

A CHANGING ATTITUDE TOWARD
POVERTY IN THE LADIES' HOME
JOURNAL: 1895-1919

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In January, 1895, seven years after the publication of Looking Backward, Edward Bellamy wrote a short article for the Ladies' Home Journal. Bellamy's name must have been a drawing card -- the Journal editor, Edward Bok, understood the value of big names and used them whenever possible -- because the article, "Christmas in the Year 2000," is unlike anything else that appeared in the 1895 Journal. It is a powerful attack upon the American conception of Christmas. Assuming the point of view of a man in the year 2000, Bellamy maintained that there was irony in celebrating the birthday of a man who would have destroyed the social order of nineteenth-century America:

What perversion of the meaning of Christmas could be more complete, however pleasing in itself, than the consecration of this day of all days in the year to a family feast with curtains drawn against the world?

There hangs upon my study wall a picture -- a copy of an old print of the nineteenth century -- representing just such a family feast on Christmas Day, save that the curtains not being closely drawn permit to be seen two beggar children, with gaunt and pallid faces marked with tears, standing without, covered with falling snow as they peer in with longing, hungry eyes at the festival. It is a picture that tells the whole story and typifies the age.¹

Bellamy's attack is remarkable more for its subject matter than its tone. Edward Bok, the eminently successful editor of the Journal from 1889 to 1919, would not hesitate to take the American housewife to task for her ignorance of landscaping, architecture and even venereal disease, but few "beggar children with gaunt and pallid faces" were destined to appear in the Journal before 1915.

This study attempts to describe the changing attitude toward poverty expressed in The Ladies' Home Journal from 1895 to 1919, Edward Bok's last year as editor. In one sense it is an analysis of Edward Bok's attitude toward poverty because he was editor of the Journal throughout the period

studied; however, even Bok, who was little given either to modesty or to self-analysis, realized that his success as editor lay in his sensitivity to the shifting winds of public opinion. In his autobiography he described the editor's role in the following way:

[Bok] perceived clearly that the editor of a magazine was largely an executive: his was principally the work of direction; of studying currents and movements, watching their formation, their tendency, their efficacy if advocated or translated into actuality; and then selecting from the horizon those that were for the best interests of the home.²

The best measure of Bok's success as an executive is the mushrooming popularity of the Journal during his editorship. When he took over in 1889, the magazine had a respectable circulation of about 400,000; by 1910 the Journal claimed 1,252,813 subscribers, the largest circulation of any magazine in the United States.

The Ladies' Home Journal was, of course, not the only magazine to increase its circulation dramatically in the last years of the nineteenth century. This was the period when the national magazine of mass circulation, as we know it today, was born.³ It appeared in the United States at about the same time that some of the ideas of reform which we associate with the progressive era were beginning to be heard. While the muckraking journalism of the progressive period has received a great deal of attention from historians, the popular magazines of the period, which might be expected to reflect the spirit of the age more accurately than magazines of limited circulation, have been essentially ignored. Robert Bremner, for example, in his comprehensive study of the discovery of poverty in America, From the Depths: The Discovery of Poverty in the United States, says nothing about any of the magazines which developed mass circulations early in the twentieth century.⁴

A few words about method: this is not a scientific content analysis, though such a study would be a valuable check on my conclusions. I have used both the fiction and non-fiction from the years 1895, 1900, 1905, 1910, 1915, and 1919 -- stopping with 1919, the year of Bok's retirement, because I wished to restrict the study to his Journal. In the fiction I have tried to determine tone and theme in stories which touch upon the problem of poverty. Authors of the fiction are not identified in this study; often they used pseudonyms, and few of the names are important in literary history. In any case, Bok was a virtual dictator regarding the kind of fiction that appeared in the Journal. In his autobiography, for example, he tells of making an agreement with a temperance woman to eliminate all drinking scenes from the fiction, and he even recalls an instance when he encouraged Rudyard Kipling to reduce the alcoholic content of a story.⁵

