

# PARIS IS DUMPING GROUND FOR ABANDONED BABIES

## Aliens Go There With the Avowed Purpose of Getting Rid of Their Progeny and the State Takes Care of Them and Provides Them With Foster Parents

By R. Franklin.  
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PARIS, April 23.—The French have long been suspected of a girdle of protective tariffs all around their frontiers. You must smoke state-made tobacco and strike state-made matches. Everything that is of foreign manufacture is rigidly excluded or made to pay a prohibitive duty—every thing with one exception: Babies! Little as the reader may have suspected it, Paris is the dumping-ground for abandoned foreign babies, 600 to 700 of whom are annually confined to its kindly care. This astonishing fact has only lately been revealed to the man in the street by the sensational abandonment in a Paris hotel of two babies by an English woman who apparently came over from Folkestone for that purpose. As no one claimed them the poor little waifs were taken to the Hospice des Enfants Assistés, a foundling hospital and not as is thus far learned from the director, M. May, all about this interesting institution, which among the 600 or 700 aliens, for Russia is the only country with a similar charitable organization, modeled on the French one, it is true, but far inferior in point of development.

Yes, foreigners may come dump their children down in Paris and return whence they came, free of all anxiety as to their fate, free of all responsibility as to their future, and without any questions asked, or if they are asked they need not be answered. There is only one condition: the children must be foundling babies and not be clandestinely deserted, for that is an offence punishable by law. And thus it comes about that among the 600 or 700 aliens which pass annually through the portals of the Hospice des Enfants Assistés, almost every nation under the sun at some time or other represented, the Turk not excepted. The vast majority consists, however, of the offspring of Russian and Polish wretched outcasts, stranded on their way to England and the new world, are fully aware of the existence of the hospitable soil of France in the certain knowledge that they will be cared for. Russian and Polish aliens located in London, even cross the channel for this purpose and it is no uncommon occurrence for a woman, about to become a mother, to come over and be confined in a Paris hospital, declare their intention to abandon her child, and straightway return to London, ready to repeat the undertaking if need be.

**Vast Organization.**

The vast organization called the Assistance Publique, or public relief, with its annual budget of \$12,000,000 and of which the Hospice des Enfants Assistés is a part, was created shortly after the year 1789. A foundling hospital, of course, existed previously, but the hospices in its present form is a creation of the men who made the great revolution. It is based upon the broad and humane principle that it is better for the state openly to take over and rear the offspring of destitute citizens, rather than expose a child to the cruel risk of desertion by stealth. Parents, therefore, are at liberty to renounce their children in the most matter-of-fact way on the simple declaration that they wish to do so. The time-honored practice of other countries of laying an infant on the steps of the foundling hospital, ringing the bell and hastily retreating under cover of night is dispensed with.

Another walks through the open doorway into the office. "I wish to abandon this child," she says to the official. It is the duty of the latter to point out to the mother the gravity of the step she is taking and remind her that in abandoning her child she renounces all claim upon it and will remain in absolute ignorance as to its future career. She is urged not to take such a step unless absolutely compelled. All this is purely a matter of form, for it is extremely rare that such friendly counsel induces a change of purpose. The person is not bound to make any declaration at all as to the infant's name or his or her identity. The conversation may be limited to this:

Question: "What is this child's name?"  
Answer: "I do not know."  
Question: "What is your name?"  
Answer: "I do not know."  
Question: "What is your name?"  
Answer: "I do not know."  
"Bonjour, monsieur."  
Every facility is thus granted for evading awkward questions as to identity, so that there is no excuse whatever for the abandonment of an infant on the doorstep or on a bench in the



ROW OF LITTLE FONDGLINGS

public squares, as used to be frequently the case and as still happens, though very rarely.

