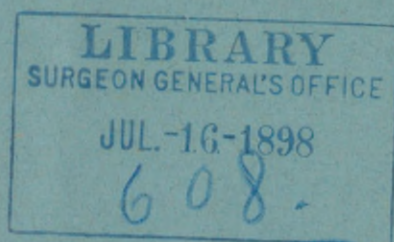


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BY

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## HOW RUSSIA CARES FOR HER FOUNDLINGS.<sup>1</sup>

BY

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ONE of the most perplexing problems of the present day — perplexing not only to the professional philanthropist but to the private giver — is the problem of alleviating distress without at the same time encouraging vice. I have been interested of late in noticing how this problem — which perhaps some of us had thought a modern one — has attracted attention and provoked discussion in countries and ages far removed from our own. I was led to this line of thought by some studies in connection with the Moscow Foundling Home, which I visited when in Russia last summer, while attending the sessions of the International Medical Congress.

The Imperial Foundling Home of Moscow is the largest institution of its kind in Europe, giving refuge annually to 17,000 infants abandoned by their mothers. The buildings cover an area of 81,000 square metres, and accommodate 7,000 persons. The approach to the entrance of the Home from the public street is between rows of fine trees, which must usually present a beautiful appearance, although at the time of our visit they were suffering from nearly two months of drought. The enclosure is surrounded by a high wall, constructed, as is also the oldest of the buildings, from the materials of the ancient walls of Moscow, demolished in the reign of the Empress Elizabeth. A large arch forms the entrance.

The Administration Building — the oldest building on the grounds — is, with a few of the adjacent wards, all that is shown to visitors except by special permission. On entering, we were received by a porter in uniform of vivid blues and reds — slightly resembling, in his dress and bearing, the austere guardian of the Bank of England — and shown by him into the visitors' room. There we were met by one of the visiting physicians who greeted us most courteously, although he was evidently perplexed as to our nationality, seeming to suppose that all English-speaking persons must come from England. I may say, in passing, that the Russian physicians whom we met at this and other hospitals impressed me, by both their faces and bearing, as men of a high order of ability.

By the visiting physician we were introduced to a resident female superintendent, who spoke English fluently, much to our comfort. She piloted us at once up several flights of iron stairs to one of the

wards for infants. The ward was scrupulously neat and clean, and well lighted by rows of long windows, on opposite sides, reaching almost from floor to ceiling. The floors were of hard wood, and partially covered by long strips of matting. Down the centre of the ward ran a double row of cribs, placed end to end. There must have been nearly 200 infants in this ward, most of them less than two weeks old. On both sides were the nurses, numbering one-third or one-half as many, dressed after the fashion of the Russian peasant, having a white chemisette with a red cotton overdress, with white stockings and felt slippers, and nearly all wearing cotton kerchiefs tied about the head. They all looked clean and wholesome, and well-fed. Some were holding babies in their arms and nursing them, and had loose cotton squares thrown over their shoulders and over the babies' heads. The ladies in our party commented upon their kindly treatment of the children, and remarked that they held them as if they loved them. This would not be at all surprising, since it is an open secret that many a nurse is really the mother of the child she cares for; the conditions of admission to the home being so easy that it is not an uncommon thing for a married woman in needy circumstances to leave her child at its door at night, apply there for a position as wet-nurse the next morning, and perhaps before another day closes find and secure her own little one again, to receive board, lodging and wages in return for her care of it while it remains in the home. But of this I shall speak again later.

As we entered the ward, each nurse rose with her baby, and remained standing until we left. In one corner of the room were piled mattresses, which at night are placed on the floor in front of the babies' cribs for the nurses to sleep upon. These mattresses are filled with straw, which is renewed every three months. The bed linen of the nurses is changed once a week; that of the infants once a day.

We were shown these babies somewhat in detail, and when nearly through were presented to the "show baby" — one which did not impress us as very wonderful, except that it was rather prettier than the rest, and black-eyed, while the eyes of nearly all the others were blue. These babies were all dressed in swaddling clothes, with their arms bound to their sides. This method is discarded when the baby is taken away from the wet-nurse. The healthy infants

<sup>1</sup> Read before the Cambridge Medical Improvement Society, April 25, 1898.

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receive a change of these clothes about eight times in the twenty-four hours: the sick ones as often as is necessary, up to fifteen times. The two sexes are distinguished by the boys having pink and the girls blue cards, bearing their names and numbers, fastened about the neck; also the same color upon some part of their clothing. It seemed odd to find, in far-off Russia, the very same assignment of colors as among the petted babies of our own land.

The scene was certainly unique, but not inspiring. The nurses were of the stolid peasant type, and their faces, though kindly, were heavy, and showed little expression either of hope or fear.

Adjoining this we were shown a smaller ward occupied by orphans of "noble parentage," whose fathers had lost their lives in the service of the State. Just what "noble" meant in that connection we could not then learn. They were attractive-looking, most of them from four to six years old, having playthings, and presenting very much the appearance of children in an ordinary nursery.

The second general ward visited was used for sick infants and children, and was capable of accommodating nearly as many as the first ward, but there were not many in it at the time of our visit, because all the sick ones that were not too sick to bear the journey had been sent into the country.

From here we passed through long corridors to one of the rooms devoted to the children's baths. Through the centre of one portion of this room was a huge metallic tank, supplied with both hot and cold water, where the babies were washed. One nurse washed them, another dried, and a third put on the swaddling clothes. This was done as automatically and regularly as though the nurse was a machine and the baby a piece of wood or metal to be put through some process, every one in precisely the same way, the entire process occupying only about three minutes. It was noticeable how little they cried, and how little attention the washers and dressers paid to their squirming, kicking and occasional screaming. All this was very interesting, mainly because it was so different from the way a single baby with us is cared for, when taking its bath. One of our party remarked that he supposed, by the time we got back to Boston, we should find that the inventive genius of that town had produced a washing machine for washing and dressing babies, just as table crockery is washed by machinery in large hotels.

