

THE SOCIAL CENTRE AND THE DEMOCRATIC IDEAL

By Mary P. Follett.

THE Social Centre movement is, as you all know, the movement for opening the public school buildings evenings for community purposes. But I wonder if you all know how rapidly this movement is spreading throughout the United States, from Wisconsin to Texas, from the Atlantic to the Pacific. City after city, town after town, is throwing open its schoolhouses evenings. And this rapid development is not surprising, for everywhere it has been the same fundamental need in the community which has brought about the Social Centre movement, the same hunger we have all felt for a wider fellowship and a common life. If I were asked to name the most striking characteristic of the present time, I should say that people are doing more things together; they are coming together more than ever before in municipal movements, for national purposes, in labor organizations, in co-operative societies, in associations of employers and employees, etc. The keynote of the twentieth century is the passion for solidarity. That this is so is the great hope of our future democracy.

Industrial democracy gets nearer, and political democracy is becoming more real with changes in the form of government (like the initiative, referendum, etc.), with the introduction of social programs into party platforms, and with the lessening of the power of the machine. But more striking evidence still of the new democracy is the change in all our hearts. Never before has the idea of union, of brotherhood, been so prominent and so permeating in our life as at the present moment. Democracy in the past has been taught as the philosophy of the individual. That is why it has not made more progress, that is the trouble with our industrial system. Some people define democracy as equal opportunity, and then think of opportunity as every man having a chance to get to the top and rule others! Democracy is not the glorification of the individual in any form, but the subordination of the individual, by himself, to the well-being of all. (Applause.) We used to talk of liberty and equality—they seem empty and selfish words to us now compared with that living, throbbing thing which is passing—from you to me, from one to all; joining us together indissolubly in the biggest bond of all—the brotherhood of man. It is the realization and expression of this bond which is going to make us alive · in every part of us, in every part of our society, which

is going to heal our political and social sicknesses, our industrial and economic evils.

But the brotherhood of man is at present an ideal, not a reality. How are the Social Centres going to help us make it real? First of all, simply by providing a place where people can meet and become acquainted with one another. Where is there a better opportunity for this than in our schoolhouses, where we have the space and plant required—large rooms, halls, gymnasiums, and where all meet on common ground with: equal rights, —where there are no races, but all are Americans, where no political party or particular religion has any special privileges, where no commercialism can dominate us? (Applause.)

The first aim of the Social Centres should be to train up young people with a sense of responsibility. Those of us who believe that the reform of city government is not to come so much: through change of charters as through the associated life of citizens, recognizing their responsibilities, look to the Social Centres as one of the most effective means at our hands for revolutionizing the life of cities. (Applause.) What we must all realize is that *we* are responsible for whatever government we have, that our government is not run by "*they*,"—some mysterious other persons, but that *we* • ourselves are responsible for the life of our city and of our nation.

We want it to become a matter of common realization that citizenship is not a duty to be exercised a few times a year, chiefly on voting days; citizenship is not a duty at all, really, it is not a privilege, it is just a function, like breathing, to be exercised every moment of the time. (Applause.) This is what we want the Centres to teach—we want to teach and to learn our share in the common life.

I want now to speak of four ways in which this civic and social responsibility may be developed in the Centres:

1. First. all the activities of the Boston Evening Centres are group activities.

The race is now evolving a new being to meet the demands the democratic ideal has laid upon it—the social being—the man who looks upon himself in every respect not as apart from but as a part of other men. The chief function of the Social Centres should be the evolution of this new being—the social man.

2. We are planning to make our Centres a real training in self-government, a real opportunity for the development of initiative, will-power and self-expression.

3. In the third place, responsibility and good citizenship may be developed by frequent discussion and by a certain amount of direct civic teaching,—of political, economic and industrial questions, of political and social ethics, of the tests of efficiency, etc.

4. Fourth, and last, acquaintance, association, discussion, will lead inevitably to common action for community ends.

And now one thing more—I want to ask you all to help in the development of the Boston Social Centres, in making them mean what they ought to mean in the life of the city. We have at present four, one in Charlestown, East Boston, South Boston and Roxbury, a part time Centre in Dorchester, and—enough schoolhouses for many more. The thing I feel more strongly about our Centres than any other is that they will never be successful if they are not community affairs, organized by community effort, for community ends. Here is where I want to ask your help.

To make our zenith moments of thought and feeling permanent—that is our task.

The Questions

[Follett Excerpts Only]

Q. What do you think of the German emperor's decorating Adolphus Busch, and Harvard's accepting a gift from him?

A (Miss Follett): I don't know anything about it, I am sorry to say.

Q: Don't the settlement houses of Boston furnish an example of the social service idea?

A (Miss Follett): We haven't enough settlement houses to go around, and besides, we want the initiative to come from the inside.

Q: Will not too many social gatherings encourage idle gossip and destroy valuable individual qualities?

A (Miss Follett): I think you haven't understood what I mean by social gatherings. I mean every place where people meet together, no matter how serious the purpose.

