

## CHAPTER XVIII

### THE CITY AS A SOCIAL AGENCY

NOT only does the growth of the city necessitate protection, it involves many new functions and activities not needed in the small town or country district. Under rural and village conditions life is organized upon individual rather than co-operative lines, and each home is complete in itself. The city changes this. Sewers become necessary. The individual well is condemned because of the danger of disease. Police, fire, and health departments are added, as are many other agencies for the cleanliness and health of the community.

These are the elementary services of every city. Their necessity is recognized by all. And the activities of the average American city end with the performance of these, in a sense, negative functions.

Aside from the remunerative business undertakings and the planning of the city referred to in earlier chapters, there is a great, unoccupied field of social activity which has been widely developed on the continent of Europe but which remains almost untouched in this country. It relates to the city housekeeping, a phrase very common in Germany a few years ago, to proper community living, to economies and services, to protection from industrial conditions, to provision for the unemployed and

those in distress. These activities are for the most part commercially unproductive, but their performance increases the efficiency as well as the wealth and happiness of the community beyond measure.

It is in this field that we may expect the most rapid immediate development of the American city, for here there are few privileged or propertied interests to protest, here are countless voluntary agencies urging action. About these demands, too, public opinion is more fully developed than the ownership of the public service corporations, which involve heavy financial expenditures and conflict with powerful vested interests.

#### **Markets and Food Supply.**

The market has been a municipal function from earliest times. The agora of Greece and the market-places of European cities were the centres of the towns. Here the whole community came to trade. The old market-places of Munich, Berlin, Frankfurt, and Brussels still remain the centres of the business and frequently of the social out-of-door life of the community.

Fifty years ago public markets were common in America, but during the intervening years they have either been neglected or have been permitted to pass into private hands. Not more than half of the cities of 100,000 inhabitants maintain markets, while of the cities of from 25,000 to 100,000 less than one third own them. The majority of these are merely centres where stalls are rented to farmers

and gardeners. The low cost of living in Baltimore is generally ascribed to the public markets, of which there are eleven located in different sections, to which the housewives come to make their daily purchases. The city of New Orleans has four such markets. Through these the marketmen buy direct from the producer and sell direct to the consumer.

#### **Some Recent Market Projects.**

It was discovered that the municipal market of Dubuque reduced the cost of living in that city far below what it was in any other city in the Middle West, and, inspired by this example, Des Moines opened city hall square and the near-by streets, to which the farmers were invited to come to sell their produce. The city required the display of cards showing whether the sellers are gardeners or hucksters. It is claimed that the cost of produce to city buyers has been reduced by the opening of the market by approximately 50 per cent., while the farmers receive nearly 50 per cent. more than they were formerly paid by the commission men.<sup>1</sup> Cleveland, Ohio, recently opened a public dock as a fish market, to which the fishermen were invited to come and sell direct to the consumer. Retailers, marketmen, and individuals were thus enabled to buy directly from fishermen instead of through the middlemen, and this resulted in a reduction in the price of fish of from 50 to 75 per cent.

The recently erected West Side Market of Cleve-

<sup>1</sup> See "The Municipal Market Situation," by D. E. Mowry, *National Municipal Review* for July, 1912, p. 410.

land is one of the most completely equipped markets in America. In addition to facilities for a retail market, provision is made for an ice and cold-storage plant in which individual farmers, retailers, and marketmen can store their produce for subsequent sale. By this means it is hoped that the control of prices by private cold-storage plants will be broken. Cleveland has also acquired a two-thousand-acre farm upon which inmates of the workhouse and other institutions of the city are employed, from which it is planned to supply the institutions of the city with hay, milk, butter, eggs, and other needed supplies.

Moved by the appalling death-rate among children, due in part to the high cost of milk, a group of public-spirited citizens in New York organized a milk committee, which maintained stations throughout the city at which pure milk was sold at a low price. The effect on the death-rate was so obvious that in 1911 the city provided for fifty-two milk stations under the control of the health department.

The exposure of adulterated food has led to quite general inspection of the food supplies of cities as well as of weights and measures. New York supervises more than 25,000 retail and wholesale establishments, including bakeries, groceries, butcher shops, and confectionery establishments, as well as slaughter-houses and cold-storage plants. A recent enforcement of the law led to the destruction of thousands of measures and scales used by dealers who gave short weight.