11

With one exception, poverty was ignored in the 1895 fiction, and philanthropy was treated satirically. The idea of poverty was romanticized by equating it with a noble loss of aristocratic status. "The Luck of the Pennings," for example, sketches a young girl's efforts to reclaim her family's economic status, lost in an unavoidable financial disaster, by turning their seven acre estate into a truck farm. Their "poverty" is symbolized by the fact that they have only one servant, and when the protagonist puts on the clothes of the yeoman, she is clearly acting in the best tradition of self-help (XII, June, 9). Similarly, Richard Wilcox in "The Holiday Dance of Worrosquoyacke" is portrayed as an impoverished southern gentleman with just two servants and a fast-decaying mansion on his plantation (XII, Nov., 1).

Closely tied to this romanticized view of poverty is an absence of urban settings. By the middle of the nineteenth century Charles Dickens had demonstrated that the city was rich with materials for popular fiction, but in the 1895 Journal one finds most of the stories taking place in the country. Most of the characters, however, are urban dwellers sojourning in the country; and the country people are often handled condescendingly.

"A Minister of the World," the only story in 1895 which mentions slums, demonstrates how far Journal fiction was from describing poverty realistically. Stephen Castle, a brilliant young man of "humble origin," makes good as the minister of a country parish and is called to a wealthy church in New York City. He finds that acceptance of a much larger salary and acquiescence to his new church's extravagance results in some kind of moral surrender, a loss of "puritanic soberness." Consequently, Stephen gives up his wealthy parish to take over a chapel in the New York slums. Stephen's dramatic act of renunciation fits rather well with an observation by Irvin G. Wyllie in The Self-Made Man in America that after 1890 clergymen in the Episcopal and Congregational churches, many of whom had been enthusiastic supporters of the "religion of success," were becoming suspicious of wealth.⁶ However, this note of authenticity is outweighed by the fact that neither the slums nor the slum dwellers are ever described in the story; and prior to Stephen's decision there is no mention whatever of his social awareness. Poverty, in short, provides an opportunity for a platitudinous ending, and even that ending indicates nothing like a genuine sympathy for the poor: "The highest gifts are not too high for use in uplifting the lowliest, and all the grace and power and energy of Stephen Castle's nature are at work here among the degraded and outcast, and are rewarded" (XI, Nov., 1).

But philanthropy usually received not even the benefit of a platitude in the Journal's 1895 fiction. When it was not ignored, it was ridiculed. The narrator of "A Vivacious Girl" characterizes her family's unfashionable life by saying: "We were not literary, musical, artistic, nor were we in any