From the bathing-room we passed through other long corridors, and down flights of stairs to the lower part of the building where the kitchens are located. These were similar to the kitchens of any large, well-regulated hotel, neat and orderly, all the work being done by men wearing white aprons, and paper caps on their heads. We were invited to taste of the cookery, and those who ventured the experiment found the "black bread" — the staple of peasant diet — more palatable than it promised.

The last place visited was the store-room where clothing for babies, nurses and attendants was kept. It seemed like the quartermaster's department of an army, only, instead of great coats in huge piles, with

trousers and shoes to match, there were the swaddling clothes, small felt or knit shoes, tiny stockings, and the diminutive pinning-blankets and head-fixings.

The report of the Home for 1893 — the latest I was able to procure — places the number of nurses' outfits owned by the institution at 5,000. The assortment of infants' clothing includes 1,700 bands and 40,000 coverlids. The entire stock represents a capital of 200,000 roubles, about \$104,000 (Report, p. 21). Of metal cradles, each draped by a muslin curtain and provided with a mattress covered with oil-cloth, the hospital owns 15,000. For those prematurely born, there are 45 heatable cradles, each containing a double metallic receptacle, the intervening space being filled with hot water. The hospital is also provided with a Farinier-Overt incubator, ordered from Paris.

Before leaving, we were very politely asked to register our names and residences, and they did not forget to show us where we could deposit our rouble, more or less, as the spirit moved us, to help these poor but fortunate unfortunates.

Naturally, the cursory character of our inspection left much of our curiosity regarding this great institution ungratified. But the report before referred to supplemented our personal observations very acceptably, in spite of its curious English and frequent typographical errors. Although we had noticed no lack of ventilation in such parts of the building as we visited, the report refers to defects of that nature.

"Large as the nurseries for the sucklings undoubtedly are," it says, "they were originally meant to hold only 500 infants, and as a matter of fact there is generally double that number in them. In all the nurseries occupied by the infants there are 873,964 cubic feet of air: each infant and nurse receiving but 977 cubic feet, that is to say, a third less than 1,500 feet, which a rational hygiene demands, and the air from the corridors offers but a feeble compensation for this." Partly to this defective ventilation, and partly to colds caught on their way to the Home, is attributed the pneumonia which causes the death annually of nearly seven per cent. of the nurslings.

The entire annual mortality, I may say here, ranges from 20 to 43 per cent.: "gastro-enteritis" being accountable for five per cent. and pyemia for 13. The mortality in cases of pyemia has diminished considerably since antiseptic bandages have been used on the umbilical sore; but a large number of infants arrive at the Home with symptoms of purulent infection already clearly noticeable.

Of the total number brought to the hospital, 20 per cent. are sick at the time of admission; 30 per cent. of weak constitution, weighing below the average (3,000 grammes, or about 6.6 lbs.); five per cent. very weak (debilitas congenital); four per cent. of premature birth (600 of these every year); and eight per cent. syphilitic, syphilis being very common in Moscow. Of this number of ailing, delicate children, an annual average of 100 die at the hospital only a few hours after their admission.

It should be said that all these statistics of mortality give an unfair impression, if one does not bear in

mind that Russia is one of the countries where the average rate of mortality is highest. The climate is unfavorable to health—particularly to the health of children—and the diet of the poorer classes is too meagre to counteract its rigors successfully. The present rate of mortality at the Moscow Foundling Home is a gain over that of former years, when it ranged from 50 to 60 per cent., and compares favorably with that at Vienna, which has been known to rise as high as 75 per cent. The most shocking death-rate in the records of foundling hospitals is that reported from Dublin, where, for a series of years preceding 1835, four out of every five perished. The Dublin Hospital was closed soon after this, its opponents urging that it had not succeeded in saving life. No doubt it had to contend with some of the very same conditions which in Russia are so unfavorable to the health of childhood. The Paris and London Hospitals, on the other hand, represent a less impoverished population, and can boast a much lower death-rate.

Certainly there is little fault to be found with their condition when once the babies arrive within the sheltering walls of the Moscow Home. Great care is exercised with regard to cleanliness. Floors, ceilings and walls are covered with oil paint, which facilitates antiseptic cleaning. In summer the children are taken to barracks provided for this purpose, so that they may get the benefit of the fresh air to the utmost. The occasion is improved to thoroughly clean and disinfect the wards. Slops and the contents of the water-closets are conveyed through metal pipes into tiled cisterns; the liquid, being separated from the solid, is filtered, purified, and in this shape flows into the river; the solid portion is put into carts and carried outside the city. The bathing facilities for the infants have been described already. The baths of the wet-nurses are also carefully regulated, there being a bathroom especially for their use, although in summer they are required to bathe in the river every morning.

The report finds the lighting and heating of the hospital less inadequate than its ventilation. "Light," it says, "is freely distributed. Each nursery has thirteen large windows, of which five have large squares, movable for airing purposes, and three have a metal network on Murray's system. The heating is done by means of Dutch stoves. During the winter, the temperature is maintained at an average of 68° F., and in the section for children prematurely born it is 72.5° F. Near each nursery there is a metallic drying oven, where the swaddling clothes of the children are dried and aired."

