

- SOCIOLOGY -

-The History of Philanthropy-

Prof.C.R.Henderson.

THE HISTORY OF THE ENGLISH POOR RELIEF DURING THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY,

by

SUMIO UESUGI.

March 13th, 1914.

THE HISTORY OF THE
CITY OF BIRMINGHAM
FROM 1800 TO 1850

BY
JAMES BURNES
LONDON 1850

The History of the English Poor Relief during the Sixteenth Century.

Sumio Uesugi.

The English system of poor relief presents a striking contrast to the rest of the national institutions of its day. Under Henry VIII the first enactment was passed ordering the regular collection and distribution of alms for the relief of the poor but it was not until forty years later that the amount to be paid by each individual was assessed and its payment compulsorily enforced. Even after ninety years had elapsed, the English organization for poor relief was still irregularly carried out and of little practical effect. Like other and more famous English institutions, the making and administration of the English Poor Law was a growth, not a creation. It was during the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries that the chief experiments were made in methods of relieving the poor by secular public authorities. But even before that time the beginnings of the later organization may be traced both in the provisions of the statutes and in the regulations of the towns.

In Anglo-Saxon times, the administration of poor relief was almost entirely under the control of the Church. Almsgiving and hospitality were however inculcated as religious duties of considerable importance, and there is much to make us think that they were extensively practiced by Anglo-Saxon kings and noblemen.

With the beginning of the 13th century we find greater activity in the matter. Two causes seemed to have influenced the secular authorities in public office at the time to interfere: first, the desire to repress vagrants, and secondly, the desire of both state and town to control some of the charitable endowments.

From the 13th century onwards there are signs that men had ceased to leave charitable endowments entirely in the hands of ecclesiastics. A growing desire was felt that Parliament and the town governments should share in the administration of some of the funds for the relief of the poor.

About the end of the 14th century a portion of the tithe had been commonly distributed by the resident rector to the poor, but when a living became a part of the possessions of a monastery, the poor parishioners were often forgotten.

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About the end of the 14th century a portion of the tithes had been commonly attributed by the parish rector to the poor, but when a living became a part of the possession of a monastery, the poor parishioners were often forgotten.

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endowments for the relief of the poor. A piece of land was bequeathed to the guild partly for the purpose of relieving the poor and, we are told, 30 L. a year was distributed to the poor brethren, to blind, lame and sick persons, and for other charitable purposes. The whole charity distributed by this association must have been considerable, for the only four great meetings of the guild were held during the year, one of these was especially concerned with the management of its charities.

In the 15th century "the townys almys were settled on a plan" and lists were kept of the weekly payments. The steward's book of 1441 states that the town gave weekly to the poor 4L. 2 s. 1 d., which, according to the value of money at that time, might have furnished relief for about 150 people. (John S. Davies, Southampton, pp. 139-214.)

We see that before the 16th century most of these measures were negative rather than positive. The orders concerning the repression of the sturdy beggars were more prominent than those concerning the relief of the poor. The main part of the charity of the time was still administered by ecclesiastics and was obtained from endowed charities and from voluntary gifts. But in the 16th century, the older methods of relief failed to cope with the new social difficulties, and the older feeling in favor of the ecclesiastical control of charity was considerably lessened.

The earlier years of the 16th century began a period of great change in the position of the poorer classes, and these changes soon resulted in a series of attempts to reform and reorganize the whole system of poor relief. The great increase in the number of vagabonds appears to have begun early in the reign of Henry VIII. The cause of this increase was connected with lack of employment; the difficulty had been for the masters to find workmen - the problem now was for the men to find work, and this in spite of the fact that at the beginning of the 16th century commerce and manufactures were rapidly extending. The age was one of transition and old occupations were becoming unnecessary. The feudal society of the Middle Ages was giving place to the modern industrial and commercial community. But this very increase of manufacturing industry had effects of its own in increasing the numbers of the unemployed. In the first place, the peaceful life of the craftsman was favorable to the growth of population; and in the second place, the new occupations were less stable than the old industries had been.

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The earlier years of the 15th century began a period of great change in the position of the poorer classes, and these changes soon resulted in a series of attempts to reform and reorganize the whole system of poor relief. The great increase in the number of vagrants appears to have begun early in the reign of Henry VII. The cause of this increase was connected with lack of employment; the difficulty had been for the masters to find work for the men to whom they were bound, and this in turn led to the fact that at the beginning of the 15th century numerous and numerous were rapidly extending. The age was one of transition and old organizations were becoming unnecessary. The feudal society of the Middle Ages was giving place to the modern, industrial and commercial community. This very increase of manufacturing industry had effects of its own in increasing the numbers of the unemployed. In the first place, the powerful life of the craftsman was favorable to the growth of population; and in the second place, the new organizations were less elastic than the old industries had been.

Another cause tended to increase the hardships of the poor, and so necessitated new methods of poor relief. The influx of silver from the New World caused a general rise of prices. Food and clothing and rents rose more quickly than wages, so that the poor could obtain fewer of the necessities of life.

Between 1511 and 1550 provisions seem to have risen about 60% in price, and there is another rise in the next ten years of another 50%:

	Wheat the quart.	Oxen	Barley	Hens.
1511-1520	6 s. $8\frac{3}{4}$ d.	23 s. 2.d	4 s. $0\frac{1}{4}$ d.	2 d.
1521-1530	7 6	30 $10\frac{1}{4}$	4 9	$3\frac{1}{2}$
1531-1540	7 $8\frac{1}{2}$	28 $7\frac{1}{2}$	4 $11\frac{3}{4}$	$3\frac{1}{4}$
1541-1550	10 8	42 $3\frac{1}{4}$	6 $2\frac{1}{4}$	$5\frac{3}{4}$
1551-1560	15 $3\frac{3}{4}$	78 $7\frac{1}{2}$	10 $0\frac{1}{4}$	$4\frac{3}{4}$

The rise in wages was barely 15% before 1550 though during the next ten years there is a rise of 30%, so that the rise in wages is less than half that in prices of provisions.