Q: (Mr. Brown): Are not many of the hindrances to our coming -together due to people's holding themselves aloof and not being willing to meet other people?

A (Miss Follett): Just acquaintance—knowing each other—is the first basis of democracy.

Q: Is industrial democracy possible under private ownership?

A (Miss Follett): I do not consider private ownership democracy.

Q: What is the attitude of the majority church in Boston toward social centres and open discussion?

A (Miss Follett): I have never heard any objection.

Q: Do you advocate the teaching of sex hygiene in social centres?

A (Miss Follett): Not at present.

Q (Miss Rogolsky): What made people start these social centres—to do away with evils or to begin a new democracy?

A (Miss Follett): For both these reasons, and many more.

Q: Has not the military spirit in the 19th century been predominant among us all?

A (Miss Follett): When things are at the worst they are always at the best. Of course we are talking more about war than ever before—but also about peace.

Q: Does not our present system of education entirely neglect the older people, and what does the social centre contemplate doing for them?

A (Miss Follett): That is one of the most important reasons for starting the social centre. We have a large number of groups for older people, and hope to have many more.

Q: How often do these meetings in the schools take place?

A (Miss Follett): Our full social centres are held in the high school buildings, and we have them three times a week, when the evening high schools do not occupy them.

Q: Do you believe that organized social centres will gradually do away with poverty?

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Q: How can we get the people together in a united effort when they are divided so sharply religiously?

A (Miss Follett): Religious differences are no longer so important as they once were.

Q: Wouldn't it help a lot of the shortlived organizations which spring up continually if they had a good leader?

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Q: What do you think of the various citizens' associations in Boston as social centres?

A (Miss Follett): I think some are better than others.

Q: Does not the operation of the social centres as now constituted show that the upper classes, which most need training of this sort, do not get it?

A (Miss Follett): Let us work hard for that, too.

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1913

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Ford Hall Forum

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Ford Hall Folks

A MAGAZINE OF NEIGHBORLINESS

VOLUME II NUMBER 9

DECEMBER 21, 1913

PRICE FIVE CENTS

THE SOCIAL CENTRE AND DIRECT ACTION*

By JOHN LOVEJOY ELLIOTT

WHENEVER I speak of this subject I think of a section of the American desert in which I once lived. That land is absolutely sterile without irrigation. A man can nearly kill himself carrying buckets of water all day, and yet irrigate only a very small portion.



The only real way to get water is either to stop the rivers or to dig an irrigation well. A good deal the same sort of thing has got to be done if ever the time comes when our American cities are fit places in which to live. In other words, the wealth we need must be provided from the inside—by the people themselves. In dealing with this problem I believe in direct action. The direct action of the I. W. W. may be destructive sabotage, but at least they have been working directly for the people of the abyss, now. The philanthropic associations have been like the man who runs with a bucket of water to irrigate the desert. The social reformers are slow. Socialism is gradually granting more and more time for its ideals to be realized. And yet, these conditions are here, and we are tired of living under them. There is getting to be more and more in our communities the spirit of restlessness. This restlessness is going to continue, to grow, to be more and more of a force.

The people of the abyss are saying, "We suffer, we die, now; must we wait for you with

you and me in our neighborhood. To paraphrase Matthew Arnold, I have sometimes thought that social reform was a vocabulary tinged with passion. For the man who stands on the street corner shouting for social reform till the windows rattle, and then goes home and does not practise brotherhood on his wife or his own brother, I have little use. The kind of fraternity that cannot stand the test of kindness to one's own neighbors is false.

In twenty years I have found out from my neighborhood several things, and one is that the women of the community were good at looking after the children of that community, and that there was need of them. You can't do all your duty indoors—not any more. To be a good mother you have got to be out of doors—in the dance halls and the saloons. The young fellows hanging before the saloons of any community are a challenge to that community to open some other kind of amusement for them. (Applause.) In our neighborhood the women are away ahead of the men. The tenement house burden is being carried on the backs of the women. And, just as fifty years ago the word went through the world, "Working men, unite!" today there should go through the slums the cry, "Women, unite and organize!" Not just for the sake of the ballot, though I believe in that, too (Applause), but for the purpose for which the ballot has got to be used, for the sake of the children and the home. The women are doing the work today, and never will there be any great progress until the women organize. Without organization they are fighting mothers of the tenements, splendid but futile.

Above all things the social centre is trying to make articulate the living God in men and women—trying to bring out their spiritual power right in the darkness of the

together as neighbors and help the big influences to be made real things. Open your schools, open these centres, and if the right standard is raised there and the right spirit predominates, the men and women will come together and work so that it will create centres of light in the darkest places of this or any other community.

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Industrial democracy gets nearer, and political democracy is becoming more real with changes in the form of government.

—One of the most interesting had at Ford Hall was that on Hyslop was the speaker and "Be Proved?" the subject. Science Foster of Worcester gives his "Can Religion Be Made" Foster thinks it can and those who his paper of his agree with him. er you do. The questions ought interesting, because Mr. Foster has cturer and a newspaper man as Mr. Coleman calls him a "live rman knows "live wires" when

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The people of the abyss are saying, "We suffer, we die, now: must we wait for you, with your theories?" You have got to save men and women alive! (Applause.) And there is no use in waiting for this or that theory to be fulfilled. This restlessness will never be satisfied until people are aken into a complete partnership. There has got to be a new form of partnership, unless this restlessness becomes anarchy. (Applause.)