**City Forestry Departments.**

Many cities have established forestry departments. Cleveland has maintained such a bureau for years, for the planting, inspection, and care of trees and for the beautification of the city. The forestry commission of Newark, N. J., has "exclusive and absolute control and power to plant, set out and care for shade trees in any of the public highways." Trees are planted in the streets by order of the commission and the cost is paid by special assessments on the abutting real estate. Individuals may only plant and trim their trees with the approval of the commission. The commission says:

"Adequate municipal control secures for the tree expert planting, pruning, mulching, spraying, etc. When these have been left to private initiative they have either been entirely neglected or the operation inexpertly performed. The treatment of trees is an expert profession; private initiative as a rule ignores that vital fact; intelligent municipal control accepts the fact and acts upon it."

The cities of Boston, Springfield, and Fitchburg, Mass., have city foresters, while in Texas the deputy state commissioner visits cities and urges their cooperation with the State forestry department.

**Health Inspection.**

In no department of administration has greater advance been made than in sanitation and the care of the health of the community. Particular emphasis has been laid upon the supervision of schools

and school children. Of 27 cities of over 200,000 inhabitants, 17 have medical inspection under the board of health, and 10 under the board of education. The object of this inspection is to prevent school children from contracting contagious diseases, to guard their eyesight and teeth and improve their physical well-being. Studies are made as to fatigue and physical exercises. Children are examined when they enter school by doctors employed by the board of health or the board of education. Where contagious diseases are discovered, children are excluded and are only permitted to return to school after the danger is over. In case of non-contagious diseases the parents are notified to see that the proper care is administered. School nurses are employed by many cities, whose function it is to follow up the discoveries of teachers or physicians and to instruct the parents and pupils in home hygiene. Minor cases are treated in the schools; proper clothing, food, and cleanliness are suggested. Parents are advised as to the free medical and dental dispensaries and as to the location of free children's hospitals. Eye and ear tests are maintained by many schools. By this means the home is brought in close touch with health and sanitary administration.

Through these agencies the community aims to protect the oncoming generation from eye strain, diseases of the nose and throat, defective hearing, bad teeth, poor nutrition, nervous disorders, orthopedic and skin diseases. Records are kept of indi-

vidual children and of follow-up activities of the nurse and school physicians.

**The Community Doctor.**

“The community doctor” has taken his place along with the police and firemen. His function is preventive.

Doctor Goler, the health commissioner of Rochester, says:

“It remains for us to construct a plan for the prevention of disease in children and for the care of children who meet with the accident of sickness. We have had a plan for filling our hospitals and clinics with material; here is a scheme for emptying our dispensary waiting rooms and keeping our hospital beds for emergency patients. It is a scheme by which the school is to become the center around which all health activities revolve. The babies are to grow up into health with the teacher nurse who takes them to school. If parents are poor, let them get milk and advice from the milk station in the school; if their teeth need attention, let them go to the school dentist in the school; if they need a doctor for health, let them have advice from the school doctor. From earliest infancy until it enters school the nurse will watch the child grow into health; will instruct the mother in its personal hygiene, and teach the mother how to avoid the accident of disease.”

This policy of preventive medicine includes the presence of a school physician, a dentist, and nurse in each school, as well as a laboratory of hygiene. Physical training and hygiene are to be made an important part of school work, with apparatus for

bathing, exercise, and gymnastics. The visiting nurse is the connecting link between the school and the home. She comes in contact with unsanitary housing or factory conditions and reports them to the public authorities. A trained psychologist in the schools would study backward, deficient, and defective children.

Dental hygiene has made great progress in recent years. Rochester opened a free dental dispensary in 1910 with forty local dentists alternating in attendance. Within two months the work became so important that a single dentist was secured to give his entire time to it. A series of lectures on oral hygiene were provided by the board of education. As a result of the interest aroused a second dispensary was opened.

The relation of defective teeth to backward school work has been noted in various cities. In New York the statement has been made by Doctor Luther H. Gulick that decayed teeth retard a child's work by six months. In 1911 Philadelphia opened a free dental dispensary for poor children and arranged for the inspection of the teeth of 50,000 school children by a voluntary corps of local dentists.

### **The Changing Point of View.**

This is by no means a complete enumeration of the social activities of the American city, although the achievements are as yet very meagre. Our cities are now in the intermediate stage of "cleaning up." It is a stage between that which preceded it,



which was negative and extremely individualistic, and that which is to follow, which will undoubtedly be constructive, physical, and semi-socialistic. Public gambling, horse-racing, pool-selling, and betting have been pretty completely driven from our cities, as have the low dance halls and other centres of vice so common a few years ago. A few cities have opened municipal lodging-houses. Wisconsin, Ohio, and New York have made provision for employment agencies. There is a nation-wide movement against vice and the white-slave traffic. Public hospitals are being erected and the dependent classes are being more humanely cared for. War is being waged on contagious disease, on inadequate water-supplies and impure milk, while the public concern for the health of the community has materially reduced the death-rate.

