

to exercise their Power in their Respective Places for the General good: And all not in authority also; Rich men to encourage it every way, being best able; and the Middle Sort do their endeavour, lest they like small Iron Creeppers in a Chimney, who bear the burden and heat of the Fire, until they be wasted to Sinders; and the Poor to avoid Idleness, which is oftentimes the Cause of Begging; and hearken to the Counsel of the Wise man, Ecclesiasticus 40. My Son, lead not a Beggar's life, for better it is to die then to beg, verse 28. The life of him that dependeth on another man's Table, is not to be accounted a life, verse 29. Begging is sweet in the Mouth of the Shameless, but in their Belly there burns a fire, verse 30. That this Plat-form, or some other, may be put in Practice when the Dayes lengthen is likely, because of the Necessity, and cannot safely with good Conscience be wholly omitted: But that all joyn in the Execution there lieth the stress; many good Things have been began, but men being selfish, careless and unconstant, the Work hath failed: I have in some measure therefore unloaded my own Conscience in this thing, and laid it before others, that all might be clear from the Cry of the Poor; But he that stoppeth his Ears at the Cry of the Poor, he also shall Cry and not be heard.

T.L.

London, Printed for Robert Wilson, at the Black-spread-Eagle, and Windmill, in Martins Le Grand, 1660.

Lambe's Tract.

THE tract, which has been copied by Principal Wheeler Robinson from the original in the Angus Library, is an interesting witness from an obscure quarter of the state of agitation and mental stirring at the time of the Restoration. Its author, Thomas Lambe, was a very interesting personality, yet he could hardly be regarded as a man of prominence in the England of his day. Still, it is quite natural to him, apparently, to draft a scheme for the settlement of the country and publish it with good hope. He has all the confidence of the ardent reformer. If his scheme is only carried on as it ought to be, he declares, the cure is certain—a confidence which inevitably raises a smile in this day, when paper schemes are showered upon us like leaves in autumn, all offering an infallible cure. It was an age not unlike the one we know, and Lambe we can easily place.

However, the spirit and discernment behind the *Platform*,

as he calls it, is in every way commendable. 1660 was the year when Charles II. entered on his gay life, putting an end to the Interregnum, and clouding the faces of the Puritans. The settlement included arrangements with regard to the future of the Crown and the Parliament, and it was to be followed immediately by the now notorious Acts which aimed at a settlement of religion. But here is a man who sees clearly that it is the *country* that wants settling, and not merely the constitution. The succession may be arranged, and the king's palace tenanted, but to what profit if the condition of the people is such as to be a continual menace. "In the midst of many and great undertakings let not the poor be forgotten." The value of England is her town and countryside.

The ranks of the destitute had been greatly swollen in the preceding years. Even in the time of Elizabeth, owing to great social changes, the number had been so large as to compel legislation, and naturally during the period of civil war things had not tended to improve. Lambe was evidently a keen observer. He is quite aware that destitution leads "to ill-breeding and a wicked life." He knows that idleness is a painful and disastrous social disease, nor is he under illusion as to the fact that even though there be work enough, the *idle* will not come for it. Further, he has seen the uselessness of indiscriminate charity, which is trouble if a man does not give, and equally trouble if he does. On the other hand, he has authentic information as to what hard poverty means, for he has been exercised many years amongst the poor, has seen through long years the grind of their misery, and desires no man ill but only their good. In short, it is a national problem, and requires a national remedy. Whatever judgment one may form of his *Platform*, and his confident faith with regard to it, it is impossible not to admire his clear-sightedness, his patriotism, and his sympathy. In a troubled time, a time of much self-seeking, here is one at least who lends his brain to his country's need, and has a single eye to England's good.

In the scheme itself there are one or two points worth noting. Reference has already been made to the legislation in Elizabeth's day, legislation which is really the beginning of our Poor Law system. The Act then passed had become a dead letter by 1660, or, rather, it had never been properly enforced. Lambe clearly has that in mind, and it explains his plea for the full discharge of their obligations on the part of all who have received powers. All judges of assizes and sessions are to inquire into these matters, not merely wait until they are brought before them, and they are to see the penalties are justly executed. Further, persons of all standings are to have free access without molestation, to lodge information and make complaints of any

wrong treatment of the poor. Also, the overseer in each parish is to be a worthy man, and one qualified for his duties.