We do not want to see any great change come with destroying fire; and yet we are very tired of seeing the hearse and the ambulance carry off to the scrap-heap the children who are our personal friends. What are we going to do? Well, we have said, "Open the school houses, and let the people from the tenement houses come in and begin to work." What can they do? In the first place, we all need a great deal more knowledge about our government than many of us have. We must learn to vote intelligently. We must above all gain a sense of local responsibility for the things near home. I have heard the village wiseacres, whose bleared eyes could see no nearer than the Capitol dome at Washington, discussing the tariff, and utterly neglecting the pressing problems of their own community. Democracy must begin for

*The speeches and the questions and answers reported by Miriam Allen de Ford.

American cities are fit places in which to live. In other words, the tenement house burden is being carried on the backs of the women. And, just as fifty years ago the word went through the world, "Working men, unite!" today there should go through the slums the cry, "Women, unite and organize!" Not just for the sake of the ballot, though I believe in that, too (Applause), but for the purpose for which the ballot has got to be used, for the sake of the children and the home. The women are doing the work today, and never will there be any great progress until the women organize. Without organization they are fighting mothers of the tenements, splendid but futile.

Above all things the social centre is trying to make articulate the living God in men and women—trying to bring out their spiritual power right in the darkness of the present conditions. You and I never will live to see the perfect time fulfilled and Boston a City of the Light, but we can get

THE PRAYER.

Help us to find Thee, O God, in the hearts and lives of the men, women and children that are all about us. May we break down every barrier that hinders us from really knowing one another. Bring us together, we pray Thee, in friendly intimacies, in mutual enjoyments, and in common aspirations. Let those who are privileged bring gifts of leisure and culture. Let the distressed and the unsatisfied bring gifts of eagerness and desire. Let the powerful lift up the weak and the light-hearted bring comfort to the over-burdened. Though we come from the ends of society and are separated by injustice, prejudice, and untoward circumstances, help us, O God, to seek out one another in love and patience and to rest not until, through fellowship and friendliness, we have realized a large measure of the relationship of brothers and sisters of a common Father. Amen.

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THE QUESTIONS

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Q: Don't the settlement houses of Boston furnish an example of the social service idea?

A (Miss Follett): We haven't enough settlement houses to go around, and besides, we want the initiative to come from the inside.

Q: What effect have the settlement houses had on our cities?

A (Mr. Elliott): They give good training in co-operation and organization.

Q: We have seen the efforts of the women in England and of the miners in this country; how can the people overcome brute force and the powers that are above them?

A (Mr. Elliott): I think that in the long run fights of this sort have been successful, and never more so than they are now. Those that have lost have been gone at in the wrong way.

Q: Are not the saloons the foundation of most of the evils that exist?

A (Mr. Elliott): I do not think they are. I think that they aggravate every evil in the world. They are a terrible irritant.

Q: How are you going to get the working class together when the struggle for existence takes all their energy?

A (Mr. Elliott): People will get a good deal better bread and butter when they do unite.

Q: How do you regard the man who is good to his family and immediate friends, but who oppresses his fellow men in the economic life?

A (Mr. Elliott): Both he and the social reformer who does not practise what he preaches are equally public nuisances.

Q: Will not too many social gatherings encourage idle gossip and destroy valuable individual qualities?

Q: Do you advocate the teaching of sex hygiene in social centres?

A (Miss Follett): Not at present.

Q: Does not the saloon when prohibited cause a greater desire for drink than when not prohibited, just as when religion was prohibited, people wanted it?

A (Mr. Elliott): No, it seems to me that the further you can keep it back the better it will be. There is no natural craving for liquor.

Q (Miss Rogolsky): What made people start these social centres—to do away with evils or to begin a new democracy?

A (Miss Follett): For both these reasons, and many more.

Q: Has not the military spirit in the 19th century been predominant among us all?

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Q: Aren't the public officials whom the struggling people elect to represent them absorbed in their own interests, instead of serving the people?

A (Mr. Elliott): Yes, with most officials it is themselves first, the party next, and then, after a long space, the people. But—the people who elect them are tarred with the same brush.

Q: Why don't both the speakers join the Socialist party and help along the things they advocate? (Laughter.)

A (Mr. Elliott): In many important respects Socialism stops just when the real work begins. I do not object to any of the practical measures of Socialism. (Miss Follett did not reply.)

Q: How do you expect the people in the centres to organize when they are exploited for profit?

A (Mr. Elliott): I want people to get together and work with each other so that they will not be exploited for profit.

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Q: How can we have social centres when the forces above are so opposed to them?

A (Mr. Elliott): We never will change the spirit above until we get the spirit of democracy among the people underneath.

Q: Do you believe that organized social centres will gradually do away with poverty?