Despite this progress the American city is still far less advanced than the European city in its social activities. We have done very little to solve the problem of labor or to provide for the vicissitudes of industrial employment. There is but scant provision for leisure by public authorities, and recreation is for the most part still in private hands. Municipal co-operation is as yet in the repressive rather than the constructive stage, and we must look to Germany for examples of what can be done in this larger field of municipal activity.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> For a more extended study of the general subject, see *Municipal Government in Continental Europe*, by Doctor Albert Shaw, and *European Cities at Work*, by the author.

**The German City Slaughter-Houses.**

The slaughter-house is a public rather than a private institution in almost all of the countries of Europe with the exception of Great Britain. Of the 50 largest towns of Germany, 43 own their abattoirs and require that all meat sold in the city shall be slaughtered in them. In most of the countries of South America, in Egypt, even in the Far East, the private slaughter-house has been superseded by publicly owned abattoirs.

The slaughtering of cattle under public supervision is required as a sanitary measure for the purpose of protecting the community from diseases prevalent in cattle. It also protects the community from monopoly and reduces the cost of living. It is assumed that the food supply of a people is too important to be left in private hands. Through public slaughtering the meat can be thoroughly inspected by trained veterinarians, while the killing is done in the most humane way possible. By the elimination of all the middlemen there remains only the butcher between the farmer and the housewife.

Slaughtering in Germany is covered by an imperial law and a code of rules which went into effect in 1903. The slaughter-houses erected by the cities are models of cleanliness and of architecture. Many of them are spacious and beautiful. They are usually of brick or cement and are located by the railways and waterways. Close by is a cattle market to which the cattle are brought by the farmers and to which the butchers go to make their pur-

chases. The charges of the slaughter-houses are fixed at a point which will pay operating expenses only and interest on the investment.

The abattoir of the city of Dresden—population 500,000—was erected in 1910 at a cost of \$4,260,000. It covers 90 acres of land and includes 68 buildings. It is built of cement, with roadways between, so arranged as to be easily cleaned by flushing-machines. The most fastidious woman could visit the abattoir, and visitors are encouraged to come as a means of insuring cleanliness. The gates through which one enters are like those of a public park. There is a spacious hotel, with a restaurant and post-office attached.

The slaughter-houses of Berlin cost approximately \$5,000,000. They took the place of 1,000 private slaughter-houses formerly scattered over the city.

#### **The Public Market.**

The consumer is still further protected by the public market, which is universal in Europe and has been for centuries. In addition to spacious covered markets, street markets are maintained which are used in the early mornings. In Vienna there are 7 enclosed market buildings and 40 open-air places. Antwerp has 19 open squares and places and 2 covered markets. Paris has one of the most extensive and well-administered market systems in Europe. The central market, or *Halles Centrales*, is a wholesale market located in the centre of the city. To it the produce is brought by railroads, by boats, and by vans, where it is classified and inspected and

then sold by auction or by bargain and sale to retailers and consumers. Scattered throughout the city are 33 retail markets which are supplied through the central market or by direct communication with the farmers. Berlin has 14 city markets in substantial buildings, which are so located as to receive and distribute the incoming farm produce to the city. Markets are used not only for the sale of food, but for many household necessities.

Ordinances and regulations prevent monopoly or misleading or fraudulent statements. A high standard of cleanliness is maintained, while the fees are fixed according to the business and the location of the stalls.

#### **The Parcel Post.**

The cost of living in Germany is still further controlled by the parcel post, which is operated in connection with the state-owned railways. Through it the farmer is brought into close touch with the consumer. Almost anything can be mailed and at a very low cost. The *hausfrau* receives her fresh vegetables, poultry, butter, and flowers along with the morning mail. They come fresh to her table from a country village perhaps a hundred miles away. Farmers come to the city three or four times a year to solicit individual customers. This makes monopoly in food products impossible. There is no waste in handling by half a dozen agents, for the producer and consumer meet directly as though they were bartering at the city markets.

It has been stated that our annual waste in the

unnecessary handling of fruit, vegetables, poultry, and other produce approximates \$1,000,000,000. This is largely due to inadequate provision for transportation, to private markets, cold-storage plants, and other intermediaries which interpose between the producer and the consumer and which depress the price of farm produce on the one hand and increase the price to the consumer on the other. Much of this waste is saved in Germany through the public ownership of the railways and the express business, the parcel post, the public as opposed to the private slaughter-house, and the use of these agencies and the public markets for the elimination of all unnecessary waste in handling.

