

**THE POOR AND THE LAND, BEING A
REPORT ON THE SALVATION ARMY
COLONIES IN THE UNITED
STATES AND AT HADLEIGH, ENGLAND,
WITH SCHEME OF NATIONAL LAND
SETTLEMENT. PP. 1-155**

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The Poor and the Land, Being a Report on the Salvation Army Colonies in the United States and at Hadleigh, England, with Scheme of National Land Settlement. pp. 1-155 by H. Rider Haggard

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H. RIDER HAGGARD

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BEING A REPORT ON THE
SALVATION ARMY COLONIES

IN THE UNITED STATES AND AT
HADLEIGH, ENGLAND

WITH
SCHEME OF
NATIONAL LAND SETTLEMENT

AND AN INTRODUCTION

BY
H. RIDER HAGGARD
AUTHOR OF "RURAL ENGLAND," ETC.

WITH TWELVE ILLUSTRATIONS

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IRRIGATION DITCH, FORT HOMIE.



IRRIGATION FLUME, FORT HOMIE.

INTRODUCTION

BLUE-BOOKS never have been and probably never will be a popular branch of literature. However difficult it may be, indeed, to collect the material and to write a treatise of this nature, it is undoubtedly far more difficult to persuade any one to study the same when written. Whether it is the colour that repels, or the size, or the big, closely printed page, the fact remains that no one reads a blue-book unless he is absolutely compelled so to do, and then not infrequently he contents himself with the Synopsis of Documents at the beginning and, perhaps, the concluding paragraphs. Moreover not one person in ten thousand is aware that such works, like others, can be purchased through any bookseller, that is by ordering them, since they are not usually kept in stock.

These, with the hope that thus it may reach a wider public, are the considerations, and not any expectation of gain, that have induced the author and, I may add, the publishers of the following pages to seek the kind permission of His Majesty's Treasury and of the Rhodes Trustees to re-issue [Cd. 2562] in its present form.

The original and official title of [Cd. 2562] is "Report on the Salvation Army Colonies in the United States and at Hadleigh, England, with Scheme of National Land Settlement, by Commissioner H. Rider Haggard". This Report with its annexed documents was presented

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to both Houses of Parliament by command of His Majesty in June, 1905, and has now, I read, been referred to the consideration of a Departmental Committee.

Perhaps it will be as well to begin this Fore-word or Introduction with a very brief summary of the Report itself in the hope that the reader may be sufficiently interested thereby to be induced to attempt the effort of a more intimate acquaintance with its substance.

In February of the present year, on the initiative of the Rhodes Trustees who contributed a sum of money to meet expenses, I was nominated a Commissioner by the Secretary of State for the Colonies and despatched to the United States for the purpose of inspecting three land settlements which have been established in that country by the charitable and social Organisation known as the Salvation Army, *viz.*, in California, not very far from San Francisco, in Colorado, and in Ohio respectively. The object of this investigation is very clearly set out in the second paragraph of my letter of commission, which runs:—

“It appears to the Secretary of State that, if these experiments are found to be successful, some analogous system might, with great advantage, be applied in transferring the urban populations of the United Kingdom to different parts of the British Empire”.

Further, I was authorised, in the event of the experiments by the Salvation Army recommending themselves to me, to include in my report any practical suggestions that might occur to me, as to the means and methods whereby the example can best be turned to use in connection with the projected transfer of urban populations of the United Kingdom to different parts of the British Empire.

I will now sum up the results of this Mission and recapitulate in few words the recommendations and

suggestions which I have ventured to offer to His Majesty's Government.