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Q: What do you think of the various citizens' associations in Boston as social centres?

A (Miss Follett): I think some are better than others.

Q: What do you think about the Arcadia fire?

A (Mr. Elliott): I see no connection between what does happen and what ought to happen, in this world.

Q: Does not the operation of the social centres as now constituted show that the upper classes, which most need training of this sort, do not get it?

A (Miss Follett): Let us work hard for that, too.

Q: (Mr. Elliott): Have not the newspapers of Boston been a great help to Ford Hall?

A (Mr. Coleman): Yes, indeed. (Mr. Elliott): I do not know the Boston

By GEORGE

The Trustees of the Social Union gave 10 hours last Monday the free use of Ford Hall for the week during our new Meeting. And I accompanied by 100 will. It only requires superintendent of us the most favorable. It will be either a fine thing. What a fine thing! splendid co-operation Union Trustees. added security at all the brighter. doubt that we are a work which in grow like a banyan.

And while I appreciate of the in Ford Hall Sunday a bit from the new called The Watchman New York, as Baptists through until very recent nothing about the Boston. The art was written by Dr. the very beginning friend of ours at days of our meeting. After the history of the telling of Mr. Forster of the Ford goes on to say that contributed to more famous than unique and widely known. He admitted that

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A (Miss Follett): Just acquaintance—knowing each other—is the first basis of democracy.

Q (Mr. Hogan): Can brotherhood be promoted by Mr. Coleman's "conundrum" in last week's Ford Hall Folks? What effect will that have?

A (Mr. Coleman): That remains to be seen! (Laughter.)

Q: Is industrial democracy possible under private ownership?

A (Miss Follett): I do not consider private ownership democracy.

Q: Wasn't it sabotage to put the tea in Boston Harbor?

A (Mr. Elliott): I don't dare to say anything about that in Boston!

Q: Isn't sabotage as practised by the I. W. W., as a last resort, and not necessarily with violence, justifiable?

A (Mr. Elliott): No, because anything that is done in an underhanded way cannot be justified.

Q: What is the attitude of the majority church in Boston toward social centres and open discussion?

A (Miss Follett): I have never heard any objection.

Q: Aren't the public officials whom the struggling people elect to represent them absorbed in their own interests, instead of serving the people?

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Q: How do you expect the people in the centres to organize when they are exploited for profit?

A (Mr. Elliott): I want people to get together and work with each other so that they will not be exploited for profit.

Q: What do you think of the work of the sociologists?

A (Mr. Elliott): I don't like to work with sociologists; they have too many notions it takes years to knock out. We have not yet had any great sociologist.

Q: Does not our present system of education entirely neglect the older people, and what does the social centre contemplate doing for them?

A (Miss Follett): That is one of the most important reasons for starting the social centre. We have a large number of groups for older people, and hope to have many more.

Q: How do you expect to arrive at democracy when people today are so selfish that they will snatch the bread from each other's mouths?

A (Mr. Elliott): I hope that doesn't hit everyone. I have known a good many people who would put bread in another's mouth.

Q: Doesn't sectarian organization create animosity, and doesn't it rule politics at the present time?

A (Mr. Elliott): Boston is "some problem," but I don't know but that the people have the main power in their own hands.

Q: How do you expect to solve the poor tenement problem as long as the economic law of marginal utilities demands that these tenements exist?

A (Mr. Elliott): It doesn't necessarily apply.

Q: Could or would a poor laboring man interest himself in the social centre after a hard day's work?

want a leader from the outside; we want co-operation from the inside.

Q: What do you think of the various citizens' associations in Boston as social centres?

A (Miss Follett): I think some are better than others.

Q: What do you think about the Arcadia fire?

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Q: Does not the operation of the social centres as now constituted show that the upper classes, which most need training of this sort, do not get it?

A (Miss Follett): Let us work hard for that, too.

Q (Mr. Frazer): Have not the newspapers of Boston been a great help to Ford Hall?

A (Mr. Coleman): Yes, indeed. (Mr. Elliott): I do not know the Boston papers.

Q: Do you think that the statement often made, that the doctrines of the law bar progress, is true?

A (Mr. Elliott): I feel very decidedly that a law must be obeyed before it can be changed.

Q: What should be done to the owners of property, in the slums and elsewhere, that is used for immoral purposes?

A (Mr. Elliott): The name of the man who owns the property should go over the door. That ought to be a beginning. (A Voice: We have that in Oregon.) (Mr. Elliott): I should have expected that. You have everything progressive there.

Q (Mr. Gallup): Is not much being done through Chambers of Commerce, city planning, etc., for social uplift by the upper classes?

A (Mr. Elliott): Yes, and they are getting good training themselves in the settlements.

Other Meetings

Sunday Commons, at Huntington Chambers Hall, Sunday, Dec. 28, at 3.30 P. M. Dr. Charles Fleischer, leader.

Public Library, Sunday, Dec. 28, at 3.30 P. M., The Art of the Theatre, by Frank W. C. Hersey.

LOYAL TO THE DEATH.