#### **Protecting the Worker.**

The German city recognizes the helplessness of the working classes under modern industrial conditions, and has worked out a most comprehensive programme for their protection. Some years ago the minister of the interior, speaking in the Reichstag, outlined the policy of Germany in social legislation. He said:

“If Germany has experienced a vast industrial expansion equalled by no other country in the world during the same time, it is chiefly due to the efficiency of its workers. But this efficiency must inevitably have suffered had we not secured to our working classes by the social legislation of recent years a tolerable standard of living, and had we not as far as was possible guaranteed their physical health.”

Social and industrial insurance is provided by the state and is compulsory against accident, sickness, invalidity, and old age. The income collected by all of these forms of insurance amounted in 1909 to \$214,856,650, of which the employers contributed \$98,312,000 and the employees \$81,414,000. The disbursements for the year amounted to \$167,592,770.

Insurance against sickness has existed since 1884, and is provided for industrial workers whose wages are below \$500 a year. The insurance amounts to about half the daily wages of the insured. Sick benefits continue for not more than twenty-six weeks, and the administration of the funds is placed in the hands of the working people and the employers. Employers are bound to provide insurance against accident, while the worker is given a pension during his old age.

#### **Preventive Medicine.**

Growing out of the insurance legislation, a nationwide programme of preventive medicine has been developed. The accumulated insurance reserves, which run into the millions, are used to erect hospitals, sanatoriums, and convalescent homes. The hospitals in Germany are almost all public instead of private. In 1897 there were only 3,334 wage-earners cared for in institutions of this sort, while twelve years later the number had grown to 42,232. In twelve years 272,000 patients had been treated. As a consequence the death-rate from tuberculosis fell from 23.08 per 10,000 during the four years

from 1895 to 1899 to 18.45 per 10,000 during the period from 1905 to 1909.

Germany leads the world in the protection of the health and lives of its people. Speaking of this policy a report in the *Bulletin of the United States Bureau of Labor* for 1912 says:<sup>1</sup>

“The marvellous results achieved in the German Empire through the intelligent co-ordination of public and private agencies enlisted in the effort to reduce the mortality from tuberculosis to a minimum entitles the German experiment, as the first and most successful of its kind, to the admiration of the entire civilized world. Whether what has been done has paid for itself in a strict financial sense is wholly secondary to the social results which have been achieved, and which have unquestionably conferred an infinite amount of good upon the German people engaged in German industry in successful competition with the economically more advantageously situated wage-earners of many other lands. From the social, economic and medical points of view the treatment and care of tuberculous wage-earners in Germany is a subject well deserving of intelligent and sympathetic study as a distinct contribution to the civilization of the present time.”

### **The Workless Worker.**

Employment agencies and lodging-houses in the United States are for the most part in private hands. In Germany they are public, or under public control. There are upward of four hundred labor exchanges in Germany, which each year find places for approximately a million men and women in all kinds of employments. These exchanges are

<sup>1</sup> *Care of Tuberculous Wage Earners in Germany.*

universally used by employers and employees. They are designed to minimize the waste involved in unemployment. When the labor market is congested in one place, the exchange distributes labor to some other section where it is needed. An attempt is being made to utilize these agencies to satisfy the demand for men upon the farms during the harvest season.

The labor exchange of Berlin occupies a large four-story building in the heart of the city. On the first floor is a great hall which seats 1,400 people, while other halls accommodate skilled artisans and women workers. The building contains a buffet, where food is sold at a trifling sum. There are tailors and cobblers employed by the exchange, who make repairs at an insignificant charge. There are shower-baths, and free dispensaries, and medical inspection bureaus.

Cities also maintain municipal lodging-houses. These, too, protect the wandering worker. There are nearly five hundred such lodging-houses in Germany, which contain 20,000 beds. They lodge over 2,000,000 persons a year, of whom the majority are paying guests. For the sum of twelve cents the worker obtains lodging and breakfast, or if he has no money he can work four hours for them.

In connection with the lodging-houses there are branches of the municipal savings-bank, while the labor exchanges are operated in close connection with them.

As compared with this policy, the State Excise Commissioner of New York says that during the



winter of 1914 there were between 60,000 and 100,000 homeless men and women who found shelter on winter nights either in the rear rooms of saloons or in lodging-houses where liquor is sold. "The agents of the department," the report says, "found that in the rear rooms of certain saloons large numbers of homeless men slept all night in chairs or on the floor. The department then sent its agents to twenty or thirty places in that district and notified the proprietors to close promptly at one o'clock in the morning. It is safe to say that none of the homeless evicted from their shelter found other places to sleep that night."

