more milk.

The average hen lays eighty eggs each year.

Business men in Glasgow and Edinburgh are vigorously pushing a project

for a ship canal to unite the Forth and Clyde.

The government of Spain has engaged a number of agricultural experts to tour the country and give instruction to the farmers.

Dr. Longstaffe, while mountaineering in the Himalayas, has just reached a height of 25,405 feet, a climbing record for that part of the world.

A well known tobacco manufacturer

estimates that at least \$5,000 worth of tobacco is daily thrown away in unconsumed cigars and cigarettes.

In digging the world's coal \$20,000 miners are engaged.

Africa leads in the matter of paid production, America coming second.

The khedive of Egypt's chief hobby is attending to his aquarium of goldfish.

When the kaiser visits one of his naval bases all the antiquated warships

are towed to a place where he can't see them.

At a recent roulette competition a couple won a prize for dancing five hours and fifty-five minutes. Goldfish are believed never to sleep, but only to rest periodically.

Motor boats are now being freely used in the fishing industry along the Norwegian coast.