"What happened to Rollignan?"

"He drowned."

"And couldn't he swim?"

"He did, for eight hours; but he was a union man."—San Francisco Star.

precipitation of the work that is being done in Ford Hall Sunday evenings let me get a bit from the newly-combined paper called The Watchman-Examiner, published in New York, and reaching thousands of Baptists through the Middle States. The article from which I have taken nothing about the work we are doing in Boston. The article from which I have taken the very beginning has been a friend of ours and did much in the days of our meetings to save us from destruction. After reviewing at some length the history of the Baptist Social Union, telling of Mr. Ford's bequests and the formation of the Ford Building, Dr. Ford goes on to say that the one thing that contributed to make the Ford Building more famous than any other feature of the city was the "Ford Hall meetings." He admits that the meetings have not escaped criticism and opposition, but declares that the Social Union has not been entirely backed them up. And what he most of all is his saying that the meetings have fulfilled the dearest wish of Ford in bringing the business man and the working-man closer together under Christian auspices.

We all appreciate the strain on the speakers when they stand up to meet the gatling-gun question fire. But let me say to you that the chairman has no easy task in catching and interpreting the questions of those who have tried it will agree with me. Some of the questions are very difficult to hear, some are in very broken English, some are in a good deal of confusion and some are all wound round with strings so long that they almost lose the question itself. Some think the questions are not properly repeated and some think the same language is given for word, and yet they can't repeat like themselves. Ninety-nine per cent of the questioners, however, are very able and patient, knowing that the chairman is doing his level best to give the fairest possible chance. Nevertheless, the chairman does the best he can for an injustice. Nor will he for long allow any questioner to usurp privileges not allowed every other questioner.

By way of illustrating the consistency with which our speakers answer questions, let me tell you that Pe-

AS IT LOOKS TO ME

By GEORGE W. COLEMAN, Director of the Ford Hall Meetings

Mr. Elliott): They do.
How often do these meetings in the
s take place?
Miss Follett): Our full social cen-
re held in the high school buildings,
e have them three times a week, when
vening high schools do not occupy

How can we have social centres when
rces above are so opposed to them?
Mr. Elliott): We never will change
pirit above until we get the spirit of
racy among the people underneath.
Do you believe that organized social
s will gradually do away with pov-

Miss Follett): I don't know whether
all ever get our social centres as ef-
e as that, but organization can do any-

How can we get the people together
united effort when they are divided so
y religiously?
Miss Follett): Religious differences
o longer so important as they once

Wouldn't it help a lot of the short-
organizations which spring up contin-
if they had a good leader?

Miss Follett): At first, but we don't
a leader from the outside; we want
eration from the inside.

What do you think of the various cit-
associations in Boston as social cen-

Miss Follett): I think some are bet-
an others.

What do you think about the Arcadia

Mr. Elliott): I see no connection be-
what does happen and what ought to
n, in this world.

Does not the operation of the social
es as now constituted show that the
classes, which most need training of
ort, do not get it?

Miss Follett): Let us work hard for
too.

Mr. Frazer): Have not the newspap-
f Boston been a great help to Ford

(Mr. Coleman): Yes, indeed. (Mr.
t): I do not know the Boston papers.
Do you think that the statement often
that the doctrines of the law bar-
ess, is true?
Mr. Elliott): I feel very decidedly

The Trustees of the Boston Baptist So-
cial Union gave me an answer within two
hours last Monday when I asked them for
the free use of Kingsley Hall one night in
the week during the remainder of the sea-
son for our newly-planned Ford Hall Town
Meeting. And it was a favorable answer
accompanied by hearty expressions of good
will. It only remains for Mr. Miner, the
superintendent of the building, to fix with
us the most favorable night in the week.
It will be either Tuesday or Thursday.

What a fine thing it is for us to have such
splendid co-operation from the Social
Union Trustees. It gives our present work
added security and makes the future look
all the brighter. There can be but little
doubt that we are only at the beginning of
a work which in the years to come is to
grow like a banyan tree.

And while I am speaking of Baptist ap-
preciation of the work that is being done
in Ford Hall Sunday evenings let me quote
a bit from the newly-combined papers, now
called The Watchman-Examiner, published
in New York, and reaching thousands of
Baptists through the Middle States, who
until very recently have heard little or
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was written by Dr. E. F. Merriam, who from
the very beginning has been a powerful
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the history of the Baptist Social Union and
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tion of the Ford Building, Dr. Merriam
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more famous than any other feature is the
unique and widely known "Ford Hall Meet-
ings." He admits that the meetings have
not escaped criticism and opposition, but
declares that the Social Union has persist-
ently backed them up. And what pleases
me most of all is his saying that the meet-
ings have fulfilled the dearest wish of Mr.

farlane in two recent letters to me was be-
wailing the unsatisfactory answers which
he felt he had made to two questioners. He
says that two regrets about his night at
Ford Hall keep coming up in his mind and
that he waked up in the morning thinking
about them. One was the case of the boy
who asked about the remedy for unemploy-
ment, and the other was the lady who
wanted to know how Cleveland and Olney
would have handled the Mexican situation.
Mr. Macfarlane says that each was worth-
ier of a better answer than he gave. Think
of a man as busy as Macfarlane remember-
ing for days two little incidents like that
in an evening crowded full of sensations!
He must have a wonderfully sensitive con-
science.

