

And in case that persons in need of relief and able to work should refuse to work they were to be sent to the House of Correction. A later Act provided for the industrial employment of children the "provision of wool, hemp, and other stock for work, and also competent sums of money for and towards the necessary relief of the lame, impotent, old, blind, poor, and not able to work. It also comprehended an enactment of mutual liability; that is, of parents to support their children, and of children to support their parents," which latter would be a very salutary provision now in Canada, where children are far too prone to marry early and leave their parents to the charity of others. Finally, he cites 43 Eliz. chap. 2, a statute which is, he tells us, "the foundation of the Poor Law down to the present day." It provides for compulsory assessment for the four following purposes: "1. For the setting to work of all such persons, married or unmarried, having no means to maintain themselves, and who use no ordinary and daily trade of life to get their living by; 2. For providing a convenient stock of flax, hemp, wool, thread, iron, and other ware or stuff, to set the poor on work; 3. For the necessary relief of the lame, impotent, blind, and such others amongst them being poor and not able to work." And it provided, too, that grandparents should be supported by their grandchildren, where it was possible for these to do it,—which, it is to be feared, would be a very unpalatable statute among ourselves.

Cardinal Manning well contrasts the judicious and enlightened spirit of these statutes with a system which relieves the natural relatives of the support of the old and helpless, and refuses to aid distress except by breaking up homes and throwing whole families "on the rates." As he says—the great mass of the deserving poor will suffer any privation rather than avail themselves of the alternative of renouncing the humanizing influences of home life and going into the workhouse. And, as Cardinal Manning remarks, this provision of work for the poor is by no means restricted to the deserving. "How much more," he says, "does it include the deserving and willing to work who are thrown out of employment by winter, which suspends a number of trades and industries, or by the vicissitudes which so often paralyze the employers of labour! The indiscriminate refusal of out-door relief pauperizes those who break up their homes and go into the workhouses, aggravates the poverty of those who refuse to break up their homes, multiplies the number of those who are idle because they are not relieved by work, and drives multitudes into the dangerous classes who become desperate and hardened."

And he adds a query which might well lead to a doubt whether the human race is advancing quite so fast as some would maintain. "Does not our present administration of the Poor Law, as compared with the old statutes, imply a decline of Christianity, and an application of political economy uncontrolled by the moral laws of human sympathy and the compassion which wealth owes to poverty?"

The considerations that Cardinal Manning thus enforces upon the people of England, we should take to heart in Canada. Already some earnest philanthropists are impressed with the feeling that the distress which every winter exists among ourselves should be relieved by some means that would press more equally upon all than does the present old and simple expedient of voluntary contribution. But, if we can learn anything from the result of the English Poor Law system—whether these are depicted by novelists like Dickens, or by moralists like the writer just quoted—it is that legalized, State-bestowed relief tends to harden the administrators and to pauperize the recipients. Unlike voluntary charity, or mercy which is "twice blessed,"—State aid seems twice cursed. Instead of kindly giving as from brother to brother, we have a hard officialism—never so offensive as when bound up with *charity*, and, as a necessary consequence, the recipient, instead of feeling any emotion of gratitude, is first humiliated and then pauperized. Better far that the illiberal and selfish should deprive themselves of the privilege of helping their fellow men, and the addition of their contributions would be more than swallowed up by the expenses of machinery, than that the moral effect of voluntary benevolence should be lost to both giver and receiver!

But the point so strongly emphasized by Cardinal Manning—that "the law of natural charity recognizes in each the same right to live, and imposes upon us all, according to our powers, the obligation to sustain the life of others as we sustain our own" is one that should be very fully considered in all our towns and cities. The length and severity of our winters, which throw so many men out of employment for a much longer period than in England, make it still more important to endeavour to relieve distress by the provision of work for all able-bodied men, so far as this can by any possibility be done. This should be a recognized duty on the part of those who are in charge of the public affairs of our communities; for no community, which is largely composed of labouring men, can be thoroughly contented and prosperous without some such provision

Whether the provision is to be made at the public expense or by charitable boards is a matter for consideration. The money a man *earns* is not *charity*, and the State may well, so far as it is within her power, provide the unemployed with the opportunity to work in ways which will eventually benefit the public. Taxation to this end would be so manifestly beneficial to the poor and eventually to the whole community, that no good citizen could complain.