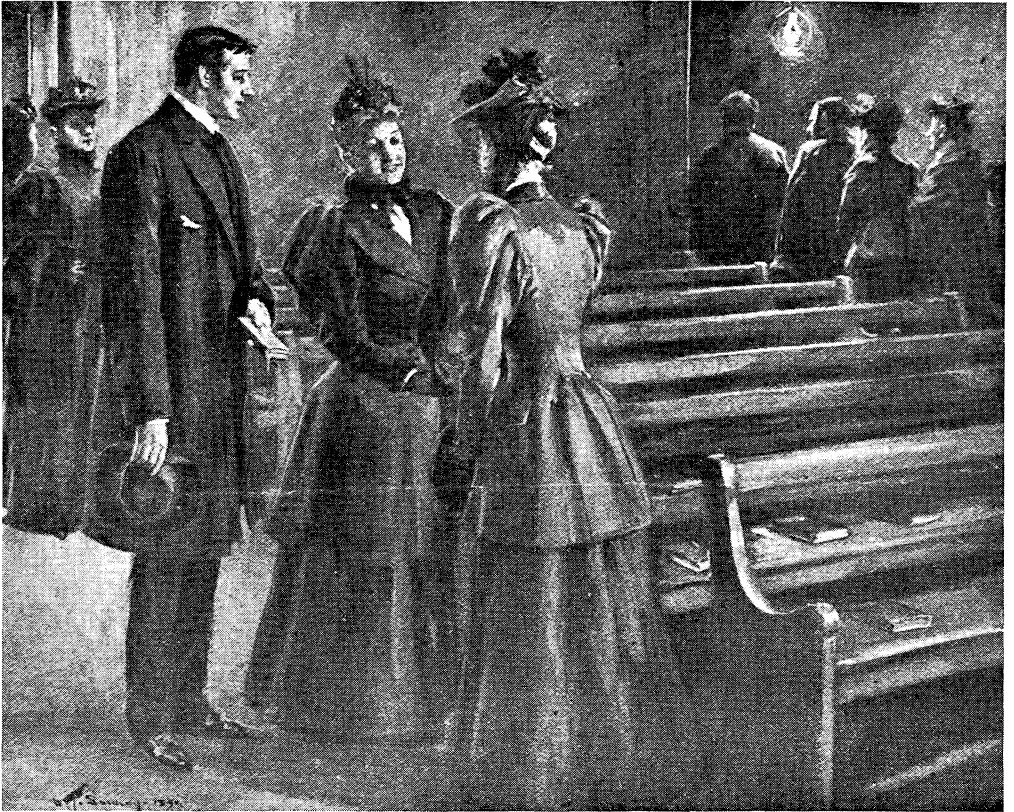


Figure One. "A Minister of the World." Pictorially, the closest that the 1895 Journal came to the slums was this rather shadowy picture of Stephen Castle's mission in the New York slums. It is noteworthy that the actual slum-dwellers are hardly discernible as such in the background (XII, March, 7).

way connected with benevolent associations." When she begins a broadly comic attempt to become fashionable, her first act is to begin sewing for the poor (XII, April, 7). In "A Spring-Time Chat" one of the main characters discusses the conventional pastimes of the society girl during the Lenten season:

And in order that she may do some good work for her fellowmen . . . she is going about the squalid sections of the city under the leadership of the assistant at St. Somebody's Church, escorted by Bobbie van Hickenlooper, who wants to do great philanthropic work and doesn't know how, but thinks that the way to find out how is to go into the camp of misery and take notes (XII, April, 11).

III

Journal fiction of 1900 differs little from that of 1895. The slums are a foreign land which writers never visit and seldom mention even in passing. However, by 1900 the Journal began to show interest in educational reform. In the January issue Bok wrote an editorial in which he attacked the academic demands being made upon American children to the detriment of their nervous systems (XVII, Jan., 16). In the same issue there is a picture story showing children visiting a zoo under school supervision, playing "educational games" in the classroom, learning to sew in school and generally engaging in a "progressive" education which the Journal heartily endorsed (XVII, Jan., 20).

In contrast to the interest in educational reform, the 1900 Journal struck a much more conservative pose when it confronted poverty. This is



EVEN DEATH DOES NOT HALT THE REVELRY

Figure Two. "Through the Slums with Mrs. Ballington Booth." This picture offers a dramatic example of the identification of depravity with poverty (XVII, Feb., 9).

suggested in a caption from an article titled "Through the Slums With Mrs. Ballington Booth." Under a drawing of slum dwellers dancing in a sick room appears the statement: "EVEN DEATH DOES NOT HALT THE REV-ELRY: While Mrs. Booth ministers to a dying woman, the other inmates of the squalid tenement indulge in a drunken carousal." Mrs. Booth was explicit in her article: "We of the Volunteers of America believe very strongly that to remedy the conditions we must change the individuals." The real causes of poverty, still in Mrs. Booth's words, could be ascribed to "the evil tendencies within" (XVII, Feb., 9).

