

# HE FOUND EIGHTY MEN PACKED IN A LODGING ROOM

Abhorrent Conditions Found Last  
Night When a Second Inves-  
tigation Was Made.

PAID FIVE CENTS TO  
GAIN ADMISSION

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As a result of the investigations I made in several lodging houses last week, and bringing the matter to the notice of the Mayor and the Board of Control, through the publicity given in The Star, the Social Service Commission was requested to investigate into the number and condition of the city's lodging houses.

I again made visits last night and found these places in the same condition as regards cleanliness. During the few days since the matter was referred to the commission its attention has been occupied with the registration of the unemployed.

On my first call I was refused admission, the man in charge telling me that he had got into trouble with the proprietor for admitting me previously. I learned, however, that sixteen men slept on the floor in one room on Monday night and a similar number were present in the room last night. In conversation I found that I might expect violence if found making investigations, so I secured the help of two of the men, who accompanied me into the house in which I had found 80 men in one room.

## Paid Five Cents.

Muffling myself up I paid my five cents and gained entrance into the room. Thirty-seven men were lying about on the floor and on forms in all kinds of postures. At the far end of the room I found an old harmonium, which gave the impression that the room had once been used as a mission. A number of men more fastidious than the rest had spread old newspapers on the floor and lay on these with rolled up coats for pillows. A dismal gas jet cast a weird light into the gloom of this home of wretchedness. In Stygian corners I talked with these outcasts of society, men who asked me how I could hope that anything would be done for them, men who are afraid of arousing the displeasure of the doorkeeper by being seen talking to me, and thus being singled out and refused admission.

## A Victim of Disease.

I heard of one man who has been sleeping there whose hand and body are breaking into running sores. As only two towels are provided for these men it is small wonder that disease is breaking out among them. I don't think that any humane man could see the conditions under which these men are living and not want to move heaven and earth to have them altered. Give these men the worst character you can imagine, even then they deserve better treatment at the hands of society than the bestiality of being herded together worse than cattle. The room must be impregnated with disease, whilst the foul air is reeking with poison.

## Incredible Conditions.

In my next visit I found fifteen men sleeping in a stagnant atmosphere which was nauseating. The lavatories are separated from two sleeping rooms by a wood partition, the broken windows allowing offensive smells to reach the sleeping men.

The deeper tragedy in these men's lives lies in the fact that they are sinking into a morass of misery which excludes all beauty, love, and color.

A slight less painful, but still provocative of thought was shown to me by Major Frazer, the assistant prison secretary of the Salvation Army. Their doors were open to men last night for the first time this winter free of charge, and one hundred and fifty men were sleeping on chairs, forms, and on the floor. Twenty of the men are married, with wives and families in the Old Country. Major Frazer is well acquainted with the criminal and loafer class and he told me that ninety per cent. of the men sleeping at the Army headquarters, Albert street, are respectable men. His practised eye soon detects the average workman shamefaced to own his sore straits. One young man was taken off the streets, who had not broken his fast for three days, and he declared he would starve rather than let his people in Montreal know of his plight. He is a well-dressed young fellow come in from the North.

## A Pitiabale Case.

Another case was a decent man of 55 years who had never accepted charity in his life, and only the direst necessity compelled him to seek food and shelter from the Army.

Major Frazer declares that half of the men seeking aid belong to the city and the number of destitute men is on the increase during the last few days.

Since Thursday last nearly four thousand meals have been given, four hundred and twenty men were fed twice yesterday. Fifty baskets of food have been given to families, each basket containing a dollar's worth of groceries. In addition to this, four hundred and fifty pieces of clothing were given out to-day.

The Major thought that the old General Hospital would be better provision for sleeping quarters than so many men sleeping in a hall. The men are in a bright, clean hall which will be washed by them each day, a striking contrast to the filth of the lodging houses.

Lest anyone may think the House of Industry is not over-crowded I may mention that forty men slept in one room last night on a concrete floor. One hundred and sixty were accommodated in beds.

H. WILSON.