Our Executive Secretary, Miss Craw-
ford, also goes out campaigning in the in-
terest of the Ford Hall idea. That is the
reason she was a little late arriving at the
hall last Sunday night. She was speaking
at Natick in the afternoon on the topic,
"Women in Industry," at a forum which
Rev. Mr. Ackerman has inaugurated in his
church. Miss Crawford persuaded them to
add the question period feature to their
program. Our loyal supporter, Dr. Cook of
Natick, was among those present at the
meeting. Before very long the number of
forums run in connection with churches
will be too numerous to mention.

In my mail this morning was a letter
from the Chamber of Commerce at Detroit,
Michigan, asking for an address about our
work, and a letter from Raleigh, North
Carolina, concluding arrangements for a
meeting there under the auspices of the
Chamber of Commerce. There was a tele-
phone call from Haverhill, Mass., and ur-
gent invitations from other nearby places.
How is one man going to find enough spare
time to do all this extra work and still
earn his living?

There were about sixty out to the Ford

years old. This magazine itself and its
present expanding life is due entirely to
the initiative of that little group and to
their continued co-operation. Our fifth an-
niversary was planned and executed by
them. They inaugurated the chorus. The
new ticket-in-the-line scheme is theirs, and
last, but by no means least, the Ford Hall
Town Meeting has been incubated under
their fostering care. And I came near omit-
ting the annual dinner which they started
at the close of last season. No doubt there
are other good things they have done that
I have overlooked. As I think of it now I
wonder how we ever got along three or
four years without their valuable help.

Mrs. Louis D. Brandeis has been a deep-
ly interested observer of our work recently
and Mr. E. A. Filene was also in the audi-
ence last Sunday night. He wanted to get
away at nine o'clock for another engage-
ment, but says he never can resist staying
over for the question business.

It may be that this Ford Hall Town
Meeting which is to be inaugurated early
in January will prove to be in time an in-
strument of tremendous power for the ad-
vancement of the welfare of the people of
Boston. It is to be thoroughly democratic. Its
control will lie wholly within itself. It will
rise or fall wholly on its own merits. It will
furnish the finest possible school and labor-
atory for the study and practice of democ-
racy. It will afford a wonderful opportunity
for individual development. Do you want to
learn the art of effective public speech?
There you will have the finest chance. Do
you want to get rid of your sharp corners
and learn how to be liked by your associ-
ates? Here's your opportunity. Do you
want to discipline your abilities in co-op-
erative committee work, learning how both to
lead and to follow? You can do it there. Are
you eager to find out all you can about our
own local government and what your
rights and duties are? This will be the
best place possible to do that very thing.

It looks now as though there might be
from fifty to a hundred who will become in
a very special way the first citizens of the
Ford Hall Town Meeting. Perhaps in
years to come one will be as proud to have
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who were present at the very first Ford
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should be done to the owners
in the slums and elsewhere,
for immoral purposes?

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ie property should go over the
ought to be a beginning. (A
have that in Oregon.) (Mr.
ould have expected that. You
ting progressive there.

liup): Is not much being done
mbers of Commerce, city plan-
or social uplift by the upper

liott): Yes, and they are get-
aining themselves in the settle-

Other Meetings

ommons, at Huntington Cham-
nday, Dec. 28, at 3.30 P. M. Dr.
scher, leader.

rary, Sunday, Dec. 28, at 3.30
rt of the Theatre, by Frank W.

AL TO THE DEATH.

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time to do all this extra work and still
earn his living?

There were about sixty out to the Ford
Hall Folks gathering last Sunday. It is
wonderful how that little meeting is devel-
oping power. Let me just enumerate some
of the good things that have come out of
it already notwithstanding it is not yet two

Ford Hall Folks

Edited by Thomas Dreier.

PUBLISHED weekly by the Ford
Hall Associates, whose work
is to create, assemble, and
distribute ideas that will help
men and institutions grow more
helpful in serving society, and which
will promote "peace on earth, good
will toward men." It is the official
publication of the Ford Hall Meet-
ings, which are held, under the direc-
tion of George W. Coleman, every
Sunday evening during the months of
October to May, in Ford Hall, Ash-
burton Place, Boston, Massachusetts.

All business communications should
be sent to Miss Mary C. Crawford,
Treasurer Ford Building, Boston,
and all communications intended for
the editor to The Thomas Dreier Ser-
vice, University Press, Cambridge,
Mass. Subscription Price: \$1.50 for
26 numbers.

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been one of these first citizens as are those
who were present at the very first Ford
Hall Meeting.