In the religion of success, as Wyllie has noted, poverty was the equivalent of sin in Puritan theology,⁷ and one finds this attitude clearly expressed in the 1900 Journal. Such an identification of poverty with depravity makes an act of benevolence simply an encouragement of evil. Thus, for example, in "The Genteel Tramps in our Churches" a minister could claim that churches did more harm than good with their generosity in slum areas.

They keep up mission-houses in poor parts of the city which are simply institutions for the propagation of pauperism, and the congregations they gather are largely made up of people who object to work between meals.

This writer's thesis was that conditions had changed since Christ told the rich man to sell his possessions to give to the poor; such an act "would be a great calamity in our day" (XVII, April, 20).

IV

The most striking characteristic of the Journal's non-fiction in 1905 is a new political-historical consciousness. There is an article by ex-President Cleveland discussing the dangers of woman suffrage, for example (XXII, October, 7). Another article attempts to account for the popularity of Theodore Roosevelt (XXII, October, 11). Beginning in September, there is a series of articles titled "Let Us Go Back" in which the author reminisces over the American past in an effort to stem "the tide of insolence, vulgarity, love of display, love of gambling and selfish greed which threatens to undermine our present social life and destroy many of our homes" (XXII, September, 7). By February, 1906, President Theodore Roosevelt had begun trying out some of his ideas in the Journal.⁸

If Journal writers of non-fiction were trying to increase the political sophistication of their middle-class readers in 1905, they tended to overlook completely the problem of poverty; and one must look at the fiction in any effort to evaluate the Journal's attitude toward poverty. In general, the focus has changed since 1895; money is not so clearly the goal of Journal protagonists. Instead, they are concerned about social position and an undefined "success." Urban settings are still absent, and again one finds urban dwellers transplanted to rural settings; however, there are, in a very few instances, descriptions of slum conditions. In a short sketch, "His

Little Girl: An Incident in the Life of a Truck Driver," a poor family's only child is killed. The author makes no attempt to place any blame, however, and the poverty only adds to the pathos but is not responsible for it. In "A Little Comrade of the Stars" a young boy dies of disease and starvation in the slums, and the author uses the occasion to emphasize the depravity of a tramp who remains unmoved by the boy's death (XXII, May, 15). ("Tramps" in Journal fiction prior to 1915 are mysterious men from whom good housewives must protect their silverware.) In a story which is one of a series that deals with "the Millionaire Girl," a beautiful young lady who dispenses various forms of happiness with her millions, there is a description of the poverty in which a struggling young actress is forced to live. There are, however, two buffers which keep her realistically depicted poverty from being oppressive to the reader; first, she has voluntarily chosen squalor in trying to be an actress; second, she is obviously destined to be saved by "the Millionaire Girl" (XXII, Oct., 5).

Perhaps more significant than these brief descriptions of poverty, is the suggestion of some interesting variations on what Wyllie has called "the religion of success." In "The Heart of a Man," a pretentiously philosophical story about a successful writer, the protagonist discovers that his financial success has created a spiritual chasm between him and his wife (XXII, Jan., 11). Another writer, in "The Girl and the Poet," is described as poor, but the author immediately adds a qualification: "His poverty was clean and honorable" (XIII, Dec., 6). This dawning recognition that poverty and depravity are not necessarily synonymous was amplified in "Lady Betty Crosses the Ocean," a story of a young and beautiful English aristocrat who comes to America for a visit. Confronted by a poor (but handsome) young American who asks her rather bluntly if his poverty puts her completely out of reach, she answers no, as long as he has "general ambition" (XII, Oct., 5). Her answer is equivocal enough, but it suggests a dimension which did not exist in the 1895 fiction, a standard of success which, however vaguely defined, is not measurable by money alone. It would be easy to over-emphasize this new dimension, though; if writers of Journal fiction in 1905 were tentatively willing to withdraw the moral stigma from poverty in certain instances, they were not yet willing to admit that the slums contained individuals who were struggling against outside forces more potent than "the evil tendencies within."