But what are the requirements for admission to all this warmth and comfort? The Home was originally intended for illegitimate children, deserted by their parents, and the larger proportion of those whom it shelters are still such. But since 1837, in accordance with the ukase of the Emperor Nicholas, a small part of the establishment has been reserved for the maintenance and education of legitimate orphans—doubtless the same who were shown to us as "children of noble parentage"—whose parents have served the

State in a military or civil capacity. The Home is thus divided into two parts, one for these orphans, the other for foundlings. The Home also makes temporary provision, in cases where extreme poverty can be shown, for legitimate children whose parents are living; but the number so received—since we are not now speaking of those smuggled in under pretence of illegitimacy—is very small, averaging only about 200 out of the 17,000 received annually. Such children remain under the protection of the Home for only one year, whereas the real "foundlings," as will be seen later, enjoy the advantages of its supervision until they reach their majority.

The formalities at entrance are exceedingly simple, as I have before intimated. The Home stands open, day and night, to receive any child under one year old, who is brought with a certificate of baptism. If the parents wish to hide the secret of birth, they may present the document sealed, but in such cases a payment of 25 roubles (\$12) is demanded. Even the certificate of baptism may be dispensed with, if the babe is newly born, and the fact attested by the presence of the navel-string. Eighty per cent. of those received are brought in this condition. The number of children received daily averages 45, but often runs as high as 70 and over.

Upon admission, each child is registered and given a number engraved on an oval-shaped bone medal which is hung around its neck, and the person who brings the child is given a receipt bearing the same number and also the date of admission. The swaddling clothes and other linen are returned to the person bringing the child, and it is immediately put into a hospital outfit. It is then weighed, and its length, chest and head measured. All these details are inscribed on a card, which is kept with each child during its stay in the Home. As has been said, these cards are pink for the boys and blue for the girls, and on them is written also the name of the child, its number, age, date of birth, date of admission, and—if known—the name of the place it was brought from. Later will be added the name and number of the nurse, the date of vaccination, and the increase, from time to time, in weight.

After these preliminary formalities, the child is bathed, the umbilical sore treated with such antiseptics as it may require, and a compress applied. As a safeguard against purulent ophthalmia new-born babes have their eyes treated with a two-per-cent. solution of nitrate of silver, according to the formula of Credé. In cases where the existence of syphilis is suspected, the child is not given to a wet-nurse, but is fed from the bottle.

Most of the foundlings, however, are intrusted to wet-nurses. These are usually girls from Moscow and its suburbs, or peasants from the adjacent governments. Many of them, undoubtedly, are the mothers of foundlings. The applicants for such positions are subjected to a careful medical examination, registered, and provided with the uniform of the service, their own clothes being stored for them until they leave the Home. Their first duty is to take a thorough bath, and they are not given an infant to care for

until they have been in the institution over one night.

There are, on the average, 14,000 nurses yearly passing through the Moscow Home; but even this enormous number is inadequate—as will be seen on recalling the number of children received, 17,000—and it is often necessary to entrust two children to one nurse. Under such circumstances, the nurse receives extra rations and beer, and extra pay. During the summer months, when other work for women is plenty, as well as at the Christmas and Easter seasons, the scarcity of nurses is particularly felt. Artificial nourishment—boiled cow's milk in equal parts with barley water (Jacobs' mixture)—is then resorted to; but the mortality among the children always increases pitifully at such times, sometimes reaching 60 per cent.

The sick and well children are kept carefully apart—a certain group of wards being assigned for each; and for contagious diseases there is an infirmary, situated in another building. In case of an epidemic there is available, in addition, a pavilion especially erected for the purpose. Small-pox and scarlet fever are of occasional, although infrequent, occurrence; but the cases of erysipelas average 120 yearly, and those of diphtheria 200. But congenital syphilis claims the largest proportion, reaching every year an average of 1,000. It occurs most frequently among infants prematurely born. All fatal cases of importance are followed by an autopsy. (Report, p. 18.)

The total number of invalid children cared for in the different wards averages about 11,000 annually. Should this seem a very large proportion of the number received, it must be remembered that the children remain at the Home for only a short period—varying from two to six weeks—and that the most critical. No doubt the health reports of an older period would make a better showing. The plan is to keep the children in the Home only until they can be safely vaccinated, and the result of the vaccination found satisfactory, and then to send them into the country. An average of 40 infants daily are vaccinated, the sole vaccine used being that of the heifer. In the spring of the year, when communication with the outlying districts is interrupted by the overflow of the rivers, the arrangements for sending away the foundlings are necessarily delayed, and a distressing over-crowding of the Home results, with often an increase in sickness and mortality. Under such circumstances, the Home sometimes shelters 1,400 nurslings at once, nearly three times the number for which it was designed.

When the hospital staff is complete, it numbers 950 wet-nurses, 150 nurses, 16 superintendents, and 54 visiting physicians. Of the physicians, 18 serve at a time, changing every four months. Each section is visited daily by one of them, and a careful inspection made of the nurses as well as the infants. The nurse of each sick child is given a paper on which is carefully noted the doctor's statement of the nature and progress of the malady, the necessary treatment, variation in weight, effects of vaccination, change of nurse, etc. Whether this paper is of any use to the nurse herself, may be doubted. Reading is by no

means a universal accomplishment, as yet, among the peasant classes of Russia.