It is a fine thing that two other groups
are to join us in the promotion of the Town
Meeting enterprise. Miss Grout and her
associates of the Boston School of Social
Science and Mr. Allen and his confreres of
the City History Club have decided to join
forces with us. Mr. Allen is an expert in
just such work and Miss Grout has already
a group of about forty who are meeting
once a week for special discussions. Mr.
Foster of our own committee is keenly in-
terested and very resourceful. Very likely
he will have as many as fifty Ford Hall
people ready to join as soon as the date
for the opening night is set.

THE SOCIALIST PARTY of BOSTON

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 21st
AT 3 P. M.

FRANKLIN UNION HALL, Berkeley and Appleton Sts.

GEORGE KIRKPATRICK

Author of "WAR: WHAT FOR?"

ADMISSION 25c

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two and one-half inches wide—can be had
for advertising purposes for one dollar per
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ing apply to Jacob London, Room 707, Ford
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FORD HALL FOLKS

THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF H. S. VICTORSON.

Part II.

Another factor in my life was a library of Jewish books kept up by the "Hebrew Progressive Association." I spent a good deal of time there, too, especially Sundays. Jewish literature always interested me, and later I wrote considerably for certain Jewish papers and magazines.

At the age of 23 I gave up the tailoring trade and became a life insurance agent. This profession of policy-hunting I detested just as much as I had hated the constant monotony and sameness of the tailoring trade. After two years' experience in that profession (which experience broadened and deepened my knowledge of human nature considerably) I accepted a rather far from lucrative position as traveling salesman for Jewish and English radical magazines, pamphlets and books. In addition to this I used to address gatherings of Jewish working men and women on different educational and propaganda topics. This, in addition to the articles I wrote for some Jewish publications, was the kind of work that agreed with me more than anything else, as it was in conformity with my intense desire to make as many converts as possible to the grandest and noblest ideal of modern times—Socialism, in its broadest and its most comprehensive sense—among the Jewish working men and women.

I look back with pride and pleasure upon the four years I spent thus. It was a purely ideal state that I was then in, and although that sort of life spelled lack of material comfort in every sense of the word, I am, nevertheless, firmly convinced that, had I suffered infinitely more all through my life than I did, the everlasting impression and memory of that period would have much more than compensated for that suffering.

It was during those travels that I familiarized myself with the Grand Old Town of this country—Boston. I intentionally use the word "familiarized" because I was acquainted with it before. Many and many

THE SOCIAL CENTRE AND THE DEMOCRATIC IDEAL.

(Continued from Page 1.)

But the brotherhood of man is at present an ideal, not a reality. How are the Social Centres going to help us make it real? First of all, simply by providing a place where people can meet and become acquainted with one another. Where is there a better opportunity for this than in our schoolhouses, where we have the space and plant required—large rooms, halls, gymnasiums, and where all meet on common ground with equal rights,—where there are no races, but all are Americans, where no political party or particular religion has any special privileges, where no commercialism can dominate us? (Applause.)

The first aim of the Social Centres should be to train up young people with a sense of responsibility. Those of us who believe that the reform of city government is not to come so much through change of charters as through the associated life of citizens, recognizing their responsibilities, look to the Social Centres as one of the most effective means at our hands for revolutionizing the life of cities. (Applause.) What we must all realize is that *we* are responsible for whatever government we have, that our government is not run by "*they*,"—some mysterious other persons, but that *we* ourselves are responsible for the life of our city and of our nation.

We want it to become a matter of common realization that citizenship is not a duty to be exercised a few times a year, chiefly on voting days; citizenship is not a duty at all, really, it is not a privilege, it is just a function, like breathing, to be exercised every moment of the time. (Applause.) This is what we want the Centres to teach—we want to teach and to learn our share in the common life.

I want now to speak of four ways in which this civic and social responsibility may be developed in the Centres.

1. First, all the activities of the Boston Evening Centres are group activities.

The race is now evolving a new being to meet the demands the democratic ideal has laid upon it—the social being—the man who looks upon himself in every respect

SCIENCE AND RELIGION TO BE RECONCILED ON OUR PLATFORM.

The lecture, next Sunday evening, will be a little out of our usual vein in that brief for the reconciliation of science and religion will then be presented by Rev. Allyn K. Foster of Worcester. To his satisfaction Mr. Foster has proved scientifically the existence of God—and his method of reasoning he has adopted is remarkable that one of the leading reviewers is about to print his paper entire. This added to the fact that the paper's writer is a live-wire of the most approved Ford Hall variety, a man who confesses—and has demonstrated—that his chief interest in life is human beings, makes the offering of this address, "Can Religion Be Made Scientific?" an announcement of great interest. The questions should be pretty interesting, too, after an address of this kind.

IMPRESSING A VERMONT CAPITALIST

This is how Ford Hall impressed Mr. D. W. Hawley of the Estey Organ Co., Brattleboro, Vermont, who was in the Hall Sunday evening. Mr. Hawley is one of those terrible things—a business man and a capitalist:

"Ford Hall is creating as well as satisfying a great need. The hunger for better things is being stimulated by the knowledge gained as well as being met by the wonderful speakers, the inspirational music and the magnetic, soulful, tactful loving presence of its leader.