	Carpenter.	Mason labor.	Unskilled labor.
1511-1520	$6\frac{1}{4}$ d.	4 d.	$3\frac{3}{4}$ d.
1521-1530	6	$4\frac{1}{4}$	4-1/8
1531-1540	7	$4\frac{1}{4}$	4
1541-1550	7	$4\frac{3}{4}$	4-5/8
1551-1560	$10\frac{3}{4}$	$6\frac{3}{4}$	6

One cause of distress affected England more than the other countries of Europe. It had become more profitable to breed sheep than to plow the land, and England was the great wool-producing country of the world. Many who had cultivated the soil were evicted in order that sheep runs might be formed, and thus agricultural laborers and small yeomen helped to swell the crowds of the unemployed.

The existence therefore of the crowd of vagrants can be accounted for by the social and economic changes of the time, but it was none the less dangerous on that account. The public authorities of state and town began, early in the century, to make more frequent orders for their repression, but it was soon clear that these orders could not be effectual

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Wheat the quart	6 s. 0d.	7 s. 0d.	8 s. 0d.	7 s. 0d.	8 s. 0d.	10 s. 0d.	8 s. 0d.	12 s. 0d.	10 s. 0d.
Oxen	23 s. 6d.	20 s. 0d.	10 s. 0d.	7 s. 0d.	11 s. 0d.	8 s. 0d.	10 s. 0d.	10 s. 0d.	10 s. 0d.
Barley	4 s. 0d.	4 s. 0d.	4 s. 0d.	4 s. 0d.	4 s. 0d.	4 s. 0d.	4 s. 0d.	4 s. 0d.	4 s. 0d.
Hens.	2 s. 0d.	2 s. 0d.	2 s. 0d.	2 s. 0d.	2 s. 0d.	2 s. 0d.	2 s. 0d.	2 s. 0d.	2 s. 0d.

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Carpenter	4 s. 0d.	4 s. 0d.	4 s. 0d.	4 s. 0d.	4 s. 0d.	4 s. 0d.	4 s. 0d.	4 s. 0d.	4 s. 0d.
Season labor	4 s. 0d.	4 s. 0d.	4 s. 0d.	4 s. 0d.	4 s. 0d.	4 s. 0d.	4 s. 0d.	4 s. 0d.	4 s. 0d.
Unskilled labor	4 s. 0d.	4 s. 0d.	4 s. 0d.	4 s. 0d.	4 s. 0d.	4 s. 0d.	4 s. 0d.	4 s. 0d.	4 s. 0d.

One cause of distress affected England more than the other countries of Europe. It had become more profitable to breed sheep than to plow the land, and England was the great wool-producing country of the world. Many who had cultivated the soil were evicted in order that sheep runs might be formed, and some agricultural laborers and small farmers slipped to swell the ranks of the unemployed.

The existence therefore of the crowd of vagrants can be accounted for by the social and economic changes of the time, but it was also the laws that were on that account. The public authorities of state and town began early in the century to make more stringent orders for their execution, but it was soon clear that these orders could not be effective.

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The methods of distributing charities as employed in the monasteries were little better. It is true that the services rendered by the monks and nuns to education were considerable, and that a number of old people and children were maintained in some of the religious houses. Lodging was also given to wayfarers and thus a very useful function was fulfilled in countries where there were few inns and no casual wards. But besides the monasteries there were hospitals. The term hospital was by no means confined to institutions for relieving the sick, but almshouses, orphanages and training homes were often called by this name. St. Thomas' Hospital may be taken for a typical institution of this kind. The hospital consisted of Master, brethren and sisters, and the official of each hospital acted on their own responsibility and afforded much or little relief to the poor of their immediate neighborhood, but were almost as powerless as a private individual to check the general evil. Now let us study in particular the development of the poor law in England during the 16th century.

Henry the Eighth succeeded to the throne at the age of eighteen. His manners were popular, frank, and manly, and his appearance was highly prepossessing.

In "An Act concerning Egyptians" passed in 1530-31, (22 Henry VIII cap.10) we find the first statutory notice of that extraordinary people. The Act recites "Forasmuch as afore this time divers and many outlandish people calling themselves Egyptians, using no craft or faicte of merchandise, have come into this realme, and gone from shire and place to place, in great company, and used great subtle and crafty means to deceive the people, bearing them in hand that they by palmystire could tell men and women's fortunes, and so ~~by~~ many times by craft and subtlety have deceived the people of their money, and have

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where this time divers and many outlandish people calling themselves Egyptians, using
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and so by many false and subtilty have deceived the people of their money, and have

committed many and heinous felonies and robberies, to the great hurt and decay of the people that they have come among." It is then ordained that no such person in the future shall be permitted to come into this realm under pain of imprisonment and forfeiture of all their goods; and further, that proclamation should be forthwith made commanding all the "Egyptians" then in the country to depart within 16 days under like penalties. It does not appear however that these directions were attended to, for the Gypsies continued to infest the country as before, mingling with the people and preying upon their credulity, becoming more or less identified with the vagabond and mendicant classes; and so they have continued even to this present day.

Shortly afterwards was passed a most elaborately framed act "concerning the punishment of beggars and vagabonds." This statute (22 Henry VIII, cap.12) is deserving of especial notice, affording as it does a proof of the careful attention given to the subject at that time. The preamble recites that "in all places throughout the realm, vagabonds and beggars have of long time increased, and daily do increase in great and excessive numbers by the occasion of idleness, mother and root of all vices, whereby both insurged and sprung, and daily insurgeth and springeth, continual thefts, murders and other heinous offenses and great enormities, to the high displeasure of God, the unquietation and damage of the king's people, and to the marvellous disturbance of the common weal. And whereas many and sundry good laws and strict statutes and ordinances have been before this time devised and made for the due reformation of the premises, yet that, notwithstanding, the said numbers of vagabonds and beggars be not diminished; but rather daily augmented into great routs and companies, as evidently doth appear." It is then ordered for remedy of these evils:

First - That justices of peace, mayors, sheriffs, and other officers, shall from time to time, within the limit of their authorities, make diligent search of all aged poor and impotent persons which live by alms and charity; and the said justices of peace, etc. enable such of the impotent persons as they think convenient to beg and live on the alms and charity of the people within a limit to them to be appointed, "and shall register their names in a bill or roll indented, the one part thereof to remain to themselves, the other part to be certified at the next sessions, there to remain under the keeping of the

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Custos Robulorum," and they are to deliver to every impotent person so enabled to beg a letter a letter containing the name of such person, and witnessing that he is authorized to beg, and the limit within which he is so authorized; and the letter is to be sealed with a seal engraved with the name of such limit, and subscribed by one of the said justices etc.

