

### THE SLAUGHTER OF THE INNOCENTS

Today passing in review as we look out through the windows of our comfortable homes in this great and happy land, are three and a half millions of helpless children, the innocent victims of the greatest war that has ever afflicted humanity. It matters not, as we gaze in the direction of these children, that our eyes must stretch across three thousand miles of ocean, we still can see them and we still can hear them, if we wish to do so; and we can not help hearing the tragic appeal in their voices and seeing their tiny arms stretched out to us, and their searching eyes looking into our souls, as they say, "Help us, or we perish." And if we fail to listen to this great call of three and a half millions of God's helpless children; if we close our eyes and ears to this great demand of duty, we will be just as guilty as the "slaughter of the innocents" as was Herod, nearly two thousand years ago.

In these lands, swept by death and filled with tragedies too deep for tears, a sum of human suffering is being written greater perhaps than for all ages gone by. The mind grows numb and the heart sick from a constant recital of tales of such tragedy as it is difficult to believe the twentieth century could hold.

And so when we receive the letter from Mr Hoover telling us that America must not allow hunger and cold to return to this mass of 3,500,000 helpless children our soul was stirred and the hot blood surged up in our hearts. We felt it was our imperative duty to use all the power God has given us to aid this noble-hearted American in continuing the work of saving human lives to which he has devoted unsparingly, and at great personal sacrifice, his tremendous energy and administrative genius during the past six years, without any remuneration to the American directors. Now he asks us all to help save the children who are in imminent danger of starvation this coming winter.

There they are, in the midst of wrecked homes, and farms, and factories; in cities crowded with masses of refugees without sustaining food for children, through the destruction of live stock; seeds for planting, raw materials, tools and machinery gone; great areas with everything burned, or looted, or smashed; vast unemployment for workers; no means of subsistence; a land of economic ruin, of mutilated life, and lingering death; and in the midst of it all—the little children.

In long lines they are waiting at the American food-kitchen. Will the food be there for them? Will they be turned away? There are no happy, healthy faces in those long lines—not one. You have seen rags and barefooted children, but never so many little boys and girls literally dressed in tatters. Soon it will be very cold, and for those bare little feet and legs and arms there is nothing at home to put on.

Hollow faces and shrunken bodies are so common that their real condition does not become evident until we inquire more closely, and then we find that most of them are from one to five years back in their growth. Children of eight years old have not reached the normal size of two and a half. They are just learning to stand alone. Others almost as old can not yet stand

on their feet. Their arms, and legs, and spines, and chest are twisted and warped. The flesh and skin are shriveled on their bones. It is surprising that life can still exist there. If they can have food they will gradually regain their health and strength but with most of them it is a question of now or never. Starvation and tuberculosis will not wait.

In Poland alone a million five hundred thousand such children must be cared for. In Latvia and Esthonia the people are living mostly on a diet made from potato-flour, oat-flour, and sawdust. In Czecho-Slovakia, in Hungary, in Austria, and in other countries of central and southeastern Europe, two millions more are in dire need of food; and who stops to ask regarding creed, or race, or nationality when a little child is starving? Children are just children the world over, and the great American heart is big enough to care for them all.

But the appeal now is not for all. The three and a half millions of children in immediate danger of starvation, if this organization fails, who must have food at once, are only a fraction of the total number. The hungry children of those destitute countries have been examined by competent physicians, and only those whose wasted little bodies are reduced to the minimum weight, and whose endurance of hunger has reached the end which merges into actual starvation, are admitted to the American kitchens and given one meal a day. It is hard to turn away thousands of hungry boys and girls—to hear them ask, pleadingly, "Do I weigh too much?" "Am I not thin enough?" "Can't I come any more?" But this restricting of food to the extreme cases is compulsory, because there isn't enough for all.

And these neediest ones cannot reach the kitchens through the cold winds and the snow barefooted and in the pitiful rags which form only a partial covering for their bodies. They must have clothes. Each outfit consists of one pair of warm woolen stockings, one pair of boots, and a little overcoat. This one meal a day, and these boots, stockings, and little coats can be supplied only if we give them. If we do not, the slaughter of the innocents by cold and starving will be appalling.

The small individual unit of ten dollars will provide the coat and boots and stockings and one meal a day for one child this winter. A hundred dollars will save the lives of ten children. For a thousand dollars you may have the joy of saving a hundred little ones. We urge our readers—we urge every one whose eyes are on these words—to give quickly as many of these units as possible, to buy for themselves that precious and priceless thing, the life of a little child—as many of them as they can, and every one will be a shining star in an eternal crown. It was the Divine Lover of little children, who came to earth as a little child, and who reigns now as the King of Glory who said "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these, ye have done it unto me." He does not forget, nor fail to award.

Let us all see what the father's heart is like in this great rich land of America. Let us have again a wondrous revelation of the heart of American motherhood. Let us have a great outpouring of love and helpfulness in the name of him who said, "Feed my lambs!"