"The personnel of the audience, their close attention, their lightning-like grasp of each speaker's thought, notwithstanding their many nationalities and frequent difficulty in expressing their own questions, their evident seriousness and intensity, create a situation absolutely unique and augur well for better understanding and agreement.

"God bless Ford Hall Folks one and all!"

Friends Who Are Coming

Dec. 28—Rev. Allyn K. Foster of Worcester, "Can Religion Be Made Scientific?"

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It was during those travels that I familiarized myself with the Grand Old Town of this country—Boston. I intentionally use the word "familiarized" because I was acquainted with it before. Many and many a time I had dreamed and pondered about the Cradle of Liberty and the Birthplace of the Abolitionist Movement. Gen. Putnam, the Adams's, Phillips and Garrison had always been among my favorite grand, ideal figures. And so, when I arrived here (in 1907) I decided to stay here as I wanted to make a change anyway. I decided to give up my activity in the Socialist movement, at least for some time, and I chose book selling as the kind of occupation most congenial to me. Then it was that I began to attend the Ford Hall meetings; that I met Mr. G. W. Coleman—one of the very, very few persons I ever knew whose first accidental meeting meant to me an instinctive soul-relationship; that I experienced the infinite pleasure of attending two of the Conferences at Sagamore Beach, and that I profited mentally and morally by all the things connected therewith.

The man who supervises the man at the machine so that the latter works more efficiently shares equally with the latter in the credit for the profit which that machine makes.

NOTICE!

There is a limited supply on hand of the copy of Collier's Weekly containing Peter Clark Macfarlane's write-up of Mr. Coleman. These may be had at 5c each by applying to Jacob London.

responsible for whatever government we have, that our government is not run by "they,"—some mysterious other persons, but that we ourselves are responsible for the life of our city and of our nation.

We want it to become a matter of common realization that citizenship is not a duty to be exercised a few times a year, chiefly on voting days; citizenship is not a duty at all, really, it is not a privilege, it is just a function, like breathing, to be exercised every moment of the time. (Applause.) This is what we want the Centres to teach—we want to teach and to learn our share in the common life.

I want now to speak of four ways in which this civic and social responsibility may be developed in the Centres.

1. First, all the activities of the Boston Evening Centres are group activities.

The race is now evolving a new being to meet the demands the democratic ideal has laid upon it—the social being—the man who looks upon himself in every respect not as apart from but as a part of other men. The chief function of the Social Centres should be the evolution of this new being—the social man.

2. We are planning to make our Centres a real training in self-government, a real opportunity for the development of initiative, will-power and self-expression.

3. In the third place, responsibility and good citizenship may be developed by frequent discussion and by a certain amount of direct civic teaching,—of political, economic and industrial questions, of political and social ethics, of the tests of efficiency, etc.

4. Fourth, and last, acquaintance, association, discussion, will lead inevitably to common action for community ends.

And now one thing more—I want to ask you all to help in the development of the Boston Social Centres, in making them mean what they ought to mean in the life of the city. We have at present four, one in Charlestown, East Boston, South Boston and Roxbury, a part time Centre in Dorchester, and—enough schoolhouses for many more. The thing I feel more strongly about our Centres than any other is that they will never be successful if they are not community affairs, organized by community effort, for community ends. Here is where I want to ask your help.

To make our zenith moments of thought and feeling permanent—that is our task.

ing a great need. The hunger for better things is being stimulated by the knowledge gained as well as being met by the wonderful speakers, the inspirational music and the magnetic, soulful, tactful loving presence of its leader.

"The personnel of the audience, their close attention, their lightning-like grasp of each speaker's thought, notwithstanding their many nationalities and frequent difficulty in expressing their own questions, their evident seriousness and intensity, all create a situation absolutely unique and augur well for better understanding and agreement.

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Jan. 4—Dr. Stanton Coit of London, "The Ethics of Marriage and Divorce."

Jan. 11—*Symposium*, "What Is the Matter With Our Public Schools?" Miss Margaret Slattery of Fitchburg and others to be announced.

Jan. 18—Bishop Charles Williams of Michigan, "Why I Work for the Single Tax."

Jan. 25—Dr. Albion Woodbury Small of Chicago University.

Feb. 1—Alexander Irvine of New York.

Feb. 8—Prof. Edward A. Steiner, "The Inter-National Mind and the Inter-Racial Heart."

Feb. 15—*Symposium*, "Breeding Men." Speakers to be announced.

Feb. 22—Charles Brandon Booth, "The Case for the Prisoner."

March 1—Leslie Willis Sprague of Chicago.

March 8—*Symposium*, on "Journalism." A. J. Philpott of the *Boston Globe* and others to be announced.

March 15—Rev. Harry Ward, "The Challenge of Socialism to Christianity."

March 22—Rev. Frank O. Hall of New York, "The Moral Law."

March 29—John Cowper Powys of England, "The Economic Aspects of Woman Suffrage."

April 5—Mary Church Terrell, "Uncle Sam and the Sons of Ham."

April 12—Dr. Thomas C. H. of New York.

April 19—Prof. Walter Rauschenbusch.