

## CHAPTER XV.

## PAUPERISM AND BENEVOLENCE.

*Grants-in-Aid.*

POOR LAW IN ENGLAND.—ORGANIZED CHARITY IN FRANCE.—  
ALMSGIVING. — HOW DESTITUTION IS RELIEVED IN SOUTH  
AUSTRALIA. — OLD PEOPLE, CHILDREN, WIDOWS, AND  
DESERTED WIVES.

THERE are always some poor and afflicted people even in the most prosperous countries. There are different ways of relieving the poor and the sick in various parts of the world. In England there is a **poor law**, which puts a tax upon all property and on every householder for the maintenance and relief of the poor. They have large houses called workhouses, where the poor are fed and lodged, and the able-bodied required to work; and the poor have a legal right to demand relief. In France there is no poor law, but there is a great deal of organized charity. This charity is partly given by private persons, and partly raised by a tax on theatres and amusements. It is distributed among the poor, chiefly at their own homes, under careful government inspection. In Turkey and many other countries charity is preached and practised as a great religious duty, binding on all who wish to please God or who hope for heaven. It is thus bestowed without any law enforcing it, and street beggars are very numerous and very importunate.

In South Australia cases of destitution are relieved by the government out of the general revenue. People who are old and unable to work are taken into the destitute asylum, and fed and clothed and lodged there; but this is only if they have neither children

nor grandchildren able to support them. Deserted and orphan children, and the children of criminals in gaol or at the stockade, are taken charge of by the government. Some of them stay at the industrial school at Magill, but the greater number are adopted or boarded out or sent to service in private families. They lead a happier and more natural life in real homes than when they are crowded together by hundreds in a large school. The government provides for their being visited in these homes, to make sure that they are properly treated and sent to school, and also to find out if they behave well.

Widows and deserted wives are helped in their homes, the government allowing them rations for such of their children as are not able to work. When the father is sick and unable to work, the family are relieved in the same way by rations until he is well again.

LUNATIC ASYLUMS, HOSPITALS, CHARITABLE ASYLUMS.—IMPROVIDENCE THE CHIEF CAUSE OF DESTITUTION.—MEANING OF IMPROVIDENCE.—BEST DEFINITION OF MAN.

The insane, or those unhappy persons who are out of their senses, are taken to the asylum at Parkside, or to that on the Botanic road. Some of the richer of them pay something for their keep, but the government pays the whole expense of the poorer ones. This is because lunatics are afflicted in themselves, and also because at times many of them are not fit to be at large; they might injure people or set fire to places in their violent fits.

The sick poor, and those who have met with accidents, are received into hospitals, of which there are several in different parts of the colony. The blind and the deaf and dumb may be taught what they are able to learn in the asylum at Brighton. There are also a Home for Incurables, a Children's Hospital, and other charitable institutions in the colony. Many of them

are partly kept up by charitable people giving money willingly, but the government allows out of the general revenue pound for pound of such contributions.

We may lay down as a general rule that it is vice and extravagance and improvidence that brings people to destitution. **Improvvidence means not providing for the future**, and this is too common among all classes of society. There are exceptions—when misfortune and bad health bring people to want—but however kindly government relief may be given, people should have an honest pride in trying to do without it. They should feel it a disgrace to allow their old parents or grandparents to go to the destitute asylum. Parents should feel the same about letting their children go to the Magill school. The home, however homely, is better for the little child than the very best charity school in the world. No almshouse or benevolent asylum is as fitting or as pleasant for the old man or woman as the corner at a son or daughter's fireside with grandchildren about them. In a country like South Australia no one with health and moderate strength should neglect to provide sufficient savings to prevent his becoming a burden to others in old age. Of all the definitions of man the best is that he is **a creature who looks before and after**. He can learn from the past to provide for the future. The education which we receive at home and at school is meant to prepare us for active work, for useful manhood and womanhood, and for contented and honored old age.