It was the original intention to keep the foundlings within the shelter of the Moscow Home until they should be of an age to learn trades and provide for themselves. But hospital life, under the best possible conditions, is an unhealthy one for children, and epidemics and a steady increase of mortality soon made it apparent that some other plan must be adopted. Less than forty years after the founding of the Home—that is, about the end of the last century—the present system of rural distribution and inspection was set in operation. It now embraces within its scope not only the government of Moscow, but five adjacent governments, comprising an area of 50,000 verst (about 21,500 square miles) in which are more than 5,000 villages. It would be interesting to know how the health of these rural communities is affected by this distribution among them of so many feeble and sickly children, many of them suffering from tendencies to disease which the six weeks' stay in the Home cannot have materially changed. Such a wholesale scattering of the sickness and vice of congested city life among a rural population is quite without parallel in our own country, although something like it is found, as will be seen later, in other countries of Europe. More than half of these miserable children were born in Moscow; and it would seem that Moscow—not remote rural districts—ought to bear the burden of their diseased lives. On the other hand, there is always the hope that, with wholesome and favoring conditions, cures may be effected, and so the little foundling grows to be no burden, but a help to his community.

The territory within the distributing system is restricted—there being 41 districts—with a medical inspector for each. The number of foundlings—or wards, as they are usually called after they leave the Home—under the care of each inspector ranges from 500 to 1,000. The peasant woman who desires to increase her scanty store by adding yet one more charge to those already within her narrow home, must apply to this inspector, be examined by him, and bring from him a certificate as to her age, parentage and condition. Upon presenting this certificate in Moscow, after a journey whose toilsomeness we can scarcely picture to ourselves, and agreeing to the conditions imposed, she is sent back with her nursling at the government expense. The understanding is that the child thus taken will remain in her home, cared for and treated as one of her own, until it is old enough to marry, if a girl, or, if a boy, to learn a trade and maintain itself. Should special reasons arise, the arrangement may be terminated by the return of the child to the Home, but, ordinarily, it is of indefinite continuance. Apparently the wards learn to look upon their foster-parents as their own, and the relations begun in so business-like a way grow to be really filial and parental. At least, so the official report would have us think. But, human nature being what it is, we may be pardoned for suspecting that in Russia, as in countries less remote, inspection is sometimes inadequate and abuses creep

in which make the fate of a little foundling, now and then, far different from that which a loving mother would have wished for him. Nevertheless, there can be no question that the children are happier, on the whole, and better fitted for the experiences of after life, than if they had grown up within the walls of the Home at Moscow.

The compensation received by foster-parents was admitted by the report of 1893 to be inadequate, although it was eagerly sought for. It may have been increased since that time. It was then about \$18.72 a year for the first two years (the value of the Russian rouble is so fluctuating that these figures are only approximate); for the third year, \$14.97; for the fourth, fifth and sixth, \$11.86; for the seventh, eighth, ninth and tenth, \$9.98; and for the eleventh, twelfth, thirteenth and fourteenth, \$6.24. This rate of payment is somewhat increased if the child's physical condition is such as to require especial care — as in cases of paralysis, epilepsy or imbecility — or if it prove incapable of physical labor and so can be made of no service to its foster-parent. In cases of acute sickness the wards receive gratuitous treatment in four hospitals established for the purpose at as many different points among the villages. Still, these must be extremely difficult of access to many, however well-distributed they may be. Sufferers from serious chronic diseases, as well as those requiring surgical operations, are transferred to a special infirmary in Moscow.

The foster-parents agree not only to shelter, nourish and clothe the child in all respects as if it were their own, but also to teach it to read and write. The inspector, who visits each of his wards six times a year, gives his particular attention to all these points. Since the system of public instruction in Russia is still very inadequate, the hospital has established schools of its own for the primary training of its wards. These schools number 44; they are open to children of both sexes. For the encouragement of the foster-parents a gift of 10 roubles (a little more than five dollars) is made to them when their charge receives a diploma.

Boys who pass through these village schools successfully, and show such talents as make further education desirable for them, are placed by the Home in the Teachers' Seminary, the agricultural or horticultural schools, the surgical schools, or the railway schools. Boys of less intellectual promise are apprenticed by their adopted parents to the various trades which their village offers, or are sent to Moscow itself for their apprenticeship. There are said to be nearly 1,000 of these wards in Moscow, learning some fifty different trades. For them, too, inspectors are provided, whose duty it is to watch over the welfare of these children, see that their masters give them proper instruction and do not ill-treat them, and settle differences arising between masters and apprentices. After the ward has passed through his apprenticeship, the inspector still keeps him under supervision, requiring him to deposit a certain part of his earnings regularly in the savings-bank, for future needs. On his reaching his majority, these

savings are made over to him. The accumulation in the government savings-bank of such small deposits, belonging to these wards, frequently amounts to 30,000 roubles, nearly \$16,500.

In the case of the girls, the simplicity and naturalness of the life which is secured for them in these foster-homes shows more distinctly, perhaps, than with the boys. After leaving school, they usually remain with their foster-mothers, helping about the household tasks, until they marry. With most of them marriage occurs at about sixteen, an age not so precocious in Russia as it seems here. It is the business of the inspector to see that the circumstances of the intended husband are such as to ensure a reasonable degree of comfort — the principal requirements being that his parents should have a fixed place of abode and a piece of land — but the choice is said to rest with the girl herself. This gives as much chance for sentiment and romance as could be expected in a country of which it has been said that "in the peasant class, marriage and the creation of a new household have at all times been regulated chiefly by utilitarian considerations," and that "in no other country, perhaps, has personal inclination played so small a part in rural marriages."<sup>2</sup> Certainly no such opportunity for the acquaintance before marriage which we Americans think so desirable could have been given to the girl within hospital walls.

A contribution of 50 roubles (\$26) is made by the Home to the ward's trousseau. In the rare instances where girls do not marry, they are often taken into the service of the Home at Moscow, as waiting-maids, laundresses, etc. All the unskilled labor of the Home is performed by these wards, there being usually about 200 of them there for that purpose. A school is provided within the Home for the benefit of those who have failed to receive adequate instruction in the country, and their leisure hours are devoted to study. They receive wages, and in time a life-pension.