Only in regard to two things, let us be deaf as adders to the voice of the charmers—charm they never so wisely.

First, let us never consent to degrade even a tramp, by setting him to work which has no result save that of mere muscular exertion, such as digging holes and filling them up again—expedients so clumsy and heartless as to justify Mr. Ruskin's severest denunciations.

And second, let us never allow the tender and humanizing graces of brotherly sympathy and aid to be crushed out of our charity by the degrading and pauperizing influence of a Poor Law system of public relief.

FIDELIS.

### LONDON LETTER.

WITHOUT being taken in by the inferior conjuring of a medium who for a consideration professes to call our dead friends from the vasty deep, without being tinctured in the least with spiritualism, most of us like a good ghost story even though we know that in nine cases out of ten, in speaking to the person who first started it, we shall find the whole thing so exaggerated as hardly to be recognized by its originator. Forster always declared Dickens had a hankering after the supernatural. But no man was readier to apply sharper tests to the tales he heard: and that but for the strong restraining power of his common sense he might have fallen into the folly of believing the impostors who a few years ago (are we wiser now?) made their harvests in London drawing-rooms out of people in want of a new sensation, and consequently ready to fly with avidity to table-rapping, to the séance, to any other performance to which Mr. Stodge chose to treat them. Do you remember all the queer incidents in connection with *Mr. H.'s Story* told in *All the Year Round*? Dickens heard it first from Lord Lytton and published it in September, 1861: and "upon its publication" he writes to Forster, "up has started the portrait painter who saw the phantoms! His own story is out of all distance the most extraordinary that ever was produced, and is far beyond my version or Bulwer's, as Scott is beyond James. Everything connected with it is amazing; but conceive this; the portrait painter had been engaged to write it elsewhere as a story for next Christmas, and not unnaturally supposed, when he saw himself anticipated in *All the Year Round*, that there had been treachery at his printers. 'In particular,' says he, 'how else was it possible that the date, the 13th of September, could have been got at? For I never told the date, until I wrote it.' Now, my story had *no date*, but seeing when I looked over the proof the great importance of having a date, I [C. D.] wrote in, unconsciously, the exact date on the margin of the proof." Dickens does not tell how Lytton knew about it in the first place; anyway the coincidence was an odd one, calculated to make him a firmer believer than ever. But last night a young gentleman—who *seemed* a truthful young gentleman enough—told me something stranger still, to which I will not add, and from which I will not take away, one word; and if at the end of it you wish to accuse any one of falsehood do not suspect *me*, for I shall simply repeat exactly what I heard, except that of course the names are fictitious:

"I was staying with the Martins for Christmas," said my friend, "when a most extraordinary thing happened. We got up a play—*A Lesson in Love*—in which a Miss Carew, a very pretty girl whom I met there for the first time and whom we all liked immensely, took the part of Lucy. Everything went right to the day of the performance, when she complained of a headache at the day's rehearsal in the morning, and said she felt so ill she could hardly remember her words. All sorts of remedies were suggested, but she would have none of them, and at last it was settled she should go for a ride, and see if that would do any good. She fell in with the plan, and she, and I to take care of her, went as far as the old Windmill on the G. road. But when we returned I saw she was worse rather than better. It was then about four o'clock. She went listlessly into the library and sat talking by the fire till five when Mrs. Martin told her that if she were to be fit for anything in the evening she ought to lie down a little: but tea coming delayed her, and then there were other things to arrange, and so it was nearly seven before she attempted to go up stairs. 'I won't dine,' she said to us, 'for I'm not a bit hungry: so I'll dress at once, and be ready in the green-room by nine.' Just before dinner Mrs. Martin went into her room, and found her on the sofa, still in her riding-habit, and half asleep. She was told that was not the proper way to rest; she should take off her habit and put on her dressing gown; and on her promising to do this, Mrs. Martin left her. Well, not a second before the performance—we didn't begin till nearly ten—Miss Carew came hurriedly through the green-room looking ghastly white: she nodded at us, but didn't speak, and as Lucy has to be on the stage when the curtain draws up, she at once took her place. We remembered afterwards no one had noticed where she was or what she was doing between the acts; but after the play was well over, and every one was in the ball-room ready to begin dancing, I went to my hostess to ask where Lucy had got to. 'I don't know,' she said, 'but I'm just going to look after her. Her maid told mine she had never been rung for, so how she managed to dress herself I can't think;