

Mutual Aid a Factor in Evolution.

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March, 1933

The unexpected by-products of historic events are frequently of greater importance than contemporary observers are aware. "Necessity is the mother of invention" is one of those familiar phrases that is saturated with a wisdom born of the rough and ready experiences of living. We have watched current events with a keen eye as to what the "Unemployed" themselves might contribute to the solution of our difficulties. By no means the least interesting and suggestive aspects of their behavior have been their experiments with self-help, mutual aid and barter. Many facts have been gathered. See, for example, the New York Sunday Times, March 12, 1933. "One Million Americans Learn to Get Along Without Money" is an account of how the Unemployed have pooled their resources of brains, trades, and needs in an effort at self-help and mutual aid. The tale is absorbing and stimulates thought. It gives us an illustration of the elemental needs and methods out of which our whole industrial and commercial structure is built. It involves not only the element of primitive barter and exchange, but suggests in a marked degree that resourcefulness and cooperative spirit that has been characteristic of the best of the pioneers who settled on these shores and pushed their way across to the Pacific. These energetic unemployed, under grim necessity, have discovered ways of meeting needs and helping one another in trying times. Sewing rooms, bakeries, restaurants, barber shops, coal mines, small factories, farms, canneries, newspapers been developed. The list is long, covering almost the whole range of human needs. The story is thrilling. It may prove to be one of those by-products of history that becomes constructively important. At least these experiments in primitive ways of living are suggestive.