Glancing back for a moment over this rapid review of the provisions which Russia makes for her foundlings, we notice that, in spite of passing its childhood in an average peasant's home, the foundling fares better, in respect to everything which money can buy, than the average peasant's child. It has better medical care and nursing in the first weeks of infancy, better hospital privileges at command all through life, better school opportunities in early years and better chances for a prolonged education if its talents warrant it, a better start in life and better provision for old age. And in Russia, it is said, these advantages are not offset by any such loss of reputation as would affect foundlings in our own country, since there no special stigma attaches to illegitimacy. As a matter of fact, however, only 25 per cent. of the foundlings live to reach their majority ("Encyclopædia Britannica"). This is about the proportion observed at the Paris Home for Foundlings.

It would be interesting to know something of the future of these wards of the State, but very little light is obtainable on that point. From them come many recruits for the public service, it is said. But it is to be feared that the experience of Russia, if the statistics

<sup>2</sup> Leroy-Beaulieu: *Empire of the Tsars*, vol. 1, p. 490.

were collected, would prove like that of other European countries where it has seemed that all the efforts at physical and moral training have not been able to overcome inherited tendencies to vice and crime. In France, it is said, that of the male convicts and prisoners, 13 per cent. are foundlings, while of the inmates of houses of ill-fame, 20 per cent. have the same origin. Facts like these have weight with those philanthropists who oppose such lavish provision for the maintenance of foundlings as is made in Russia, France and some other countries. But of these considerations we shall speak later.

Our sketch of the Russian system would be incomplete if no reference were made to the Foundling Homes at St. Petersburg and Warsaw, smaller than those at Moscow and receiving fewer infants, but managed on the same general plan and under the same government supervision. There are also smaller Foundling Homes in other parts of Russia.

The history of the Imperial Foundling Home of Moscow is of considerable interest. As its name indicates, it owes its origin to one of Russia's sovereigns — no less a character than the notorious Catherine II. What motives prompted this deed of benevolence — statesmanship, desire for popularity, a last lingering trace of superstition, a conscious affinity for such courses of life as fill hospitals like this with the abandoned, or a more worthy sympathy for distress and suffering — it is impossible to say. At least the dates show that scarcely more than a year after the murder of her husband — a crime in which Catherine has always been suspected of complicity — the initial steps were taken. The plans of empresses do not wait upon tedious subscription lists and committee meetings, and the hospital begun in September of 1763 was opened in April of 1764. Nineteen children were at once received, and baptised — for the empress, though at heart in sympathy with the French infidelity of her day — still conformed ostentatiously to the usages of the Russian church. The first two were named Catherine and Paul, in honor of the empress and the heir apparent. During the entire period of her reign, until her death, in 1796, Catherine granted to the hospital an annual subsidy of 100,000 roubles — a sum equal now to about \$52,000, but doubtless of much greater purchasing power at that time. The Grand-Duke Paul, for the same period, gave annually half that amount. Almost immediately voluntary subscriptions began to pour in — money, real estate and legacies. The most magnificent gift of all (1,200,000 roubles) was received from one of the Demidoff family, a family of which it has been said that "occupying a position in Russia similar to that held by the Rothschilds elsewhere, they are not more celebrated for their wealth than for their beneficence."

It will be easily believed that an institution founded under such auspices has not lacked for resources. Before the end of Catherine's reign the reserve capital had reached the sum of 2,000,000 roubles. To-day, the general expenses of the Home amount to 1,800,000 roubles annually, about \$936,000. (Report, p. 30.)

It is the boast of the Home that its doors have never been closed — no matter in what public calamity, not

during the plague of 1771 nor the cholera epidemic of 1830, nor even during the disastrous French occupation of 1812. During the latter period, indeed, an unexpected use was found for its resources, and it gave shelter, by order of Marshal Ney, temporary governor of Moscow under Napoleon, to large numbers of children whom the necessities of war had forced their parents to abandon. When the one hundredth anniversary was celebrated, in 1864, the total number of foundlings succored was reported as 468,560. By 1890, the number had risen to 812,989. If the second centenary finds the Home still in existence — as there seems no reason to doubt that it will — the total will be far beyond a million.

It seems almost ungracious to ask whether the administration of so ancient and splendid a charity has its dark side. And yet the thoughtful visitor cannot escape misgivings. Does such lavish and indiscriminate help really benefit? Is there no danger that it may increase the very evils it seeks to alleviate?

Certain facts are not without significance. Whether profligacy is increased by the facilities which a great foundling hospital like that at Moscow offers for disposing of the fruits of shame is a mooted question. But that unnatural indifference and selfishness on the part of legitimate parents thrive under such a system there is abundant evidence. The hospital report itself — assuredly not a source from which one would expect any but the most optimistic reflections — admits that a large number of legitimate children, not orphans, are probably sheltered there, and estimates the number of such as one-fifth the total number of admissions (page 14). When one considers the advantages which the wards of the hospital enjoy over other children of humble parentage, one can understand how a father and mother might persuade themselves that they were really doing their child a kindness in casting it off. And yet one cannot approve the philanthropy which tempts to such a view of parental responsibility. Charities which have for their avowed object the assistance of the poor in the care and training of their children may commend themselves to both our sympathy and our judgment; but a charity which offers to parents the temptation to rid themselves wholly of their natural cares, under false pretences and by stealth, rests upon an entirely different basis. Such practices, continuing for generations, must degrade parental feeling, family life and public sentiment, to an extent beyond words or imagination.