The city has but one municipal lodging-house with accommodations for 768 persons, while one hundred times that number were shelterless.

### **Unemployment.**

To some extent cities provide distress or emergency work during hard times. Many men are out of work during the winter—while constant changes in machine industry dislodge many others who cannot immediately find employment. The city recognizes this fact and provides outdoor work for those temporarily in distress, while contractors are frequently required to employ local men so as to relieve expenditures for charity. The theory of such laws, according to the American consul in Zurich, Switzerland, is as follows:

"The indigent unemployed are dealt with as an economic question. The Swiss act upon the theory that the man who is unemployed is, if left to him-

self, prone to become unemployable; and that for a community to allow anyone of its members capable of work to remain unemployed is public waste, for the reason that as soon as he becomes a subject of charity he is a tax upon the community, which has to support not only the individual but also those dependent upon him.''

Pawn-shops have been a public institution in Germany for centuries. They are administered by the city on a business basis, the rate of interest being from 1 to 2 per cent. a month. Many small tradesmen use the pawn-shop as a bank of discount.

Municipal savings-banks have also existed from early times. The rate of interest paid is usually 3 per cent., the funds being invested for the most part in public securities. Branch offices are scattered all over the city to encourage their use as widely as possible. Inasmuch as the banks are administered by the city at practically no expense, the depositors receive the full return realized from their money.

#### **Labor Courts.**

Cities realize that the workers are at a disadvantage in legal controversies with their employers and have established special courts for the settlement of disputes of an industrial nature. In these courts the employment of lawyers is discouraged; the fees are very small and the decisions are speedy. A large percentage of the cases are disposed of without litigation. The court is made up of employers and employees rather than of trained lawyers, and each class elects its own representative.

Cities supply many other services for the poor. There are floating bath-pavilions upon the waterfronts, while all-the-year-round bath-houses are distributed throughout the city. Munich has a great central municipal bath-house, which provides Turkish and Russian baths and contains an immense swimming-pool. Pure milk is sold to the poor at cost. There are farm schools out in the country for anæmic and subnormal children as well as convalescent homes to which persons are sent after hospital treatment. Cities loan money to working men desirous of building homes. They buy and sell land for the purpose of controlling private land speculation and making home ownership easy.

#### **Poor Relief.**

Relief work in Germany is administered by the city directly rather than by private charities. Indoor institutional relief is discouraged and is confined to the sick, the infirm, and the homeless. The German city has adopted the so-called Elberfeld system, by which the poor are cared for in the home rather than in the public institution. The idea underlying this is to preserve the family life and the economic independence of the persons assisted. Relief is administered by a large number of voluntary workers who are assigned to different sections of the city, acting under the direction of a committee of the town council and one of the paid officials of the city.

Cities maintain public physicians who give gratuitous service to needy persons, as well as munic-

ipal nursing establishments for convalescent invalids.

The health of children is carefully watched. On entering school the child is examined by the school physician, to ascertain its physical condition. The parents are advised as to food and other precautions to be taken in the care of the child. If the child is sick or anæmic it is frequently sent to schools in the country for recuperation. School buildings are equipped with gymnasiums and are surrounded with playgrounds provided with all kinds of apparatus. Poor children often receive a hot breakfast in winter.

All of these activities of the German city are part of a conscious imperial programme of human efficiency. The aim is to conserve the health, the strength, and the working capacity of all classes. This is defended on military as well as industrial grounds. The nation appreciates that to rear children to manhood and then permit them to be weakened by disease, bad housing, or to be out of work, is an economic loss which the community should aim to prevent.

### Summary.

The individualism of the American city has retarded the development of social activities necessary to a well-ordered municipal life. Only within recent years have we begun to develop markets for the reduction of the cost of living, the intensive supervision of the health of the people, the protection of the public against false weights and measures, the supply of pure food and milk, and other measures of a

similar sort. It is probable that these activities will develop rapidly within the next few years.

The German city has carried activities of this sort further than any cities in the world. Almost all cities own their abattoirs, in which all meat sold within the city must be slaughtered. Markets are universally owned and have been for centuries. In addition, the German city has developed many agencies of a preventive sort for the protection of the workers. Among these are pawn-shops and savings-banks, the loaning of money for the building of homes, employment agencies and lodging-houses, as well as emergency work in hard times. In addition, the state provides insurance against sickness, disease, accident, and old age, while poor relief is administered by the community rather than through private agencies as a necessary part of a well-ordered city administration. All of these activities have been promoted by Germany as part of a conscious programme of human efficiency. No cities in the world have given as much thought and consideration to the protection of its people as have the cities of Germany.