v

In the November 1, 1910, issue (the Journal was experimenting with bi-monthly publication), Edward Bok made a solemn declaration which typifies the Journal's treatment of poverty in this period even though the declaration was not concerned with poverty. He began by asking his readers, "Can we not get away from the universal use of the words 'dead' and 'death' and even the harsher-sounding words 'die,' 'dying' and 'died'?" Bok then declared that it would henceforth be the policy of the Journal to substitute

the verb (to pass away) for those other "harsh and cruel" words (XXVII, Nov. 1, 1). This euphemistic strategy, a conscious effort to ignore actuality, characterizes the Journal's approach to poverty in both the fiction and non-fiction of 1910.

The fiction of 1910 became noticeably more escapist than the earlier fiction. Titles such as "The Land of Unborn Children," "The Dream Garden" and "The Man in the Shadow" suggest the insubstantial settings which frequently appeared. One finds idyllic love stories set in Eden-like surroundings, mystery stories in which ghosts appear, and several stories set in a highly romanticized past.

In the non-fiction of 1910 the Journal continued to be interested in reform, but the most obvious characteristic of its treatment of poverty was a willingness to accept facile solutions. The panacea for poverty which the Journal envisioned in 1910 can be phrased very simply: If you can't make ends meet in the city, then retreat to the farm. To this, several articles added a corollary: If you were lucky enough to be born and raised in the country, do not be drawn away from pastoral simplicity by the materialistic temptations of the city. Perhaps the most dramatic example of the bucolic solution to poverty appeared in an article titled "How We Changed Poverty to Prosperity." A young mother told of the hunger and cold which her family experienced while living in a New York tenement and of the almost immediate prosperity and comfort which came when they moved to the country. She concluded:

Am I happy in My Country Home? . . . It seems to me the only place in the wide world for children to grow-up, and for men and women to learn to think and to know and to come to a realization of their oneness with the God of all Nature (XXVI, March, 30).

Several articles warned of the dangers of city life. A long series titled "My Experiences in New York: The True Story of a Girl's Long Struggle in This Big City," a series which Editor Bok billed every month as "the most outspoken experience ever published in this magazine," was explicitly intended to warn readers about the dangers of the big city. Bok said:

We believe that the good this story of a girl's life will do to thousands of girls throughout the country, and particularly in acquainting parents with the real conditions as they exist in this big, cruel and brilliant city, will more than outweigh the jars which the recital will unquestionably give to some sensitive natures, who, sheltered in quiet homes, do not realize how dangerously widespread is the ambition of thousands of unsophisticated girls to go to New York (XXVII, May, 7).

Another series in 1910, "The Ideas of a Plain Country Woman," reminded readers of the pastoral beauty and purity to be found in country life. On

one occasion the "Plain Country Woman" warned readers explicitly of the terrors of city life (XXVII, Oct. 1, 40).⁹

VI

By 1915 the Journal began to focus on another cure for poverty; instead of sending tenement dwellers to the country, writers of non-fiction told them how to economize. Throughout 1915 the Journal ran a series titled "How I Helped My Husband to Make More Money" in which wives shared their suggestions for economizing both at home and in business (XXXII, Jan., 25). Frugality was stressed in articles such as "Making a Dollar Do the Work of Two," "How Four Women Economize" and "How I Entertain on Little Money."

Not surprisingly, this new approach to the problem, one which tended to emphasize the opportunities for self-improvement that existed for the poor, seemed inadequate to some readers. As a result, Bok found it necessary to defend the Journal's position in an editorial titled "Why I Believe in Poverty." He admitted that he had been receiving mail which questioned his competence to discuss poverty, and he published part of a letter which, he said, represented a "fair sample" of that mail:

Has it ever occurred to you, born with the proverbial silver spoon in your mouth, that theoretical writing is pretty cold and futile compared to the actual hand-to-mouth struggle that many of us live, day by day and year in and year out -- an experience that you know not of.