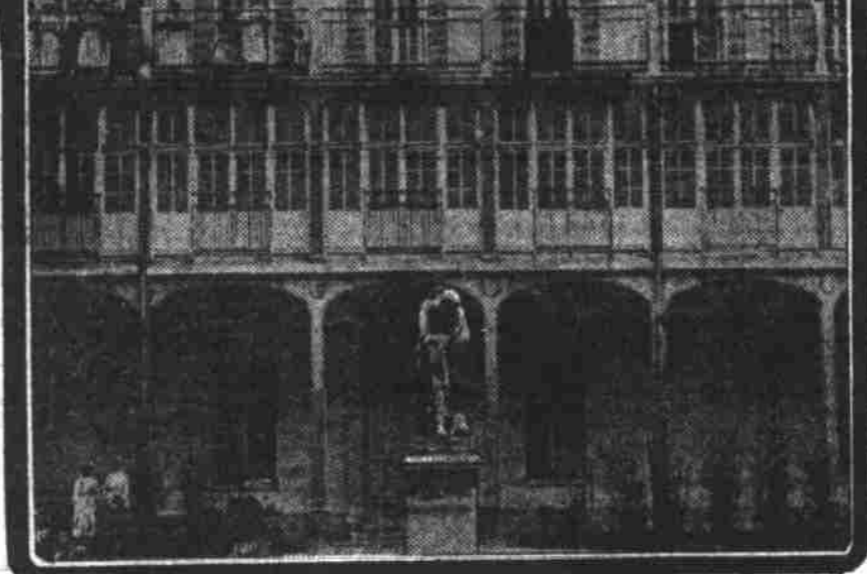
### Authorities Careful.

To such a degree is this scrupulousness on the part of the authorities carried that a woman is free to go to a lying-in hospital and declare that she intends to abandon her child as soon as it is born. The only formality she has to comply with is to write her name and address and any other particulars she may desire on a sheet of paper, seal it herself in an envelope and hand it to the hospital authorities, so that in the event of her death the necessary formalities may be carried out. The envelope is otherwise returned to her unopened on her leaving the hospital.

Should the parent, however, the child declare its name and other particulars, so much the better; otherwise the authorities have to name it themselves and give it what is termed an *etat civil*, tantamount to our birth registration. When the infant has been deserted, its name is frequently borrowed from the place where it was found. The two little children, for instance, to whom I have already alluded and who were deserted in a hotel in the Boulevard de Rochechouart, may quite conceivably be now bearing, respectively, the names of, let us say, Jean and Marie Rochechouart. But one thing is certain: from the moment an infant has been received into the Hospice des Enfants Assistés its future whereabouts, its history and career are alone known to the authorities. This is absolutely necessary, for if a mother abandoning a child were able to keep herself informed of its movements, the temptation to the poorer classes to abandon their offspring would be well nigh irresistible. If, however, the child's name has been duly declared on its being received into the hospice, it is possible for the parents to reclaim it in after years, if they defray the outlay that has been incurred, which is about \$100 a year in the early period of the child's life. About 400 children are thus given back to their parents every year. Until it has reached the age of 6 or 7 years, every "foundling" wears underneath its clothing a little brass necklace, from which is suspended a medallion bearing its number, so that it may be easily traced if lost. As soon as it is sufficiently intelligent to know its own name and where it lives, this necklace is dispensed with.

No children remain at the hospice for more than 36 hours as a general rule. Almost as soon as they arrive they are drafted into the country districts to be nursed in the houses of the peasantry. They are sent to school, the boys are taught a trade or to work on a farm, and they perform their military service very like every other citizen, while the girls become domestic servants.

It is an absolute and very humane principle of the authorities never to divulge to the outside world the fact that their nurselings have been "enfants as-



THE HOSPICE DES ENFANTS ASSISTES

sistes," for the name recalls disagreeable, if not painful, memories, something akin to our charity schoolboys. Some of these children are destined to make honorable, if not great names for themselves and future professors, artists, teachers and even millionaires are to be found within their ranks.

### Secrets Well Kept.

The director of the Enfants Assistés, while ready to give all possible information with respect to his numerous family, declined absolutely to quote a single instance of the successful "foundling" by name. He remarked that these poor children always retain a mournful recollection of the fact that they were "abandoned." It is a phenomenon which M. May has again and again observed that the child when it has grown to man's or woman's estate forgives its mother for having given birth to it, forgives her for having abandoned it. One thing, however, eats like a canker at its heart—the fact that its mother has never sought to trace its whereabouts in after years.

"Why," said a poor domestic servant one day to M. May, "does not my mother at least try to find me?" And when the kind-hearted director, seeking to console her, said: "If your mother were to find you, she would probably be only a burden to you." The girl replied: "Ah! monsieur, at least I should have some one belonging to me. I should not be alone!" It is this feeling of being alone in the world which seems hardest to be borne and which begets a certain melancholy in them. "One of my boys," continued the director, "is now the captain of a transatlantic liner. He wanted to become an officer in the army, but unfortunately we set about it too late. Well, I feel certain in my own mind

### SOME OF THE NURSES

from abroad, were received by the authorities from persons willing to adopt them, but all were rejected.