These duties are splendidly comprehensive. First of all, he has to discover the state of the parish, the number of old, impotent, and young children who need assistance, and also the number of unemployed. Next he has to help and advise the parish in the task of finding work for such as are capable of it, and thirdly to administer relief. Lambe recognizes how much depends on getting the right kind of man for this work, and he puts work as the first item in his programme.

By means of the information obtained in this way over the whole of the country, it would be possible to use the resources of wealthy parishes for the assistance of the more needy (an arrangement, by the way, which Poplar has been recently trying to enforce), and also the statistics so obtained would be a valuable help towards the distribution of labour. To assist this still further he would have a *Poor Man's Office*, established, apparently, in each district, where men could apply for work and masters for workmen. His Paragraph III., in which this idea is sketched, is perhaps the most practical part of the tract, being in effect the machinery which we know to-day as the *Labour Exchange*, a system which has taken deep root in Germany. There is no doubt that had it been adopted in Lambe's time it would have been a great boon both then and in the succeeding ages, especially so before the modern quick means of communication and transit came into vogue.

His method of finding work for the workless by getting one clothier to take ten, another twenty, and so on, all under authority, is very naïve, and has about it the defect of a paper scheme. It leaves out of account the root causes of unemployment and the question of supply and demand, and even in that age would split on the rock of practicality. Whether his statement that there was work enough for all at the time is true, we cannot say, but the root difficulty in every period of social change is precisely this difficulty of finding work. Organizing relief and preventing destitution is relatively simple compared with this, even though all be agreed that work is infinitely better than doles, and has in it human and spiritual values which for the country's sake, as well as the individual's, it is absolutely necessary to preserve. The day did come when parishes in England attempted to provide work by manufacturing on their own account, and no other than Robert Hall, the Leicester preacher, had to plead with them to desist *in the interests of the poor themselves*, as they were only further overstocking the market and depressing the hire.

To-day we again face the same problem. Undoubtedly we have made advance since Lambe's time, and especially so if we remember the vast increase of population in the country.

There is not now the destitution and the misery. Yet remember the vast increase of population in the country. Yet though three centuries have passed, we have to admit that the wit of man has not yet found a solution to a problem which is clearly one of the most vital. Lambe calls upon all the estates of the realm to do their part—rich, middle folk, and poor are all concerned. He sees clearly that it is the problem of all, and that only a united effort will avail. Robert Hall, a century and a half later, used his eloquence to make the same plea, and surely the fullest recognition of that in any age is the first step towards a real grappling with the problem. Happily, in our time, many minds are at work on it from different angles, and never perhaps was Lambe's ideal more attractive and honoured than to-day—namely that there may not be a beggar in England, and that all may have work, food, and government.

Thomas Lamb.

Thomas Lamb, writer of the economic tract in this issue, was a Particular Baptist. He had a name-sake more famous at the time, a General Baptist, of Colchester and London, a soap-boiler, who evangelized as far as Gloucester. Our man has been recognized by a notice in the *Dictionary of National Biography*, which, however, like our *Baptist Bibliography*, volume I., page 222, has slightly confounded the two men. He was once a member of John Goodwin's church, and became an elder there; a hymn by him was published by his minister in 1651; he himself had published a treatise of particular predestination in 1642. In 1653 he became Baptist, started a Baptist church meeting in Lothbury: for colleague he had William Allen, not the same man as the Adjutant-general. Goodwin issued forty queries on the points in issue, Allen replied, Goodwin rejoined, and in 1655 Lamb defended his brother minister. Next year he opposed Goodwin on another point, upholding the possibility of absolute freedom from sin; at this time he lived in Norton-Falgate. Goodwin replied to him, and other assailants, in 1658. But by this time Lamb had ceased to be a Baptist; Mrs. Lamb and Mrs. Allen had brought about a correspondence with Richard Baxter, in the course of which both Lamb and Allen abandoned Baptist principles, disbanded their church, and passed on to join the Church of England. This greatly chagrined Baxter, and it must be put to the credit of these men that they quitted Baptists in the day of prosperity, and joined a communion which was being oppressed. This tract is good evidence that in 1660 theology had receded to the background, and philanthropy was to the