Bok's answer anticipated Andrew Carnegie's Autobiography (1920) in its glorification of poverty. With only an occasional gesture in the direction of modesty, Bok pointed out that he himself had fought his way up from poverty and had acquired much of his greatness from the struggle. He concluded by calling poverty "the greatest blessing in the way of the deepest and fullest experience that can come to a boy. But, as I repeat: always as a condition to work out of: not to stay in" (XXXII, Apr., 6).

There were attempts to glorify poverty in the fiction as well, but, as I have already indicated, poverty in such stories was described as loss of status rather than any kind of squalid, hungry existence. For example, in "The Star in the Country Sky" the heroine, Georgiana, shocks her wealthy ex-classmates by telling them that she has been forced to join the I. W. W., and make rugs for a living. However, as the title indicates, the real contrast in this story is not so much wealth-poverty as city-country. Georgiana, who lives sixty miles from New York City, is compared with her friends from the city; and Georgiana is clearly the most industrious and vivacious of all (XXXII, Apr., 15). (One of Georgiana's friends is a settlement worker. Interestingly, she is treated as a comic character, a do-gooder who frequently asks people if they are doing anything worthwhile.)

If Journal fiction writers found it impossible to portray poverty and glorify it at the same time, they were still able to offer the bucolic panacea. "The Call to the Colors," a story aimed primarily at the evils of war, might almost be a fictional treatment of the 1910 article "How We Changed Poverty to Prosperity" (above, 11-12). Jean Barbot, a French immigrant living in the slums of New York, is saved from poverty when some friends make a down payment on a farm for him. Before Jean is tragically called to war for France, he and his wife successfully create their own Eden in the New England countryside (XXXII, Jan., 8). Another story, "The Girl in the Hall Bedroom," reverses the plot; a young girl comes to New York from Fayette, Connecticut, and is forced to live in "unspeakable and sordid poverty." Her problems are solved when a benefactor gives her enough money to return to her rural home (XXXII, May, 10).

In the 1915 fiction there are no sympathetic portrayals of the poor. When a robbery is handled unintelligently in a mystery story, the protagonist is thankful that "it was only a tramp" (XXXII, June, 15). An immigrant cook who threatens to quit is easily bought off with an expensive painting of her home country (XXXII, Feb., 20). Even a serialized story which deals sympathetically with the labor movement, "When Carey Came to Town," offers only unpleasant portraits of the laboring class. Poor people come to the home of an urban industrialist in "surlly defiance," and their threats can be turned to blessings with offers of money. The protagonist, a naive aristocrat from a Virginia plantation, endangers her life when she decides to visit the poor; and when she convinces the urban industrialist to give in to the demands of striking workers, the story focuses on the regeneration of the industrialist, ignoring the improved lot of the poor (XXXII, Apr., 17).

VII

During 1919, Bok's last year with the Journal, the magazine was preoccupied with the aftermath of World War I. That fiction which was not related to the war aimed essentially at portraying security and normality in the average American home. Most of the fiction, however, was filled with the plots, the sentiments and imagery of war; and in almost every issue there were several full page reproductions of war paintings which often showed in surprising detail the horrors of war.

The 1919 Journal, as might be expected, devoted little space to social reform. In the midst of the magazine's frenzied patriotism, however, Edward Bok stopped to ask what Americanism meant; and his answer suggests a new conception of social justice:

The interpretation of Americanization to every man and woman is in one word: usefulness. . . .

Let it be in teaching those who lack what we know: in having healthier babies: in having more sanitary homes: in paying living wages: in teaching the standards of morality to boys and girls: in exercising care how we act,



Figure Three: "When Carey Came to Town." Like the story, this picture suggests the persisting inability to depict poor people sympathetically. The generous aristocrat, Carey, seems to be in actual physical danger from the woman whose children she is feeding (XXXII, June, 17).

dress and talk: in our actions and words proving an example to others. The particular line of our endeavor matters not so much. What does matter is that we shall do [sic]: that we shall realize that we are our brother's and sister's keeper: that we have obligations to others: that we must help the other fellow: that we must live for others, often forgetful of self (XXXVI, Sept., 1).