### Interest in Aliens.

It may be said that France, with her practically stationary population, has an interest in accepting alien children who are destined to swell the number of her citizens. This may be so, but such a consideration does not detract from the generosity with which for years past "Marianne" has taken to her bosom the cruelly abandoned offspring of her sisters. That she does so out of the goodness of her heart is evident to all who, like the writer, have been privileged to see the poor little waifs and strays clinging affectionately to their nurses in the wards of the hospice.

"After all," said the kind-hearted director, with a smile, "what difference does a few hundred aliens make to our budget in the thousands of children we receive annually?"

No description of the foundling hospital would be complete without a refer-

ence to St. Vincent de Paul, the good genius of abandoned infants in his time—he was born in 1578 and died in 1660—there was a particular spot for foundlings in front of the cathedral of Notre Dame. It was called a *couche de Notre Dame* (our lady's bed), and the little ones were picked up there and taken to various hospitals. The compassionate heart of Vincent de Paul was touched by the sufferings of those innocent babes, and he took up their cause with the fervor of a Peter the Hermit or a Savonarola. His eloquent preaching smote the hearts of the laity of the court, and fired with religious zeal they tore off their jewels and gave them to the good priest for use of the "enfants Trouvés." There is an old painting in the creche of the hospice, by an unknown master, showing St. Vincent de Paul seated at a table receiving the jewelry which princesses, duchesses and other great ladies are laying in front of him, while two babies swathed in swaddling clothes and looking for all the world like Egyptian mummies lie at his feet. I should certainly choose as its motto the words "humanity and cleanliness."

### OLD TIMES AND THE NEW—By John Anderson Jayne

EVERY once in a while you come in contact with a man of good countenance or a woman with a whine in her voice who tells you that today is the worst day there is in the history of the world. That young men and women are less manly, less ambitious, less honorable and moral than they were in the years past and gone.

Listen, if you must, to these cooak-ers of society, and realize that the pessimist, like the poor man, must always be with us. Then, after you have listened and have been influenced to the least degree toward believing that the past is better than today, contrast that past with today and you will discover that today is the best day that the world has ever seen or known.

Contrast for a moment the scene at the opening of the eighteenth century with the every-day experiences of the dawning of the twentieth, and you will come to the conclusion that young people, though possibly reckless in many of their amusements, are more respectable and much better in every way than those of 200 years ago.

What would you say to an advertisement in the Leader tonight that should read like this:

"A mad bull will be dressed up with fireworks and turned loose in the game place; a dog will be dressed up with fireworks all over him; a bear will be let loose at the same time, and a cat will be tied to the bull's tail and all other mad bull dressed up with fireworks, will be baited."

That is an ad. that appeared in a London paper 200 years ago.

In the year 1712 in London a large number of young men organized a gang that they called the "Mohawks." These young men were from the nobility. They had been educated in the best colleges and schools of their day. They were indeed "Indian" Lecky says of them: "They were accustomed

created in 1638 but it was not until the revolution that the present system was organized as we now see it.

In 1814 the convent of the Oratory Fathers, situated in what is now the Rue Denfert-Rochereau, was converted into the present Hospice des Enfants Assistés, for until then the little foundlings had no fixed abiding-place, but were taken to whatever charitable institution would receive them.

When the revolution had set the country aflame with patriotic ardor, the little foundlings were characteristically dubbed "enfants de la patrie," and Napoleon turned them to good account by deciding that they should all henceforth be trained to become seamen of the fleet. This regulation ceased with the end of the first empire.

Nothing now remains of the original hospice except the creche or grand salle and the infirmary. The exterior of the old building, as seen from the garden, is shown in the illustration, with the creche in the foreground. A good priest tenderly holds an infant in his arms, whilst two others are on the ground at his feet. St. Vincent de Paul, as everybody knows, was also the creator of those devoted women named Sisters of Mercy, whose lives are spent in tending the sick.

I have said that about 4,500 infants are abandoned to the hospice every year. The number of papers, which annually pass through the hands of the nurses must, however, be nearly double that many cases—many employ them, but must be looked after while their parents are in hospital or otherwise prevented from attending to them.