And if any impotent person so authorized shall beg in any other place than within such prescribed limit," the justices, mayors and sheriffs may, at their discretion punish such persons by imprisonment in the stocks the space of two days and two nights, giving them only bread and water, and after that causing them to be sworn to return again without delay to the place where they were authorized to beg."

Secondly- "If any such impotent person shall go about begging having no such letter under seal, "the constable or other inhabitants of the town or parish where such person shall beg, shall cause him to be taken and brought to the next justice or high constable of the hundred, who shall command him to be stripped naked from the middle upwards, and cause him to be whipped, if it shall seem to the discretion of the said justice or high constable that it be convenient so to punish such beggar, and if not, then to command such beggar to be set in stocks by the space of three days and three nights, there to have only bread and water." He is then to be furnished with a letter under seal and assigned a limit within which to beg, and is to be sworn to repair thither immediately "after his punishment is to him executed."

Thirdly - Of any person or persons "being whole and mighty in body and able to labor" be found begging, or if any man or woman, being whole and mighty in body, and able to labor, "having no land master, nor having any lawful merchandise, craft, or myserie, be vagrants, and can give no reckoning how he doth lawfully get his living" the constables and others of the king's subjects of every town, parish and hamlet, are to arrest the said vagabonds and idle persons, and bring them before a justice of peace, high constable, mayor, or sheriff, who at their discretion shall cause every such idle person to be had to the next market town, or other place most convenient, and be there tied to the end of a cart naked, and be beaten with whips throughout the same town or other place, till his body be bloody by reason of such whipping; and after such punishment he shall be enjoined upon his oath to return forthwith the next straight way to the place where he was

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born, or where he last dwelled the space of three years, and there put himself to labor as like as a true man oweth to do." And if, where any impotent person or strong beggar doth happen to beg contrary to this statute, the constables and inhabitants be negligent and fail to take and punish every such beggar, then the parish or township is to forfeit for every such default, if it be an impotent beggar and for every strong beggar, "one-half to the king, the other half to him that will sue for same."

Fourthly- "Scholars of the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge that go about begging, not being authorized under the seal of the said universities, and shipmen pretending losses of their ships and goods at sea, going about the country begging without sufficient authority witnessing the same, shall be punished and ordered in the manner as is afore rehearsed of strong beggars. And all proctors and pardoners going about without sufficient authority, and all other idle persons going about, or abiding in any city, borough or town, some of them using divers and subtle craft and unlawful games and plays, and some feigning to have knowledge in physic, physionomic, palmistry, or other crafty science, whereby they bear the people in hand that they can tell their destinies, diseases, and fortunes, and such other like fantastical imaginations," shall, if found guilty of any such deceits on examination before two justices, be punished by whipping two days together, after the manner before rehearsed.

Fifthly- If any person shall give harbor, money, or lodging to any beggars being strong and able to work, who act contrary to the form of this statute, every person so doing is subjected to such fine as the justices at their general sessions shall direct. And if any person or persons shall in any wise hinder the execution of this Act, or make rescue against any mayor or other person endeavoring for the due execution thereof, such person or persons for every such offense shall lose and forfeit a hundred shillings, and over that have imprisonment at the King's will. And it is further ordered that the Act shall be yearly be read in open sessions, "to the intent that it may be the more feared and the better put into execution."

The legislators of that day were strenuous in their endeavors to put an end to vagabondage in every form; but they recognized the distinction between the impotent poor beggar and the able bodied mendicant, and directed a different proceeding with respect to

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 shall be yearly be read in open sessions, to the intent that it may be the more feared
 and the better put into execution."

The legislators of that day were numerous in their attempts to put an end to
 vagabondage in every form, but they recognized the distinction between the laborer and
 beggar and the able-bodied mendicant, and directed a different proceeding with respect to

each. As regards the impotent poor, the proceeding seems to have been prescribed with a view to ascertaining whether it would be possible so to regulate mendicancy as to deprive it of its evil consequences - whether, in short, the sanction or toleration of begging, by means of a letter of licence under strict limitations and restrictions, might not be adopted without leading to an increase of beggars. The experiment was made in a good spirit, but the result could hardly have been regarded as anything but doubtful, even at that early period. With respect to the able bodied, the course adopted was more direct and more stringent.

The fourth provision, inflicting punishment on the scholars of the two universities who go about begging without being duly licenced, seems at the present day an extraordinary enactment, but it was not then so regarded. The priests and inferior clergy were all, more or less, beggars, or solicitors of alms, and those of the mendicant orders were professedly such; so that partly from custom and partly from teaching and example, not only was begging tolerated but the profession of a beggar was not regarded as disgraceful.

"And forasmuch as it was not provided in the said Act how and in what wise the said poor people and sturdy vagabonds should be ordered at their coming into their counties, nor how the inhabitants of every hundred should be charged for the relief of the same poor people, nor yet setting and keeping in work and labor the aforesaid valiant vagabonds," - it is ordered that the mayors, bailiffs, constables, and other head officers of cities, towns, and parishes, "shall most charitably receive such poor creatures or sturdy vagabonds as are specified in the said Act," and shall succor, relieve and keep the said poor people by way of voluntary charitable alms, in such wise that none of them shall of necessity be compelled to wander and go openly in begging; and also shall cause the said sturdy vagabonds and valiant beggars to be set and kept to continual labor in such wise as they may bet their own living with the continual labor of their own hands. The mayors, bailiffs, constables, etc. are likewise "to endeavor to order and direct the poor people, valiant beggars and sturdy vagabonds, in such wise that the present Act shall be duly observed and put into execution, upon pain that every parish shall forfeit 20 shillings for every month in which it is omitted and not done."