The statement is muddled and platitudinous; it is the statement of a self-made man about to retire from business. Still, it is strong language for a high priest of the religion of success and self-help to say that "we must help the other fellow." Another indication that the Journal had begun to change its attitude toward poverty by 1919 is a series of articles titled "Putting America Into Your City." Introduced by Franklin L. Lane, Secretary of Interior, this series explored some of America's inadequacies in urban housing. While the articles made no specific suggestions, they did

recommend that some kind of practicable urban renewal should someday be worked out "by some combination of American business men and bankers and real-estate men and city government" (XXXVI, May, 33). Another article attacked the failure of churches to solve any of the social and economic problems created by industrialization in small towns (XXXVI, June, 43).

Even Mrs. Ballington Booth, who in 1900 was willing to identify poverty with depravity (above, 7), had changed her mind by 1919. In an article suggesting several kinds of prison reform, Mrs. Booth recalled asking a judge, "When you sentence a man to from twenty years to life, do you ever think that at the same time you pass also a sentence of suffering, poverty and perhaps death upon that man's family?" In the same article, she wrote of the "economic causes" of crime (XXXVI, March, 29). Together, the question and the phrase imply a new attitude toward poverty. No longer is it simply a matter of "the evils within." Both Mrs. Booth and the Journal seem to be willing to consider the possibility that poverty can be, in some instances, a problem for which society is responsible.

No historian of ideas would have expected a magazine of mass circulation edited by one of America's most outspoken advocates of self-help to show anything like a precocious understanding of poverty in the United States, and the Journal assuredly did not. The Journal's characteristic attitude toward poverty during the years 1895 to 1919 fits into a pattern suggested by Warren I. Titus in his article "The Progressivism of the Muckrakers: A Myth Reexamined Through Fiction."¹⁰ Titus finds that the impulse toward reform in muckraking novels is characterized by naive moralism. For example, in the American Winston Churchill's novel Mr. Crewe's Career corruption can be removed from political institutions when dishonest bosses reform themselves morally. After 1908, however, Titus points out that Progressivism shows its awareness of the limitations of moral reform by its emphasis upon government intervention and regulation.

There is no dramatic change in the Journal's attitude toward poverty. As late as 1915, Journal writers were offering the agrarian solution to urban poverty, and Bok was calling it a blessing. Even those articles in 1919 which recognized that the slums might contain some victims of an industrial society were vague and inconclusive. Despite this predictable cultural lag, there seems to have been a genuine awakening to poverty in the Journal, a growing unwillingness to identify poverty with moral evil, a movement toward the view that we associate with Progressivism. That such a view could find its way into the almost invariably banal pages of The Ladies' Home Journal is, perhaps, one measure of the impact of an idea.

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Footnotes:

¹ Ladies' Home Journal, XII (Jan., 1895), 6. Subsequent references to stories and articles in the Journal will appear in parentheses following the reference. The information in parentheses will include volume, date and page in that order. When a story appears in serial form, the reference will be to the volume in which the story begins.

² The Americanization of Edward Bok (New York, 1921), 168.

³ Theodore Petersen, Magazines in the Twentieth Century (Champaign, 1956). Petersen sees the national magazine of mass circulation as a product of Congressional legislation in 1879 which drastically cut mailing costs and the emergence of editors like Bok who knew how to attune their magazines to popular taste.

