

THE POOR PEOPLE

By E.M.CUMBER

The *POOR PEOPLE*. Who are they, and where do we find them? My dictionary defines them as people with little money or those not having, and not able to get the necessities of life. Have you any other definition for them?

We find them everywhere for they have no country of theirs, and they speak no particular language from which you can identify them. Whatever the case they do exist. We all know that, for we may be them. They are the hapless, hopeless, struggling people, whose silent passionate cry sounds everywhere and every day. They are the suffering lot in our communities. They are not just people but, POOR PEOPLE.

They have all sorts of names

- The Poor people
- The ordinary people
- The unfortunate ones
- The laborers
- The struggling lot
- The punk
- The inconsequential
- The sucker
- “ZHOBZHO”

When the RICH / MIDDLE CLASS talk of 2 to 4 square meals a day, the poor talk of just ‘meals’.- something to keep soul and body together. When there is famine draught, or epidemic, they go first to the UNKNOWN. They head the queue to death.

When there is WAR, ECONOMIC or POLITICAL instability, they suffer most, and when the TAX MAN comes, he does not spare them. He squeezes out the little, (Maybe the last) they have got. Under the name of the participating NATION BUILDING – a nation they feel they derive nothing from. They are not just the masses or the people. They are less than that, except that nature has refused to make them ‘half people’

They have their place in society and they know this very well. It is their right to accept that place, and you cannot take it away from them. They will defend it till death. They are contented to be there, for they have no other choice.

As the entire nation wakes up every morning to face another day of multiple and complex animations, the poor also wake up only to face another day of torments and uncertainties, for at the end of the day, they go back home no better than they started off in the morning. The RICH despise them as if they are suffering from infectious diseases. Because of poverty they are associated

1

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with crime, and anything that is bad. But in church they sit by the side of the rich and worship together. To them, it looks like a privilege.

They are use to the surrounding in which they are condemned or doomed to perish. Because of all these, the RICH might be tempted to look at them with snobbery, but then let us accept the paradox that;

“Snobbery flourishes best where there is no aristocracy, and conservatism where there is little to conserve”.

About the personal lives, there could be some strange revelations. Some of them drink, smoke and philander profusely when money or money values stray in to their hands, and they are all imbued with alcoholic baked ideas. They create a world of their own not sentimentalized, but quite interesting and comfortable in its coherence. They have learnt to accept the ecstasies and agonies of their lives or present condition. Some of them look at it as a temporary situation and that some day they will come out of it. But others are less optimistic, and they prefer to accept the situation as a defeat in life, and as fait accompli. Yes they are abstract, distant and hold themselves in contempt. They look at life with a mixture of fondness and contempt. To put it in share human terms, the rhythm of their lives is slowing down to a drowsy crawl.

Some of them are against culture, religion, in fact everything that formed them, or may we say things that make them what they are today. They seem to have lost all vestiges of credibility and their future may be hanging on a precarious balance. Every day the face the growing sense of frustration, and one can see grief and tension showing very strongly an their faces, the grief has the nobility” honest nobility”.

When they start talking about their situations, they do so with mooted frustrations. Some of them seem to hold the impression that all assistance and promises to help them seem to disappear always into some bureaucratic maze. Some of them have no qualms in challenging the rich or the authorities when such an occasion arises, and they do so without reservation.

They claim that sometimes the RICH FRIENDS would be of some help if the need arises. The poor live in quagmires and in dilapidated buildings, some don't even have a roof over their heads, while the rich live in sky scrappers and villas, yet they are a very important item in a nation's economy, for when considering the GROSS NATIONAL PRODUCT in economies, the POOR have to be considered. Put them side by side with the RICH, there is “POLARIZATION”. The bible tends to console them by saying that it is easier for a CAMEL to pass through the eye of a needle than a rich man to enter the kingdom of HEAVEN. But what happens when a POOR man decides to live a wreck less and criminal life? Is heaven reserved for him? They answer is a big “NO”. Much as the RICH can be sorry for the POOR, one wonders if the POOR are sorry for the others and themselves. There is an account in the bible where a RICH MAN pardoned his debtor, while the debtor a POOR MAN refused to pardon his own debtor.

CONCLUSION

The account above is a course of concern and sober reflections. It is disturbing and bewildering. It develops ripples of concern and worries in the minds of good thinking people. Weighed on the scale of human endurance, we are expected to treat the POOR urbanely and with lots of concern. Oh, I write as if I am not in that group. Secular humanism has today blunted our moral edge of judgment and we see nothing wrong with this "SOCIAL DEFICIENCY". May be we can resort to the "local maxim' that "COW WEH E NO GET TAIL NA GOD E DI DRIVE E FLIES" But the rich and the poor leave this world with nothing. 'Rein' as the French would say. Now tell us the truth,

where do you belong? Rich or poor. To some it would be easy to answer. To others I bet you the class system makes it difficult to class themselves. While others would say

we are not interested. Well that is the world we live in but we all do know there is some classification of some sort, but classing ourselves would depend on a lot of factors with some being individualistic. I bet you, you've got a class.