The mayors and other head officers, etc. and the churchwardens or two others of

each. As regards the indigent poor, the preceding seems to have been prescribed with a view to ascertaining whether it would be possible to regulate mendicancy as to degree of its evil consequences - whether, in short, the sanction or rejection of begging, by means of a system of license under strict limitations and restrictions, might not be adopted without leading to an increase of beggary. The experiment was made in a good spirit, but the results could hardly have been regarded as anything but doubtful, even at that early period. With respect to the able bodied, the course adopted was more direct and more stringent.

The fourth provision, inflicting punishment on the violators of the two universal laws who go about begging without being duly licensed, seems at the present day an extraordinary enactment, but it was not then so regarded. The priests and inferior clergy were all, more or less, beggars, or solicitors of alms, and those of the mendicant orders were professionally such; so that partly from custom and partly from teaching and example, not only was begging tolerated but the profession of a beggar was not regarded as disgraceful. "And forasmuch as it was not provided in the said Act how and in what cases the said poor people and sturdy vagabonds should be ordered at their coming into their counties, nor how the inhabitants of every township should be charged for the relief of the same poor people, nor yet setting and keeping in work and labor the otherwise idle and vagabonds, it is ordered that the mayor, bailiff, constable, and other head officers of cities, towns, and parishes, shall most charitably receive such poor craftsmen or sturdy vagabonds as are specified in the said Act, and shall support, relieve and keep the said poor people by way of voluntary contribution, in such cases that some of them shall of necessity be compelled to wander and go about in begging, and also shall cause the said sturdy vagabonds and idle persons to be set and kept in continual labor in such wise as they may best their own living with the continual labor of their own hands. The mayor, bailiff, constable, etc. are likewise to answer to other and diverse the poor people, vagabonds, beggars and sturdy vagabonds, in such cases that the present Act shall be fully observed and put into execution, upon pain that every person shall forfeit 20 shillings for every month in which it is omitted and not done."

The mayor and other head officers, etc. and the churchwardens or two others of

every parish "shall take such discreet and convenient order, by gathering and securing voluntary alms of the good Christian people within the same, with boxes, every Sunday and holiday, or otherwise among themselves in such good and discreet wise as the poor, impotent, sick, and diseased people, being not able to work, may be provided, holpen and relieved, and that such as be lusty, having their limbs strong enough to labor, may be daily kept in continual labor, whereby every one of them may get their own living with their own hands."

A new description of offenders as noticed in this statute. They are described as idle persons, "ruffelers," calling themselves servingmen, but having no masters. They are expressly subjected to the penalties provided in this and the previous Act; and if, after having been once taken, shipped, and sent into any town, hundred, or parish, any of the aforesaid "ruffelers" sturdy vagabonds, and valiant beggars" wander, loiter, or idly play the vagabond, and absent themselves from such labor as shall be appointed unto them, then upon due examination and proof, they are not only to be whipped again and sent to the town or parish whereunto they were first appointed, but also "have the upper part of the gristle of the right ear clean cut off, so that it may appear for a perpetual token that he hath seen a countenance of the good order of the commonwealth." And every constable with the assistance of the most substantial people of the parish where such "ruffeler, sturdy vagabond or valiant beggar" shall happen to be taken, shall do or cause to be done this execution, as well as shipping as in cutting off the said upper gristle of the ear, upon pain of forfeiting five marks, and the inhabitants are to assist the said constables to the best of their power upon the like pain. It is also further directed.

The only other section of this statute requiring attention is that which provides for the placing of poor children out in service. By the fourth section, it is enacted that the governors, justices of peace, and head officers and constables of every city, town, or parish, shall have "authority to take up all children between the ages of five and thirteen years, who are begging or in idleness, and appoint them to masters in husbandry or in other crafts to be taught, by which they may get their livings when they come of age, giving to them of the said charitable collections clothing to enter into such service." And if any of such children between the ages of 12 and 16 refuse such service, or depart from the same without reasonable cause, they are to be apprehended and openly shipped with rods, at the

every parish "shall take such discreet and convenient order, by gathering and receiving voluntary alms of the good Christian people within the same, with boxes, every Sunday and holy day, or otherwise among themselves in such good and discreet ways as the poor, impotent, sick, and distressed people, being not able to work, may be provided, helped and relieved, and that such as be idle, having their limbs strong enough to labor, may be daily kept in continual labor, whereby every one of them may get their own living with their own hands."

A new description of offenders as noticed in this statute. They are described as idle persons, "rufflers," calling themselves servants, but having no masters. They are expressly subjected to the penalties provided in this and the previous Act; and if, after having been once taken, whipped, and sent into any town, hundred, or parish, any of the above said "rufflers," sturdy vagabonds, and violent beggars, wander, loiter, or idly play the vagabond, and absent themselves from such labor as shall be appointed unto them, then upon due examination and proof, they are not only to be whipped again and sent to the town or parish wherunto they were first appointed, but also "have the upper part of the griddle of the right ear clean cut off, so that it may appear for a perpetual token that he hath been a continuance of the good order of the commonwealth." And every constable with the assistance of the most substantial people of the parish where such "ruffler, sturdy vagabond, or violent beggar" shall happen to be taken, shall do or cause to be done this execution, as well as shipping as in cutting off the said upper griddle of the ear, upon pain of forfeiting five marks, and the defaulters are to stand the said costs to the best of their power upon the like pain. It is also further directed.

"In any other section of this statute requiring execution in that which provides for the taking of poor children out of service. If the fourth section, it is enacted that the Governor, Justices of Peace, and head officers and constables of every city, town, or parish, shall have authority to take up all children between the ages of seven and thirteen years, who are begging or in idleness, and appoint them to service in husbandry or in other crafts to be taught, by which they may get their living when they come of age, saving to them of the said charitable collection nothing to put into such service."

of such children between the ages of 12 and 18 return such services, or report from the same without reasonable cause, they are to be apprehended and openly whipped, at the

discretion of the said officers.