I was on the whole extremely well satisfied with the Californian and Colorado Settlements which are named Fort Romie and Fort Amity. Fort Herrick in Ohio, which I visited also, may be left out of the account, inasmuch as it is in the main devoted to the redemption of inebriates and to the carrying out of certain agricultural experiments. At both Fort Romie and Fort Amity, as may be seen by my Remarks on those places, I found the settlers healthy, happy, hopeful, and, almost without exception, doing well. Beginning in nearly every case with nothing, moreover, in the course of about four years at Fort Romie these settlers are now worth an average of over £400 per head above all their debts and liabilities to the Salvation Army and others, and at Fort Amity an average of over £200, which is, needless to say, a great deal more than they could possibly have accumulated during the same period as day-labourers on the land or in the cities.

The venture, however, has not proved so prosperous to its founders, the Salvation Army, who on these two settlements have incurred a total loss of about £10,000. This loss, not very large it is true, although quite as much as any charitable Body can wish to face, is due to four causes: (1) The fact that the Settlements were established by aid of money borrowed at a heavy rate of interest, namely 5 and 6 per cent., and that the settlers were charged too little for their holdings which they pay for by instalments. (2) The considerable initial cost of the estate both at Fort Romie and Fort Amity. (3) The fact that the settlers were first established at Fort Romie before the soil had been properly irrigated and at once confronted by a three years' drought. (4) The circumstance that at Fort Amity the land, which was virgin prairie, proved exceptionally

hard to work ; also to be impregnated with alkali or natural salts, whereof the presence was totally unsuspected at the time of buying, of which alkali it has cost much money to be rid by deep-draining.

So it comes about that although the settlers are doing so well, the Salvation Army have been called upon to pay £10,000 for their experience. My own view is that under all the circumstances and in face of the principles demonstrated and the success won in every other direction, this has been very cheaply bought. Further, I cannot see any cause to fear a repetition of that loss in the future application of those principles. It is therefore totally inaccurate to say, as has been done widely in press summaries of my report, that these Settlements are "financially a failure".

Indeed if the Settlements are carried out on the lines which I suggest, and especially if they are located upon good land which has cost the controlling Authority nothing, there should be, as is indicated by the tables that I have furnished, no loss but a considerable gain. Here I may state that this opportunity has arisen, since I was sufficiently successful in convincing the Government of the Dominion of Canada of the soundness and practicability of my scheme to induce them to make a formal offer of 360 square miles of territory to enable it to be put into operation as a beginning, with the promise, should it prove successful, of as much more land as may be required. This means that a huge estate of some of the best land in America, worth, even in its undeveloped condition, a great sum of money, is lying there waiting our good pleasure to occupy it and turn its emptiness to wealth.

As for the scheme itself it is so simple that I can only wonder no one has propounded it before. Also I believe that whenever it is put to work, as soon or late must certainly happen, it will be found very far-reaching in

its effects. Here it is in a sentence: To combine a judicious use of the Public Credit with that of what I have called the "waste forces of Benevolence," and by means of these two levers to lift some of the mass of human misery which demonstrates itself in the great cities of civilisation to a new level of plenty and contentment.

There are those who urge, however, that all such efforts are misconceived and useless. Thus I will quote from a discussion of my scheme by an ably conducted provincial journal which I respect although I, who have no faith in the shibboleths of Party and am not of its bond-servants, do not always agree with certain of its judgments. It says: "No attempts to dispose of social wreckage in special ways will avail, so long as a defective social organisation is allowed to continue producing wreckage. The business of reformers is not to discover special methods of dealing with our social and industrial failures, but so to remedy the normal and ordinary condition of things as to cease producing a class that has to be watched and selected and labour colonised."

Counsels of perfection indeed and very well put! But what do they come to? That we must wait for something like a revolution followed by a millennium, for surely nothing short of these will produce so wondrous a change in our national conditions and thus prevent the production of "wreckage," that is of the destitute poor. But sudden and violent remedies are not in the way of an ancient people who prefer to glide "from precedent to precedent," also revolutions of whatever sort have not been observed to precede millenniums.

Such a doctrine seems to me indeed to violate all the laws of political or personal medicine. It is as though one said: These children are very ill, but some of them at any rate could be cured and become splendid citizens,