

repeated. Until I read Miss Rye's letter, I was not aware that I had been invited to this gathering "upon the express understanding that the "children were being collected for my inspection." I was all the while indulging the agreeable delusion that I had been invited, not to an official "inspection" of children, but to the wedding of a very charming young lady, Miss Rye's friend and fellow-labourer at Niagara. The only "printed invitation" that I ever saw or that, I believe, was ever issued was one addressed to the employers of the children, suggesting that the mistresses and children should come "in white dresses," as that would help to make "a very pretty "wedding," and (by way, I suppose, of killing two birds with one stone) "show Mr. Doyle what great things Canada can do for poor children." To Miss Rye personally I expressed my regret, several days before the interesting event, that I should not be able to be present, as I had already given a very undue proportion of my time to visiting children in the neighbourhood of her "Home." Nor, if I had been present, is it quite clear that I should not have run some risk of getting a wrong impression of the ordinary condition of some, at least, of these children. For it fell out that a few days before this exhibition, I visited at London one of the children, Emma Bennett, who had been placed as a servant with a working bricklayer named Webber. He and his wife appeared to be very kind, decent, hardworking folks. But the place was altogether unsuited to the child, as the child was to the place. The man had written to Miss Rye that he wished to return the child, as he could not afford to keep her, and got for answer that he must fetch her himself. Being but a working-man, and just then out of employment, that was impossible. Equally impossible was it for his wife to accept Miss Rye's printed invitation, which she had just received, to accompany the child, both in white dresses, to the "gathering." If they had gone, and I had been present and observed the honest bricklayer's wife with the poor little seven-year-old mite whom I had just seen grubbing in a dustbin, I should doubtless have been expected to accept them as witnesses in white dresses "of what great things Canada can do for poor children"—for the "refuse of the workhouses," as I saw these same children designated in an account given of this "gathering" by one of the most influential newspapers in Canada.

Undoubtedly, Sir, Canada can do great things for poor children, not however by the indiscriminate deportation of such children as guardians may desire to get rid of, but by the gradual and not too hasty development of a well-organised system, such as that which appears to be now established by Miss Macpherson, and for the same destitute-class. It is not, however, for "pauper" children that this sort of public aid and sympathy should be invoked. Every board of guardians in the kingdom has the means of training pauper children, so as to fit them to supply the demand for labour of every description, especially in domestic service. And recent inquiries have proved beyond question the general success for this purpose of workhouse education, and shown what commendable efforts guardians are making throughout the country still further to improve it. It is not, I repeat, for workhouse children that emigration is needed, or should be encouraged. It is otherwise, however, with the very young destitute children who are not "paupers," but may be said to be the raw material of our criminal classes, and who swarm in our cities and large towns. With reference to the position in Canada of that class of children, it is, as I said in my Report of 1874, "the "most perfect realisation of the principle of boarding-out that can be well "conceived." But for that class of children the supply of homes is far indeed from being inexhaustible. I believe that from Miss Macpherson's Distributing Homes at Knowlton, Belleville, and Galt, all the homes that are really available might be found for such destitute children as could be sent from England with advantage, either to themselves or to the Dominion. For it would be a very great mistake, and would be simply misleading guardians, to say that the people who take children are all, or even a majority of them, those "simple country "folks" of whom Miss Rye speaks in her letter to you. Miss Rye knows perfectly well that a very large proportion of girls taken out by her are either directly placed in cities, towns, and villages, or find their way there after a little while. She knows too, or ought to know (she has experience of the fact every year), that children so placed are exposed to the greatest danger. This is the uniform testimony of every unprejudiced person who has had to do with the distribution of these children in Canada.