It would be difficult to say how many babies are to be found in the hospice at one time, for the number varies greatly, but one would be generally sure to see several hundred. The abandoned infants are, as I have explained, detained in the country within 88 hours of their arrival. They are paid for until they are 18 years of age. From that time forth their foster parents may employ them, but must give them a certain wage. At the age of 21 the foundling is free, but in a great many cases—many employ them, but must be looked after while their parents are in hospital or otherwise prevented from attending to them.

The creche, or grand salle, of which a portion is shown in the illustration, is a vast place, with lines of snow-white coats in which the little ones are placed as soon as they arrive, and where they await the doctor's visit and their removal to the country. In conclusion, if I were asked to characterize the Hospice des Enfants Assistés in two words, I should certainly choose as its motto the words "humanity and cleanliness."

temperance and righteousness whose influence cannot be calculated. You may hear of an occasional murder in the dark streets of our cities, but it is occasional and not the regular thing. Your wives, mothers, sweethearts and sisters can go anywhere unmolested, knowing no protection save the protection that is given every true woman from the manhood of America. A woman can go today from Pittsburgh to Pekin, from Boston to Bombay, from San Francisco to Suez and never hear a sound or see a sight that shall offend.

If you would know the value of human life, as contrasted with that of 200 years ago, think how men were hanged then for mutilating London bridges, and the expense the state today assumes to protect even the lawbreakers and the criminal.

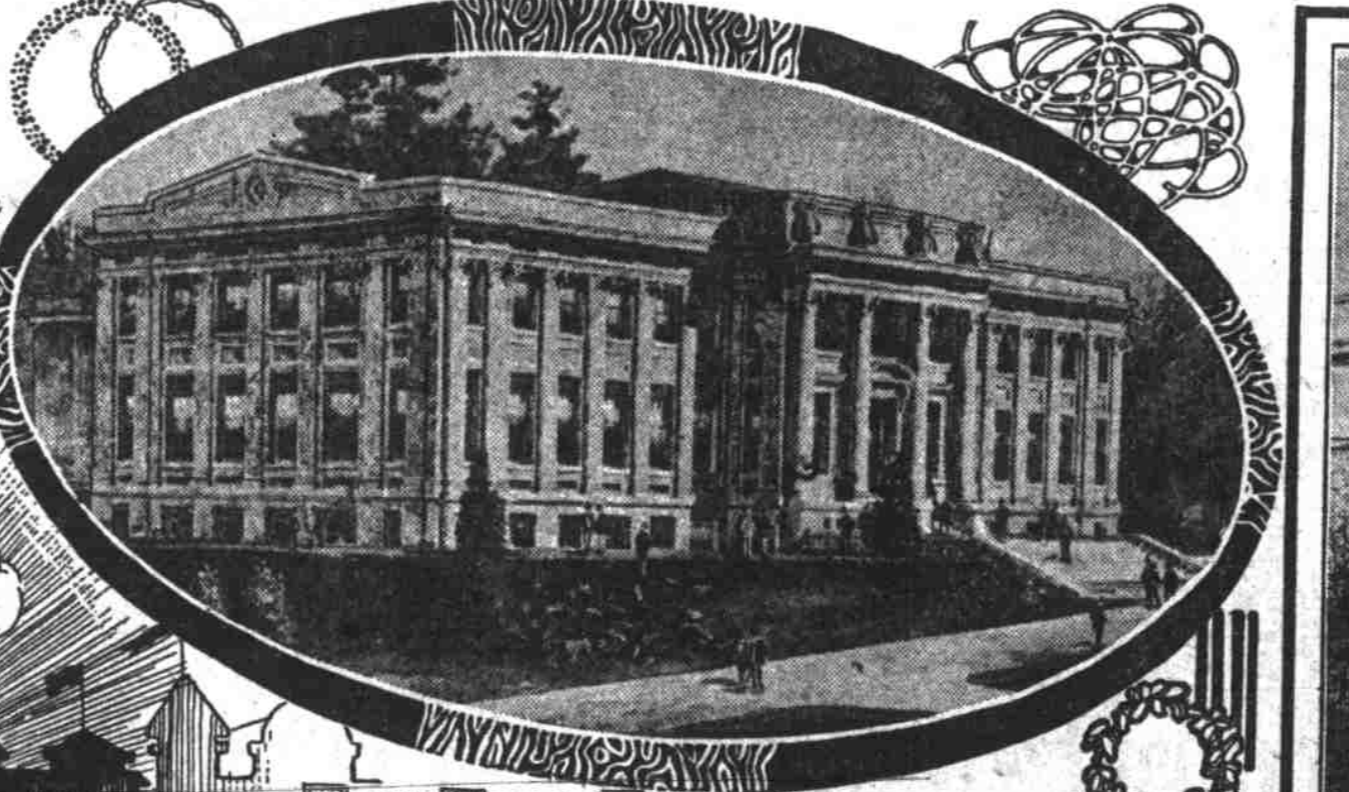
Everything in life today indicates that today is the best day in the history of the world. That tomorrow will be better than today. Life is on the upgrade. Our May flowers turn not backward, but ever turn their brows toward the future. The new time is better than the old time and the days that hang over the fringe of the future are big with hope.