⁴ From the Depths: The Discovery of Poverty in the United States (New York, 1956). I have been unable to find circulation figures for three of the magazines which Bremner uses -- The Arena, Masses, The Craftsman. However, the following figures, taken from N. W. Ayer and Son's American Newspaper Annual and Directory, show the circulations in 1900 of the other magazines which Bremner cites: Atlantic Monthly, 14,000; The Forum, 45,000; Harper's Weekly, 80,000; Life, 65,000; North American Review, 30,000; The Outlook, 79,076; Scribner's, 175,000. (In 1900 the circulation of The Ladies' Home Journal was 845,798, and it was still growing.)

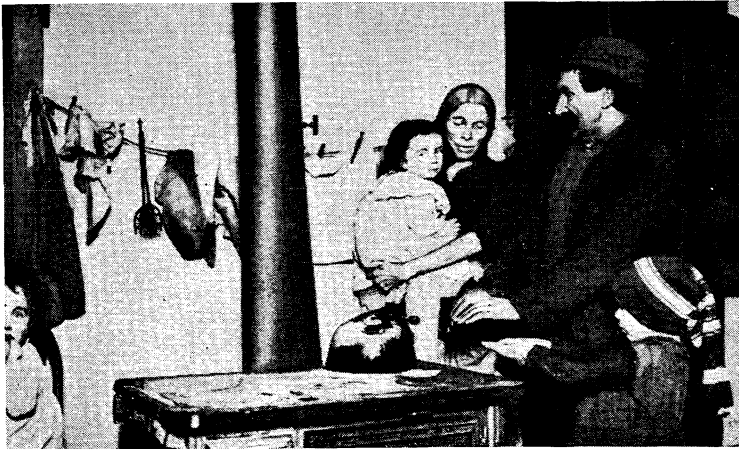


Figure Four. Quaker Oats advertisement, October 1, 1910 (see footnote 9). If this family is "Before," apparently college professors are "After"; the ad at least is not anti-intellectual. Perhaps department chairmen eat Quaker Oats while 84% of their underlings eat Brand X.

⁵ The Americanization of Edward Bok, 219-20.

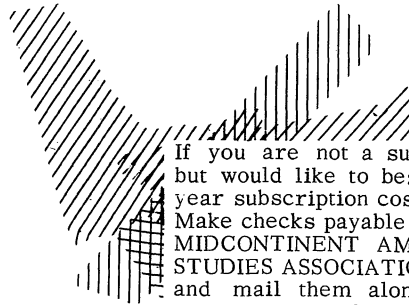
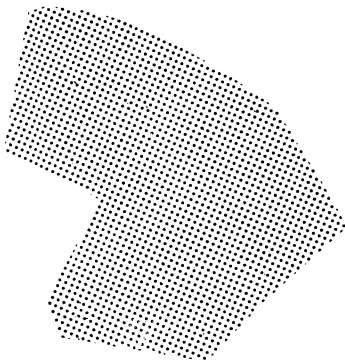
⁶ New Brunswick, New Jersey, 1954, 74.

⁷ Wyllie, The Self-Made Man in America, 22.

⁸ In his autobiography Bok describes at some length the interview with Roosevelt in which he persuaded the President to allow Robert L. O'Brien, Washington correspondent for the Boston Transcript, to interview him once a month while he was shaving. The results of these interviews were included in a series called "The President," begun in February, 1906. (The Americanization of Edward Bok, 273-75.)

⁹ No systematic use of Journal advertising has been made in this study. However, a Quaker Oats advertisement in 1910 is notable for dramatically identifying poverty with stupidity. Interviewing under-fed slum dwellers in "the homes where are bred the anemic, the incapable, the undeveloped," the Quaker Oats people discovered that almost none of them ate oatmeal. In contrast, "we find, in one university, that 48 out of 50 of the leading professors regularly eat oatmeal." The advertisement then pointed out that oatmeal is one of the least expensive forms of food. The obvious conclusion, then, is that slum dwellers can afford oatmeal but they are not intelligent enough to know what is good for them (XXVII, Oct. 1, 92).

¹⁰ JCMVASA (MASAJ), I (Spring, 1960), 10-16.



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