

Charitable Towards Others While Neglecting Our Own

AMERICANS anxious that America retain her championship title as the world's greatest sympathizer, are spending much time worrying over the fate of the people in foreign countries where war and fighting, in the language of Octavus Cohen's Tempus Todd, "is the fondest thing they are of." While they give and collect money for the care of the sufferers in Europe, laudable enough in itself, the truth is that a large number of them are rather indifferent and unsympathetic when the fate of hapless beings within our domestic realm is brought to their attention.

There is no question that there are millions of well-meaning Americans who would gladly support a movement to open wide our doors any day and make of America an asylum for the world's war scarred millions who would take their hatred and national differences with them, the conquerors and the conquered alike, ready to take up the cudgel against one another and give the old habits free reigns after a spell of recuperation. With natures and habits unchanged these scarred individuals and nations appealing to Uncle Sam for succor are somewhat analogous to some scarred individuals here at home, who weary of their self-inflicted wounds, during a recent flurry of local sympathy capitalized in a restitution asylum up the Columbia highway trail, sought and found revitalization at public expense, only to obey the old habit via the route of the primrose path, where human passions are unrestrained, ere they with healed wounds had stepped beyond the neutrality zone of the asylum.

At public expense we erect penitentiaries and jails for adult offenders; detention homes and reformatories for erring women and youths, and insane asylums for feeble-minded, but we refuse to provide homes and institutions at public expense for the care of our own innocent children left without protection and answer their pitiful cries for help by turning them over to semi-subsidized private institutions, trusting the judgment of their keepers to care for these future citizens, boys and girls, on whose very start in life depends so much of our future well-being as a nation. No more attention is given the call for help coming from those who have become crippled and maimed in the maelstrom of life or who have found themselves unable to save enough out of their meager earnings to take them safely through the declining years.

While we seem to have unlimited confidence in ourselves to provide homes of restitution and care for the people of foreign countries, we seem to be sorely lacking in this respect when the case is domestic in scope.

A prominent statesman stopped the other day at a reform school in our environs and observing a crippled boy with a sad face, he called the little fellow and sympathetically asked: "What did you do that they sent you here?" With tears welling from his eyes the little mite answered: "Nothing. They just sent me here because they said they had no other place where I could be taken care of."

No state institution in a great American common-

wealth to send a homeless little American boy?

No place for him except in a reform school, where the incorrigible boys and girls go?

Is there only one alternative for the homeless child in an American commonwealth—to be "farmed" out to some semi-subsidized private institution?

Our propensity for foreign sympathy may be very becoming in the proper setting of news and editorial columns of papers, magazines and books, but if we lost our title as the world's champion sympathizer in lieu of concentrating our sympathetic faculties to setting up remedial public institutions at home, we should in a short time be a much healthier nation with a growing vigor possessing potentialities for an effective cure of many of our political and social ills.

If it is wise as well as expedient to protect society against criminals by confining them in public institutions of punishment and correction, it is equally wise and expedient to care for homeless children in state institutions corresponding to such requirements, in order to save them for society and to protect them against the unscrupulous who gain their recruits from the ranks of the weak and those "who have no place to go."

Our altruistic obligations as Americans are obviously neglected. Every man, woman and child, native born or foreign born, properly a member of the American family of one hundred and ten millions, is entitled to an equal share of the care and consideration extended any other American, according to his requirements and needs.

A little more constructive and altruistic sentiment backed by coöperative and coördinated efforts at home, throughout our country, with less scattered sympathies, will adjust our domestic friction, relieve the strain we are under and help to make national unity among our people a less difficult thing to attain. Human worth and values are not wrapped up in one race, one religion nor one place of birth.

These qualities are fairly distributed and are remarkably similar in quality and expression wherever we find them. In America we are so constituted that we possess almost an over abundance of these qualities hidden away in our reservoir of human mixtures. Some day when we become weary of our hypocrisy we will turn to this reservoir for renewed national vitality life and strength.

It is a perfectly noble thing for Americans to do to salvage from the European wreckage the emaciated children of impoverished combatants, but why not put this charitable spirit, in part, to work at the same task here at home, where we have plenty of undernourished, underfed and insufficiently clad children of both native and foreign parentage.

Meanwhile thousands upon thousands of mentally and physically war scarred sufferers from the old world are finding their way to America and are being admitted under our percentage immigration plan.

Collectively they constitute a formidable contingent of the population of our country, yet, there is very little concern manifest among Americans for the