Edward VI. 1547-1553.

Henry VIII died January 28th, 1547, and was succeeded by his son, Edward VI, then only ten years of age. Edward's uncle was his chief adviser.

One of the earliest acts of Edward's reign (1 Edward VI cap 3) was "For the punishment of vagabonds, and for the relief of the poor and impotent persons." Accordingly this statute begins by reciting that "idleness and vagabondage is the mother and root of all thefts, robberies, and other evil acts and mischiefs, which the king and parliament both often with great travail endeavored to repress; but owing to the foolish pity of them which should have seen the laws executed, the said goodly statutes have hitherto had small effect, and idle and vagabond persons, unprofitable members or rather enemies of the commonwealth, have been suffered to remain and increase, who, if they should be punished by death, whipping, imprisonment, or with their deserts; yet if they could be brought to do service, it were much to be desired." The punishment of vagabonds and sturdy beggars is repealed but they are punished for being idle, "whether man or woman, not being lame, impotent, or so aged or diseased with sickness that he or she cannot work." Every idle and loitering wanderer who shall refuse to apply himself to honest labor, or to work for wages, or for his meat and drink, or who shall run away from work he agreed to perform, is to be taken for a vagabond, and if he continue idle and refuse to labor or run away from work set him to perform, he is to be branded with the letter "V" and be adjudged a slave for two years. If he run away within the two years, he is to be branded in the cheek with the letter "S" and adjudged a slave for life, and if he run away again, he is to suffer death.

The Act further provides that a young beggar or the child of a beggar, whether it be male or female, between the ages of 5 to 14, "idly wandering about as a vagabond" may be taken by any manner of person from any such beggar, "being the mother or the keeper of them." If the child shall run away from the master or mistress, the child may be taken again and punished in chains.

Provision is likewise made in this Act for the care and relief of the aged, infirm, and impotent poor, and for preventing their wandering and begging out of their own

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Provision is likewise made in this act for the care and relief of the aged, in-

firm, and impotent poor, and for the visiting their households and begging out of their own

districts. But description of poor as are capable of doing anything shall be kept at work. The trouble was how aged and impotent persons should be ordered for their better relief and how vagabonds and strong beggars should be punished.

In 1551, the mayors should appoint two able persons or more to be collectors of the charitable alms of residue of the people for the relief of the poor. And the Sunday next or the Sunday following when the people are at church, "collectors shall gently ask and demand of every man and woman what they of their charity will give weekly towards towards the relief of the poor, and the same is to be written in the same book. And the collectors shall justly gather and truly distribute the same charitable alms weekly to the said poor and impotent persons; without fraud or covine, favor or affection, and after such sort that the more important may have the more help, and such as can get part of their living have less, and by the discretion of the collection to be put in such labor as they be able to do; but none are to go or to sit openly begging, upon pain limited in the aforesaid statute." No person elected and nominated to the office of collector is permitted to refuse to execute the same for one whole year, upon pain of forfeiting 40 shillings to the alms box of the poor. And the collectors are to account quarterly to the town and parish authorities at which accounting "such of the parish as will may be present."

Edward died on July 6, 1553, at the age of 16, and he was succeeded by his eldest sister, Mary. She was 37 years old. She was a strong Catholic, and she married Philip, King of Spain. The King and Queen were both strong Catholics and did what they could for that Church in England.

^{SYSTEM OF}
The charity ^A was contented to give weekly collections for relief of the poor, and helped impotent persons. A licence to go abroad to beg and receive charitable alms out of the parish, in which limits the place to which such poor folk may resort shall be named, ^{was issued} and valiant beggars were to punished and the licence was be taken from them.

Elizabeth - 1558 - 1603.

Elizabeth was in her 25th year when she succeeded to the throne, November 17, 1558, and from an early age she had given promise of superior talent. She was known to favor the Reformation.

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permitted to refuse to execute the same for one whole year, upon pain of forfeiting 40

shillings to the king's box of the poor. And the collectors are to account quarterly to the

town and parish authorities at which accounting "such of the parish as will may be present."

Edward died on July 2, 1855, at the age of 18, and he was succeeded by his eldest

son, Henry. He was 17 years old. He was a strong Catholic, and the curate Philip King

of St. John's. The King and Queen were both strong Catholics and did what they could for the

Church in England.

The charity was continued to give weekly collections for relief of the poor.

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Elizabeth - 1855 - 1856

Elizabeth was in her fifth year when she succeeded to the throne, November 17,

1855, and from an early age she had given promise of superior talent. She was known to

favor the Restoration.

The appointment of collectors of alms and for licencing the poor to beg in cases where a parish is overburdened and also requiring the beggars so licenced to wear badges.

Accordingly this statute enacts (5 Elizabeth cap.3) that after due exhortation and persuasion, first by the parson and churchwardens of the parish, and next by the bishop, if any person of his forward or wilful mind shall obstinately refuse to give weekly to the relief of the poor, according to his ability," the bishop shall have authority to bind him under a penalty of 10 L. to appear at the next sessions, when the justices are "again to charitably and gently persuade the said obstinate person to extend his charity towards the relief of the poor. If person refusing to contribute may be assessed for the relief of the poor, and if he will not be persuaded there by the said justices, "they may assess tax and limit upon every such obstinate person so refusing, according to their good discretion, what sum the said obstinate person shall pay;" and if he refuse to pay the sum so limited, taxed, and appointed, the justices on complaint of the collectors and churchwardens of the parish may commit the said obstinate person to prison until he pay the same, "together with the arrearages thereof, if any such shall fortune to be."

This is the first instance of a compulsory assessment for the relief of the poor and it is therefore of marked importance in the history of the Poor Law. The justices are empowered to assess and levy "According to their good discretion, from all those who refuse voluntarily to contribute to the relief principle that property is to be held subject to the needful relief of the destitute, is thus formally sanctioned by the legislature.

