

Drink seems within hope of abolition, crime and vice are but weakly rooted; the outlook for beneficent social institutions is still cheerful. May we trust then that before the morning of Canada is spent something will be done for the solution of the root-problem of all social problems—that of the child—the child, in whom, generation after generation, all progress, all civilization, take their form, and in the training of whose instincts sleeps the success of all humane movements, all humane institutions.

I remember once an instance which concentrates some of the features of the problem. Early on one of the sharpest mornings of a severe midwinter, when I was a child myself, the door-bell rang, I opened, and to my amazement the ringer pressed forcibly past me into the hall. He was a French boy of say ten years of age, quite naked except for a piece of sacking which he held around his body. His eyes and look were like those of a wild animal. The skin of his face and limbs was livid with the cold; he seemed to be dumb, and sprang shivering towards the hall stove. To me, in my first surprise, he was an intruder whose unwarranted entry I was bound to resent. If he had known how to weep and appeal to my feelings it would have been different. So I cried out, and my elders came. They saw the situation, took him in, warmed and clad him and fed his ravenous hunger. He spoke no word and gave no sign of gratitude. They recognized him as the offspring of drunken parents in the neighborhood, who had doubtless pawned his rags for liquor and turned him out in the frozen street to bring them food and still other articles to pawn.

Take another case. A child's parents die or desert it. It lives on the streets obtaining what shelter or food it can through the precarious charity of neighbours, or by theft or by semi-adoption in some family. Its existence is a pitiable fight, resembling the career of some roughcoated ownerless dog. No one troubles about educating it, and either tyrannical overwork or vagabond idleness are its lot. In Canada this class of cases may be few for the present; they will be many; in Chicago and New York they are numerous.

A third case still is the foundling, of parentage quite unknown, abandoned to the care of some irresponsible institution.