The conditions of admission to foundling hospitals, even the utility of such hospitals themselves, had been matters of debate among statesmen and philanthropists for centuries before the Moscow Home was founded. Letters-patent of Charles VII of France, in 1445, affirm it as his royal opinion that "many persons will make less difficulty in abandoning themselves to sin when they see that they are not to have the charge of the up-bringing of their infants."<sup>3</sup> In Charles's day a large cradle was kept within the Cathedral of Notre Dame, accessible day and night, in which infants might be left, the clergy assuming their protection. But the funds for their maintenance were inadequate, the miser-

<sup>3</sup> Chambers's Encyclopædia.

able little waifs were left in charge of poorly paid and unscrupulous servants, and shocking abuses arose. Street-beggars wanting a new-born infant with which to work upon the sympathies of the public procured one of these; if a nurse needed a babe to replace one that through her negligence had died, she resorted to the Foundling Home; even a witch, requiring a child for her loathsome sacrifices, could be accommodated there. The price asked was just twenty sous.<sup>4</sup> In 1638, by the labors of St. Vincent de Paul, a better state of things was brought about: a new hospital was erected, and Sisters of Charity placed in charge; and the Parliament of Paris issued a decree securing to the institution annually the sum of 15,000 francs. Before many years this charity became fashionable. Louis XIV, in 1670, issued an edict commending it to all; and his queen, Maria Theresa, laid the corner-stone of a new and spacious Home.<sup>5</sup> "By this time," says an English reviewer, "two principles were acknowledged: the one, that it is a sin and crime to expose infants; the other, that it is a religious and social duty to bring up such foundlings. Neither of these principles had been controverted for centuries; but in some respects they had remained in a kind of abstract state. It was only now that they entered into the sphere of real life, where their action and reaction soon produced a series of unexpected problems, and gave rise to the question whether one evil had not been patched up by another seven times worse. For the abandonment of children, which up to that time had been an exceptional crime, became an habitual incident, demoralizing to society in proportion to its frequency. The mark had been overshot: it was necessary to aim a little lower."<sup>6</sup>

The mark had been overshot, indeed; and the number of abandoned children increased, with the new provision made for them, out of all proportion to the increase of population. In 1638, when St. Vincent de Paul first took up their cause, the foundlings numbered 312, by the end of a century they were 1,738.<sup>7</sup> At this period the so-called "turning-box system," first used in Marseilles in the thirteenth century, was in general use. "The turning-box," says the writer just quoted, "is a wooden cylinder, convex on one side, and concave on the other, turning easily on a central pivot. Its convex side is turned to the street, its concave side to the inside of a room. A bell is hung outside, close to the box. When a woman wishes to abandon her new-born baby she calls the attention of the guard by ringing the bell; the box is turned half round, so as to present its concave side to the street; the baby is put into it, and carried by another half-turn into the inside of the hospital. Turning-boxes were not abandoned in Belgium until 1860;<sup>8</sup> they are still in use in some hospitals in Italy;<sup>9</sup> and in China one may see what is practically their equivalent, in a drawer beside the outer door, nicely wadded with cotton, and communicating with a bell, which, as soon as the drawer

with its freight is pushed back, summons a porter waiting within. A more easy method for a mother to abandon her child could scarcely be devised. It offers every opportunity for secrecy, and at the same time allows the mother, if she still has some lingering tenderness for her little one, to be sure that it has been received into warmth and safety.

This turning-box, or "*tour*," has been regarded as the visible symbol of the whole system of secret, and hence indiscriminate, admission, and over its use have been waged the most heated discussions. Both the merits and faults of the system have been so clearly displayed in France that it may not be unprofitable for us to continue our rapid survey of its progress there. In 1779, the state of things had become so scandalous as to call forth a decree of the royal council. "His Majesty," the decree runs, "has observed with grief that the number of infants exposed increases day by day, and that, at the present day, they are mostly the offspring of legitimate unions. So that these asylums, originally intended to prevent the crime into which fear and shame might drive an erring mother, have by degrees come to be nurseries for the criminal indifference of parents; and their abuse is growing so expensive to the State that in the great towns, the maintenance of such a multitude of children, has grown out of all proportion both with the revenues of the hospitals and with the care and attention which the officers of the civil service can give."<sup>10</sup>

But this was a royal decree, and the Revolution was at hand. The Revolutionists—with their lax ideas of morality, in our use of the term, and their exaggerated sense of the claims of liberty and fraternity—not only maintained the existing system, but conferred on the foundlings the affectionate and honorable appellation of "children of the State" (*enfants de la patrie*). Illegitimacy was declared to be no disgrace, and a premium of 120 francs was voted to every unmarried woman who should come forward and avow herself about to become a mother.<sup>11</sup> This insane enactment, however, was abolished in 1811, under the Empire, but the foundling hospitals continued to be administered as before, with the same indiscriminate admission. Twenty-five years later, it appeared by the report of the Minister of the Interior, that even parents in easy circumstances were in the habit of saving themselves the expense of rearing their legitimate children by sending them to the foundling hospitals, which by this time were to be found in most of the large towns; and that it had come to be considered, especially in country places, perfectly simple and natural to have one's family brought up at the expense of the State.<sup>12</sup> In such a public sentiment as this, one can clearly trace the influence of the socialism of the period.

Practices more scandalous still were common. A later report asserts that it was considered a part of the professional duty of midwives to dispose of unwelcome children for their patrons, by carrying them to the nearest hospital, and the open advertisement of such a person is quoted, to the effect that she "desires to re-

<sup>4</sup> Harper's Magazine, vol. viii, p. 337.