Certain persons compelled to serve. Every married or unmarried person under 30 not having 40 shillings per annum, nor being otherwise employed. Every servant departing without such testimonial, or refusing to produce it is subjected to imprisonment, and any master who retains him is made liable to a penalty of 5 L. All persons between the ages of 12 and 60 are moreover if not otherwise employed," compelled to serve in husbandry by the year, with any person that keepeth husbandry, and with requirement any such person so to serve within the same shire where he shall be so required," and unmarried women between the age of 12 and 40 may be compelled to serve by the year, week, or day, for such wages, and in such reasonable sort and manner, as shall be deemed meet under the penalty of commitment.

The appointment of collectors of rates and for licensing the poor to beg in cases where a parish is overburdened and also regarding the payment to be licensed to work highways. Accordingly this statute enacts (S. 111) that after due consultation and permission, given by the person and churchwardens of the parish, and sent by the bishop, if any person of this diocese or vicar shall obstinately refuse to give weekly to the relief of the poor, according to his ability, the bishop shall have authority to bind him under a penalty of 10 l. to appear at the next sessions, when the justices are again to consider, and gently persuade the said obstinate person to extend his charity towards the relief of the poor. If person refusing to contribute may be assessed for the relief of the poor, and if he will not be persuaded there by the said justices, they may assess of the poor, and if he will not be persuaded there by the said justices, they may assess tax and bind upon every such obstinate person to contribute, according to their good discretion, what sum the said obstinate person shall pay, and if he refuse to pay the same to limited, taxed, and appointed, the justices on complaint of the collectors and churchwardens of the parish may commit the said obstinate person to prison until he pay the same, together with the expenses thereof, if any such shall fortune to be.

This is the first instance of a compulsory assessment for the relief of the poor and it is therefore of marked importance in the history of the poor law. The justices are empowered to assess and levy "according to their good discretion, from all those who refuse voluntarily to contribute to the relief of the poor, property is to be held subject to the needful relief of the destitute, as time formerly sanctioned by the legislature. Certain persons are exempted to serve. Every child of unmarried person under 16 not being an illegitimate person, nor being otherwise employed. Every servant departing without leave, or refusing to produce it is subject to imprisonment, and any master who retains him is liable to a penalty of 5 l. All persons between the ages of 16 and 20 are however to be employed in service in husbandry by the year, with any person that remains in husbandry, and with a servant any such person so to serve within the same shall be liable to be required, and committed to prison between the ages of 16 and 20 may be employed in service by the year, week, or day, for such wages, and in such reasonable rate and manner, as shall be directed under the penalty of

Justices empowered of five the rate of wages. They are authorized to limit, rate and appoint the wages "of all servants, laborers, artificers, workmen, or apprentices of husbandry, as they shall think meet, by the year, or by the day, week, mon~~th~~h, or otherwise, with meat and drink, or without meat and drink...."

The payer of excessive wages is subjected to 10 days' imprisonment and the one who receives such wages to 21 days' imprisonment. It was very interesting to know that during this period all persons compelled to serve in time of harvest. If any one shall refuse so to do, upon pain to suffer imprisonment in the stocks by the space of two days and one night.

The value of labor and of the laboring classes was becoming better understood, and the importance of the people and their efforts to free themselves from old usages and restraints crippling their industry began to be felt, although the master-class were yet ignorant of the true mode of dealing with the newly awakened impulse.

In 1573 passed the Act of "the punishment of vagabonds, and relief of the poor and impotent." "If duly convicted of his or her roguish or vagabond mode of life, he or she shall be adjudged to be grievously whipped, and burnt thru the gristle of the right ear with a hot iron of the compass of an inch about," and this punishment is to be forthwith to be executed "except some honest person will of his charity take such offender into his service for one whole year next following," and if the offender so taken into service shall leave the same before the end of the year, he is to suffer the punishment of whipping and burning thru the ear.

Any person harboring or giving money, lodging, or other relief to any such rogue, vagabond, or sturdy beggar, "either marked or not marked" is declared liable to a penalty of 20 shillings.

After thus enacting punishment of great severity for the vagrant class, and prohibiting the giving them money or other relief, the Act declares that poor, aged and impotent persons should be provided for. The justices of peace, with their respective divisions, are to make "diligent search and inquiry of all aged poor, impotent, and decayed persons,,and the justices are also required to ascertain what the weekly charge for the relief and sustentation of the said poor will amount to, and they are likewise required to

Justices empowered of life the rate of wages. They are authorized to limit, rate and appoint the wages "at all seasons, times, or circumstances, or otherwise, as they shall think meet, by the year, or by the day, week, month, or otherwise, with meat and drink, or without meat and drink...."

The power of executive wages is subjected to 10 days' imprisonment and the one who receives much wages to 21 days' imprisonment. It was very interesting to know that during this period all persons compelled to serve in time of harvest. If any one shall refuse so to do, upon pain to suffer imprisonment in the stocks by the space of two days and one night.

The value of labor and of the laboring classes was becoming better understood, and the importance of the people and their efforts to free themselves from old usages and to strive enjoining their industry began to be felt, although the manner of doing was yet ignorant of the time made of dealing with the newly awakened ignorance.

In 1575 passed the Act of "the punishment of vagabonds, and relief of the poor and impotent." "If duly convicted of his or her roguish or vagabond mode of life, he or she shall be adjudged to be cruelly whipped, and burnt with the triple of the right ear with a hot iron of the compass of an inch about," and this punishment to be forthwith to be executed "except some honest person will of his charity take such offender into his service for one whole year next following," and if the offender be taken into service shall leave the same before the end of the year, he is to suffer the punishment of whipping and burning with the ear.

Any person harboring or giving money, lodging, or other relief to any such rogue, vagabond, or sturdy beggar, "either before or after arrested" is declared liable to a penalty of 10 shillings.

After thus enjoining punishment of great severity for the vagrant class, and prohibiting the giving them money or other relief, the Act declares that poor, aged and impotent persons should be provided for. The Justices of Peace, with their respective divisions, are to make "thorough search and inquiry of all aged poor, lame, and decrepit persons, and the Justices are also required to ascertain that the weekly charge for the relief and maintenance of the said poor will amount to, and they are likewise required to

appoint overseers of the poor. Any of the poor persons who are not so diseased or impotent but do some work are to have overseers appoint to them work. But if they refused such work they were whipped. If any of the poor people refuse to be bestowed in the abiding place appointed by the justices, but still persist in begging, they are to be punished.

