

## A CHAPTER ON CHARITY.

"Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me."

THESE words of the Savior apply to acts of charity and kindness done by man to his fellowman. They also apply to acts of cruelty and unkindness done by man to his fellowman. It is not my intention to preach a sermon. I am not a theologian and I speak rather from the heart than from the subtleties of a logical brain.

So many acts of oppressive cruelty to poor and the unfortunate have come to my knowledge during the past few months that I should like to ask how those calling themselves Christians, posing as followers of the compassionate Jesus, can so far forget, or ignore, the humane teachings of their avowed Master as to pursue their fellow beings with the remorseless, un pitying cruelty which is almost daily displayed in our community at this time. Scarcely a morning paper comes from the press but it contains notice of sales of furniture by the sheriff for distress of rent. Weeks ago, the kindly voice of THE HOME JOURNAL was raised in protest against these heartless inhumanities, but so far, no one else has followed its noble lead. When I have read one of these distress sale advertisements I find myself wondering whether, when the officer of the law has turned over to the landlord the price of the tenant's household goods to satisfy the rent distress (?) there comes any pang of conscience to the man who, with his family, lives at ease in his pleasant home; if, when he sits at his well stocked board, any thought of the poor creatures who have no longer a table upon which to spread their humble fare, whets his appetite? When he stretches himself up on his comfortable bed, is there a vision of a fellow being with his wife and little children resting themselves from the day's weariness upon the bare board of some garret or shack, courting the slumber which comes slowly to aching brains? In the stillness of the night, does a voice whisper of the day wherein the Proprietor of universe shall call for settlement of His accounts? Landlords who resort to such extortionate methods as are at present in vogue may be helping the cause of Single Tax. There might not then be so many vacant houses for boys to practice marksmanship upon the windows.

A few evenings since I went, as do scores of others, to "the spring" to get some drinking water. I filled the little pail which I carried and turned to retrace my steps homeward when my little son said, "Mamma, the poor — boys carry all their water from this spring; they don't get any water from their tap." Knowing the father of the poor — boys

to be both indigent and intemperate, it instantly flashed upon me that the water supply had been shut off. We all know how vile the city water is, still, if it were shut off from us we should miss it sadly, and the dreadful inconvenience and hardship of carrying from a long distance every drop of water used in a household, is something which should cause water commissioners to investigate before subjecting helpless women and children to such cruelty. So many people are now paying for water which cannot be used for drinking (and should not be used for any purpose) it really seems as though the owners of the water pipes might stretch a point, and allow those who are irresponsible to have a few bucketfuls of water daily, even water for Monday's washing would be a great boon, and the company would neither miss the water nor be out of pocket. If God were as exacting of rents as some proprietors, what would become of those unable to pay? There are times and circumstances which should be well considered before refusing anything so necessary to existence as water. It might not be inappropriate if the ministers of our various churches were to give us a few sermons on the "cup of cold water."

Another source of persecution to the unfortunate which to me appears nothing less than legalized blackmail, is the "judgment summons," as used by a certain collector in Victoria. Now, let no one understand me to say that I regard the "judgment summons" as other than a wise and just provision of the law when applied legitimately to force those having the means to pay, but who, through dishonest or other unworthy motives, refuse to settle just debts: but, applied to those who would gladly pay, but through successive misfortunes are unable to do so, it appears a very different matter, and the reverse of just. More especially is this the case when the collector knows personally that the parties whom he is hounding are not worth a dollar, and that, to use a rather inelegant maxim, it is a hard struggle for them to "make buckle and tongue meet." Two cases in particular of the many which have come to my notice, seem the refinement of cruelty and cowardice. A man owed a debt of about ninety dollars, which, from time to time, was reduced to less than twenty dollars; times became bad, business worse, and the collector got the "balance of account." Suit was instituted and allowed to go by default. The debtor called and explained to the collector that he was willing, but unable, to pay the bill at the time, but would as soon as possible; notwithstanding, the collector brings on the "judgment summons," simply, it would appear, for the purpose of humiliating the man, since he must know the law can not force

from the debtor that which is not possessed. A carpenter had been long out of employment and secured a job from a lady who wished some work done. Our worthy collector, on the alert for his client and his own commission, heard the carpenter had obtained work, hastened to the lady employer and inquired the amount she intended paying for the services of the carpenter, as he—the collector—intended to garnishee the wages in her hands. The lady, like most people, had a natural aversion to being a party to unpleasant law processes, so when the poor mechanic came expecting to commence work, he was dismissed, and told why. Did the collector injure the carpenter to the extent of depriving him of that piece of work and the wages which would have been paid therefor, and does the law afford no redress to one who has been thus injured? Collectors should not be permitted to resort to unjust or injurious methods any more than those who ply some other trade.

The City Council is being importuned to do something toward finding and assisting some person or persons, who have been committing depredations on chicken roosts. Well, if something is not done toward arresting distress sales of furniture, evictions of tenants, etc., it will be wonderful if nothing more than chicken roosts are disturbed when the biting winds of winter come, reminding the poor of their unprotected bodies and empty stomachs—the coroner may be kept busy holding inquests on suicides, or the court employed looking after attempted ones.

Many times this summer, whilst rambling about the city, I have looked regretfully upon the great number of vacant lots and fields which lie fallow, doing good neither to the owners nor to the municipality. Why have not those who have influence used it to induce the holders of these vacant lands to allow them to be cultivated by the unemployed for this season, at least? If all these acres of lots had been planted in vegetables, it would have gone far toward solving the problem of feeding the hungry during the winter which is approaching, and which promises to be a winter of unparalleled hardships to a large proportion of our population.

CATHARINE D.

The Ainu women in Japan tattoo their faces to give them the appearance of men with whiskers.

Shallcross, Macauley & Co., commission merchants, have opened offices in Board of Trade building, Victoria.

Amity Lodge No. 27, I.O.O.F., New Westminster, has been incorporated under the Benevolent Societies Act.