### Buttons as Clues to Crimes.

From the Westminster Gazette.

In the Black museum at New Scotland Yard is a fragment of a button found on the window sill of a house which had been entered by burglars. It was the only clue the police had to work on but in the hands of a keen-eyed young constable it led to the arrest of its owner, whom the constable met casually in the street wearing the very waistcoat with its broken button of which the fragment had formed a part.

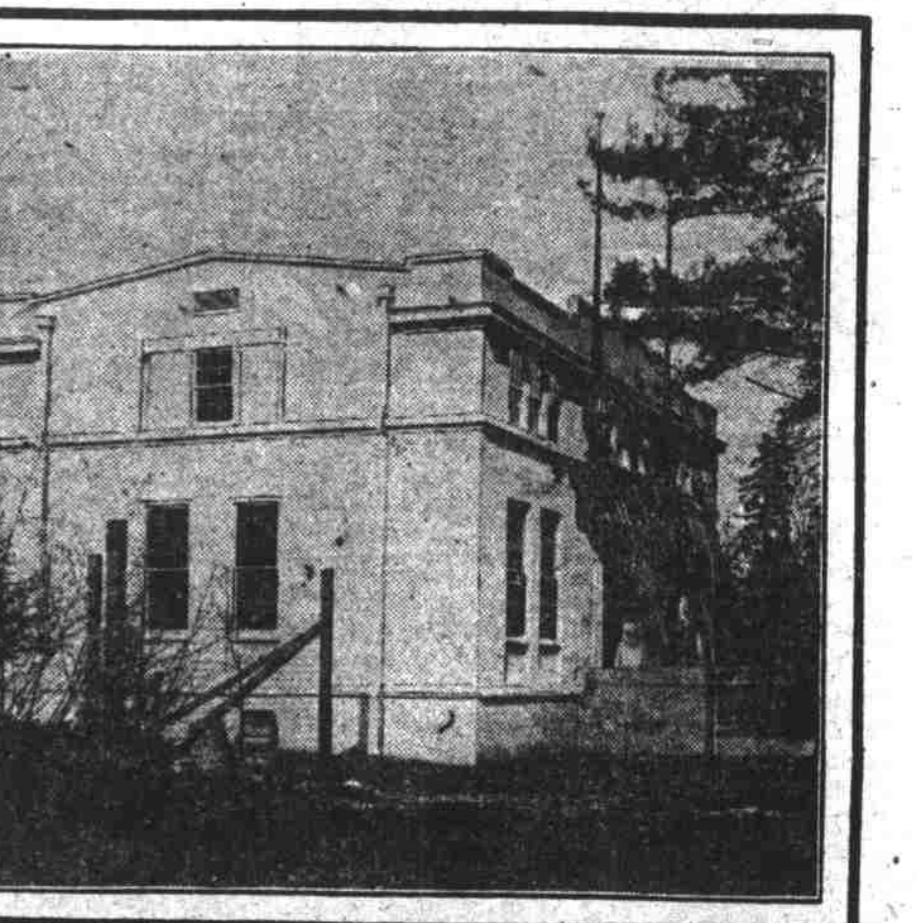
The murderer of Mr. Delarue in Belsize lane, Hampstead, some years ago was brought to the gallows through the instrumentality of a mackintosh button found near the body of his victim.



FINE ARTS PALACE TO BE USED AS CHEMISTRY BLDG. FOR WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY



MACHINERY HALL PERMANENT BLDG. FOR WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY AFTER FAIR. BRICK WITH TERRA COTTA TRIMMINGS.



**EMERGENCY HOSPITAL**

New buildings for the Alaska-Yukon Exposition, which will become permanent parts of the Washington University after the big fair is over. The structures are handsome specimens of architecture.