It is very interesting to note that justices are directed to take over for punishment of the mother the reputed father of every bastard child, as well as for the better relief of every such parish. The next important provision was that a poor and needy person being willing to work may be set on work. The justices of peace may in general sessions appoint and order a competent stock of wool, hemp, flax, or other stuff, shall be provided by taxation of all the inhabitants within the several limits.

The "collectors and governors" thus ordered to be appointed are from time to time to deliver out wool and other materials to be wrought by the poor who when the same is delivered back, are to be paid "according to the desert of the work;" and the articles are to be sold and the money applied to purchasing "more stuff in such wise that the stock shall not be decayed in value." And if any poor person, being able, shall refuse to work, or shall go abroad begging or shall live idly, or having taken such work shall spoil or embezzle the same, in such wise that the minister, churchwardens, collectors, and governors of the poor, shall think not meet to have any more out of the same stock, then he is to be taken.

It appears that the several enactments against the Gypsies or the Egyptians had not cleared the country of these people, but on the contrary, their numbers had increased by many native vagabonds associating with them and adopting their habits and manner of life. Therefore a new statute was passed, (1562-3, 5 Elizabeth cap.20). "Every person which shall be seen or found in any company or fellowship of vagabonds commonly called Egyptians, or counterfeiting, transforming, or disguising themselves by their appeect, or other behavior like unto such vagabonds, and shall continue and remain in the same by the space of one month, every such person shall be esteemed and judged a felon, and suffer the pain of death."

The great number of idle and disorderly persons who resorted thither, and lived by pilfering and begging, Stow in his survey of London states that in 1569 an order was made to apprehend all beggars and idle persons, whether men, women, or children, and other

appoint overseers of the poor. Any of the poor persons who are not so diseased or lame as to be unable to work are to have overseers appointed to them. And if they refused such work they were whipped. If any of the poor people refuse to be bestowed in the spinning

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It appears that the several enactments against the Gypsies or the Egyptians had not altered the country of these people, but on the contrary, their numbers had increased by many native vagabonds associating with them and adopting their habits and manner of life. Therefore a new statute was passed, (1552-3, 5 Elizabeth cap. 12), "Every person which shall be seen or found in any company or fellowship of vagabonds commonly called Gypsies, or otherwise called, wandering, or begging themselves by their apparel, or other badge or mark, such as vagabonds, and shall continue and remain in the same by the space of one month, every such person shall be a felon, and suffer the pains of death."

The great number of these and dissolute persons who resorted to the highways, and by following and begging, show in the survey of London states that in 1562 an order was made to apprehend all beggars and idle persons, whether men, women, or children, and other

masterless vagrants. The vagabonds and sturdy beggars were to be taken to Bridewell; the aged, impotent, sick, sore, lame, or blind to St. Bartholomew's or St. Thomas' Hospitals, and the children under 16 to Christ's Hospital.

In 1593, London and the country generally were so grievously pestered by beggars that the queen put forth a proclamation against idle persons and vagabonds wandering on the common highways, and the multitude of able men, neither impotent nor lame, exacting money upon pretense of service in the wars.

Overseers of the poor in every parish were appointed. These overseers are to take orders from time to time, with the consent of two or more justices," for setting to work the children of all such whose parents shall not be thought able to keep and maintain them, also all such persons, married or unmarried, as having no means to maintain them, use no ordinary or daily trade of life to get their living by." Again overseers' duty was to raise weekly taxation of every inhabitant and competent sum of money as they shall think fit, and send the stuff to the poor on work, and also competent sums of money for and towards the necessary relief of the lame, impotent, old, blind, and sick; and also for the putting out of such children to be apprentices. Overseers are to account within four days after the end of their year of office - they are to yield up to two such justices of peace "a true and perfect account of all sums of money by them received or rated and assessed and not received." The Act moreover establishes the highly important principle of the mutual liability of parents and children by enacting "that the parents or children of every poor, old, blind, lame, and impotent person, other poor person not able to work, being of sufficient ability, shall at their own charge relieve and maintain such poor person, in that manner and according to that rate as by the justices in quarter sessions shall be assessed, upon pain to forfeit 20 shillings for every month which they shall fail therein."

All this legislation appears to have been governed by kindly feelings towards the poor, but there is one opposite characteristic. "No person shall go wandering and beg in any place, by licence or without, upon pain to be esteemed, taken, and punished." This seems severe.

A definition is given: "All persons calling themselves scholars going about begging; all fencers, common players; all jugglers, all wandering persons, all persons

masterless vagrants. The vagrants and sturdy beggars were to be taken to Bridewell, the aged, infirm, sick, lame, or blind to St. Thomas' Hospital, and the children under 16 to Girls' Hospital.

In 1832, London and the country generally were so grievously plagued by beggars that the Queen put forth a proclamation against idle persons and vagrants wandering in the common highways, and the multitude of idle men, neither infirm nor lame, carrying money upon pretence of service in the wars.

Overseers of the poor in every parish were appointed. These overseers were to take orders from time to time, with the consent of 2 lay or more justices, for setting to work the children of all such poor persons who had not been thought able to keep and maintain them, also all such persons, married or unmarried, as having no means to maintain them, use no ordinary or daily trade of life to get their living by. Again overseers, they were to

raise weekly taxation of every inhabitant and competent sum of money as they shall think fit, and send the same to the poor on work, and also competent sums of money for and towards the necessary relief of the lame, infirm, old, blind, and sick; and also for the putting out of such children to be apprentices. Overseers are to account within four days after the end of their year of office - they are to yield up to two magistrates of peace

a true and perfect account of all sums of money by them received or raised and assessed and not received. The law moreover established the highly important principle of the mutual liability of parents and children by contract, that the parents or children of every poor, old, blind, lame, and infirm person who was able to work, being of

sufficient ability, shall of their own choice relieve and maintain such poor person, in that manner and according to that rate as by the justices in quarter sessions shall be assessed. Upon pain to forfeit 20 shillings for every week that they shall fail therein. All who neglected to have been relieved or maintained were liable to be taken to the

workhouse, but there is one exception thereto. A person shall go to the workhouse and beg in any place, by licence or without, upon pain to be sentenced, unless and provided. This

seems severe.