<sup>5</sup> Harper's, loc. cit.

<sup>6</sup> Home and Foreign Review, London, vol. iii, p. 497.

<sup>7</sup> Harper's Magazine, vol. viii, p. 337.

<sup>8</sup> Encyclopædia Britannica.

<sup>9</sup> Chambers's Encyclopædia, Edition of 1896.

<sup>10</sup> Home and Foreign Review, London, vol. iii, p. 497.

<sup>11</sup> Chambers's Encyclopædia.

<sup>12</sup> Home and Foreign Review, loc. cit.

mind her numerous clients that she undertakes to effect the abandonment of natural children without any knowledge of the circumstances."<sup>13</sup>

Later legislation, however, has produced at least a partial reform in these respects. A Department of Outdoor Relief has been organized, by which assistance is given to poor mothers at their homes, thus diminishing the temptation to the desertion of legitimate children. Cradles and clothing are loaned, wet-nurses are provided, and money itself is sometimes given. Half the children annually on the registers of the Paris Hospital are in this outside department; but the experiment cannot be viewed with as much satisfaction as it otherwise might, for the mortality reports show five times as many deaths among infants thus cared for as among those received into the hospital.<sup>14</sup> This is not surprising, considering the miserable condition of many of their homes.

With the exception of the Department of Outside Aid, the system at Paris now much resembles that at Moscow. The foundlings are kept but a short time at the hospital, and are then put out to foster-mothers in the country. An attempt was made, a few years ago, to introduce what was called the system of *deplacement*, by which the infants were to be sent, each to a district remote from its birthplace, thus removing from mothers the temptation to desert their children, in the hope of later receiving them again to nurse—a practice common in France, it appears, as well as in Russia. But the experiment was soon abandoned on account of the expense, since the fact that the foundlings were not all received at one or two great central hospitals, but taken in at numerous smaller ones, in different parts of the country, made a species of transportation exchange necessary to carry out the *deplacement* plan.

The sum paid to the foster-parents in France, as in Russia, is gradually diminished with the development of the child's capacity to care for himself and be of service to others. The total cost of maintenance for each child during his first twelve years is said to average the very moderate sum of 1,500 francs, about \$300.<sup>15</sup> At twelve apprenticeship begins, but the supervision of the government inspectors continues till the ward is twenty-one.

The Paris Asylum receives annually, exclusive of those registered in the Department of Outside Aid, about 5,500 children. The provincial hospitals report an annual average of about 36,000 under the care of their authorities. These include not only foundlings proper, but children temporarily cared for while their parents are undergoing penal servitude, or while they are in hospitals for treatment. It is also admitted that there are still legitimate children of living parents among the number, although in no such proportion as in the years before the turning-box was abandoned. Even since its abandonment, the formalities of admission to the hospital have been less strict than in some other countries.

Probably in no country of Europe have the princi-

ples underlying the public care of foundlings been more ably and exhaustively debated than in France; and France may be considered the representative of that system of lavish and somewhat indiscriminate public provision which has been called by some writers the Catholic, by others the Roman, as distinguished from the Protestant or Teutonic system. Curious enough—and yet not at all curious, when one reflects upon it—is the relation between the laws of the various European countries and their conduct of these public charities. Teutonic custom is far less lavish in its public provision for the foundling; but Teutonic law pushes back much further the private responsibility for the child's maintenance, in many cases extending it to the very distant relatives, if they can be found. An extreme instance of both these tendencies is Scotland, where there have never been any foundling hospitals, and where a notable attempt of a private philanthropist to establish one was overruled by Act of Parliament in 1832, on grounds of public morality: but where the law gives to the mother of an illegitimate child unusual claims for alimony upon its putative father. It is a crime, in Scotland, to desert an illegitimate child: the few children who are deserted, in spite of law and its penalties, are cared for by the poor-law authorities. This possibility of bringing proceedings for alimony against the father of an illegitimate child is pointed out by a writer in the latest edition of the "Encyclopædia Britannica" as marking a fundamental difference between the law of most Protestant countries, on the one hand, and that of those Catholic countries which have adopted the Code Napoleon, on the other. Where the law gives the mother the means of redress, there is far less occasion for public provision for the child. The cases of real necessity will be relatively few, and can safely be left to the ordinary administration of the poor-law system, or to private charity. Such is the custom of England, Germany, and most of the other Protestant countries of Europe, and it will be recognized at once as that of our own country.

Both of these opposing systems—the Roman and the Teutonic—have had able defenders, and it must be admitted that a plausible case can be made out for either side. The lavish bounty of the Roman method appeals at once to the inherent generosity of human nature, and all the more strongly on account of the helpless condition of those for whom it pleads. It is claimed for it that it prevents infanticide and abortion, and makes it possible for the woman who has slipped once to regain a footing in society again. Its opponents, on the other hand, say that it encourages vice and profligacy. They claim, too, that so far from its being an advantage for an erring mother to be relieved of her child, the care of the little one is often a positive safeguard to her, preventing her from returning to evil ways, and not seldom a tie to unite father and mother in a happy marriage. Statistics are quoted in support of both these positions—and where the statisticians disagree, who shall decide? The fact seems to be, that so many other considerations enter into the problem—considerations of national temperament, standards of morality, expense of living, average age of marriage,

<sup>13</sup> Report of Commission of 1861, quoted in Home and Foreign Review, loc. cit.

<sup>14</sup> Chambers's Encyclopædia, Edition of 1896.