A definition is given. All persons defined themselves as beggars going about begging, all persons, common players, all jugglers, all wandering persons, all persons

delivered out of goals that wander abroad abroad begging; all persons pretending themselves to be Egyptians."

The sturdy beggars are to be punished and and then sent to the place of their birth or last residence. To "be stripped naked from the middle upwards and be openly whipped until his or her body be bloody, and shall then forthwith be sent from parish to parish, the next straight way to the parish where he or she was born." It is now found more needful than formerly to provide relief and maintenance to soldiers and mariners who have lost their limbs or disabled their bodies in the defense and service of the state. It is not enacted that every parish shall be charged to pay such a sum weekly towards the relief of sick, hurt, maimed, or crippled soldiers and mariners.

We have now arrived at the most important period when (43 Elizabeth cap.2) the principle of a compulsory assessment for the relief of the poor was fully and finally established as an essential doctrine in our domestic policy. Such was the state of the Poor Laws down to the passing of 39 ^{Elizabeth in} 1597. Long previously however a persuasion seems to have been gaining ground that severe punishment alone would not answer, and that something else was necessary for putting down vagabondage and mendicancy with their long train of accompanying evils.

The great turning point of our Poor Law legislation is still the formulation and text book of English Poor Law. It is remarkable that this most important statute has no preamble setting forth the evils to be corrected and the good expected from it, as is the case with most of the other statutes; but it goes at once to its main objective, and directs that in every parish "four, three or two substantial householders shall under the hand and seal of two or more justices of the peace be yearly nominated in Easter week, and that these with the churchwardens shall be overseers of the poor." These overseers are "to take orders from time to time" with the consent of the justices, for carrying to several provisions of the Act into effect. They are to raise "weekly or otherwise, in every parish, by taxation of every inhabitant, parson, vicar, and others, and of every occupier of lands, houses, tithes appropriate or propriations of tithes, coal mines, and saleable underwoods, in the said parish, in such competent sums of money as they shall think fit" for the following purposes:

1. "For the setting to work of children of all such whose parents shall not be thought able to keep and maintain them."
2. "For setting to work all such persons, married and unmarried, having no means to maintain them and who use no ordinary and daily trade of life to get their living by."
3. "For providing a convenient stock of flax, hemp, wool, thread, iron, and other ware and stuff, to set the poor on work."
4. "For the necessary relief of the lame, impotent, old, blind and sick, and such other among them being poor and not able to work."

The mutual liability of the parents to maintain their children and of children to maintain their parents, later extended to the grandfather and grandmother.

The 43 ^{Elizabeth} ~~Edw.~~ was gradually formed upon the sure ground of experience, and it is curious to trace the successive steps by which its chief enactment, that of a compulsory assessment for the relief of the poor came at length to be established. First, the poor were restricted from begging, except within certain specified limits. Next, the several towns, parishes, and hamlets were required to support their own poor by charitable alms, so that none of necessity might be compelled to beg.

During the 16th century, the period was favorable to agricultural and commercial industry, and to the increase and improvement of the population, which has been estimated at 5 millions in 1580. A middle class had sprung up during this period, possessing considerable wealth. The Reformation commenced by Henry VIII matured under Edward VI, and was finally consummated and established in the reign of Elizabeth.

Out of the increase of evil, however, there sprung up an efficient remedy, as has been the case in so many other instances - an effectual relief for destitution was at length established and the community thereby acquired a right to prohibit mendicancy.

The most severe enactments against vagrants and beggars tended to this, their failure serving to show that no severity of punishment could be effective. Charitable alms and contributions for the relief of the poor were put in force, and after a time a machinery was constituted for collecting and distributing these offerings, and for stimulating liberality where the givers were found to be tardy.

With regard to the laws as a whole, they bear evidence of continuous social

1. "For the purpose of work of children of all such whose parents shall not be thought able to keep and maintain them."
2. "For the purpose of work of all such persons, married and unmarried, having no means to maintain them and who use no ordinary and daily trade of life to get their living by."
3. "For providing a convenient stock of linen, hemp, wool, thread, iron, and other ware and stuff, to set the poor on work."
4. "For the necessary relief of the lame, impotent, old, blind and sick, and such other as are unable to work."

The mutual liability of the parents to maintain their children and of children to maintain their parents, later extended to the grandfather and grandmother. The 43rd Statute was gradually formed upon the sure ground of experience, and it is curious to trace the successive steps by which its chief enactment, that of a compulsory assessment for the relief of the poor came at length to be established. First, the poor were restricted from begging, except within certain specified limits. Next, the several towns, parishes, and hamlets were required to support their own poor by charitable rates, so that none of necessity might be compelled to beg.

During the 18th century, the period was favorable to agricultural and commercial industry, and to the increase and improvement of the population, which has been estimated at 5 millions in 1880. A middle class had sprung up during this period, possessing considerable wealth. The Reformation commenced by Henry VIII secured under Edward VI, and was finally consummated and established in the reign of Elizabeth.

Out of the increase of evil, however, there sprung up an efficient remedy, as has been the case in so many other instances - an efficient relief for destitution was at length established and the compulsory theory acquired a right to prohibit mendacity. The poor were prohibited against begging and begging tended to cease. Their minds were turned to show that no remedy of mendacity could be effective. Charitable rates and contributions for the relief of the poor were put in force, and after a time machinery was constituted for collecting and distributing these contributions, and for extending the liberality where the circumstances were found to require. With regard to the law as a whole, they bear witness of a benevolent model.

improvement, often slow to be sure, but in the main always progressive. Freedom from vasselage accompanied the growth of trade and manufacturing industry, and with these came increase of wealth and civilization, and the growth of a middle class, serving as a connection between the higher and lower orders.

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