<sup>15</sup> Encyclopædia Britannica.

freedom of divorce, and so on,—that statistics alone do not count for very much. The writer of the article in the "Britannica," just referred to, is perhaps right in his suggestion, that each system may be the best for those nations which have adopted it. There is no doubt that the Teutonic system brings less expense upon the countries following it, and its cheapness has been made the subject of taunts by those opposed to it. Said Lamartine, the brilliant French orator, in an impassioned appeal in behalf of the turning-box, "It was reserved for the sordid ingenuity and pitiless economy of certain theorists of Great Britain to undermine, in the name of arithmetic, an institution founded in the name of morality and fraternity."

Let us glance for a moment, in closing, at the experiences which led, in Great Britain, to the adoption of this frugal Teutonic system.

The largest foundling hospital in the United Kingdom is that established in London, early in the last century, by Thomas Coram, a retired sea-captain. Captain Coram's kindly heart was touched, as he went back and forth, day by day, among the wharves and dockyards, by the sight of abandoned children, half-naked, cold, starving, or already dead. Seventeen years he labored at his subscription list, and in 1739 had the satisfaction of seeing his hospital incorporated. It became at once an object of popular interest, and from that day to this perhaps no charity in Europe has been associated with more brilliant names. The sermon at its dedication was preached by Sterne. Handel gave a performance of his "Messiah" for its benefit, year after year, adding to its funds a total of £10,000. The beautiful organ in the chapel was also his gift, and it was he who composed for the childish choir the anthems of which Mendelssohn said, on hearing them, that they were "like the jubilate welcome at the gates of Paradise." Hogarth exhibited his paintings to aid the hospital, and gave his celebrated "March of the Guards to Finchley" to adorn its walls. The "Christ Blessing Little Children," over the communion table in the little chapel, was also given by its painter, Benjamin West. During the reign of George III the popular interest in the hospital was so keen and the grounds so attractive that they became the place for fashionable promenades.

In the early days of the hospital, the rush for admission was so great that lots were used to determine which children should be received. It is said that one mother, after drawing a black-ball for nineteen mornings in succession, dropped dead with joy when, on the twentieth, she drew the coveted white. It may have been incidents like this—as well as the belief that the public enthusiasm and generosity would be equal to unlimited demands—that led the House of Commons, in 1756, to direct that every child presented should be received, to appoint receiving places all over the country, and to guarantee financial support. But the remedy proved worse than the disease. The first day on which the basket—the English equivalent of the turning-box—was placed outside the hospital door, it received 117 foundlings. Within the first three months 3,727 were taken in. To

carry infants whose mothers wished to be rid of them became a regular branch of the carrier's trade, and a shocking proportion of those entrusted to them reached the hospital lifeless. Children at the point of death were sent by their parents to save the expense of burial. Legitimate children of paupers were also sent there to save the local guardians of the poor the care and cost of their maintenance. It was believed that criminal intrigues increased fearfully, in consequence of this easy means of disposing of illegitimate children.

After a four years' trial—during which time 15,000 children had been received and cared for, at a total expense of £500,000, the basket system was abandoned ("Encyclopædia Britannica"). The present system, which has been, substantially, in use since 1801, admits only illegitimate children whose mothers make personal application in their behalf, and convince the receiving officers both of their need and of their previous good character. By these officials their secret is carefully guarded, but to them it must be disclosed. This regulation has been criticised as over-strict, but it is difficult to see any middle ground between it and indiscriminate admission. Children thus brought by their mothers are not, in the exact sense, "foundlings" at all—that is, they are not deserted by their parents—and it has been objected that the hospital has no right to call itself a "Foundling Home." With these limitations upon admission, the hospital maintains only about 500 children—an insignificant number indeed, compared with those reported from Paris and Moscow. The care of the children after their admission is very similar to that in other foundling homes; at fourteen the girls are sent out to domestic service; at sixteen the boys are apprenticed; all are under supervision till they reach the age of twenty-one. The foundlings sent into the country from London do not remain as many years as those sent from Paris or Moscow; and it is said that the ill-effects of their city life are seen in stunted development and feeble health ("Chambers's Encyclopædia").

Making all due allowance for the difference in moral standards between England and the countries of the Continent, it is obvious that the 500 children maintained at the Foundling Home in London cannot represent all the illegitimacy of the United Kingdom. But the whole evil—so the writer in the "Britannica" assures us—does not attain proportions beyond what private charities and the Poor-Law funds can easily cope with. The London Home is now practically a private charity, supported by ample endowments, and has only been compared in this sketch with the foundling homes of Moscow and Paris because, for part of its history, it was, like them, the object of government assistance and regulation. It might be argued, by one not in sympathy with the English or "Teutonic" system, that the "private charity" of England puts in the way of the ill-disposed as many temptations to desertion of children, or even to looseness of life, as the public provision of Continental countries. But practical experience seems to show that such is not the case. Private charity is less apt to be lavish and indiscriminate. Then, too, a provision

made by government is likely to be more freely taken advantage of, especially in countries where socialistic sentiments are widely diffused, and where the idea that children belong to the State rather than to the family, and that the State should be responsible for them, is familiar.

To an American, of course, the Teutonic system naturally commends itself. And yet, as has been suggested before, what is best for one nation may not be best for another. In a country like Russia, for example, the crowded condition of peasant homes — grandparents, brothers and brothers' wives, and cousins

of all ages, sometimes occupying the one sleeping apartment in common — the long absences of husbands on military service, and the rigid class distinctions, must have tended to develop ideas of morality which seem to us loose and degenerating. Moreover, the general poverty and the autocratic character of the government combine to produce in the people a child-like dependence on the governing power. It may well be that there, a great public charity, like that so admirably conducted at Moscow, meets the conditions of the case better than anything which our Anglo-Saxon thrift and ingenuity could devise.







