

which it arises. Among the elements of extension are the constantly diminishing reluctance to claim an apparent benefit, the receipt of which imposes no sacrifice except a sensation of shame, quickly obliterated by habit, even if not prevented by example; the difficulty, often amounting to impossibility, on the part of those who administer and award relief of ascertaining whether any and what necessity for it exists, and the existence in many cases of positive motives on their parts to grant it when unnecessary, or themselves to create the necessity. From the preceding evidence it will be seen how zealous must be the agency and how intense the vigilance to prevent fraudulent claims crowding in under such a system of relief. But it would require still greater vigilance to prevent the *bonâ fide* claimants degenerating into impostors, and it is an aphorism amongst the active parish officers that 'cases which are good to-day are bad to-morrow' unless they are incessantly watched. A person obtains relief on the ground of sickness; when he has become capable of returning to moderate work he is tempted by the enjoyment of subsistence without labour to conceal his convalescence, and fraudulently extend the period of relief. When it really depends on the receivers whether the relief shall cease with the occasion for it, it is too much to expect of their virtue that they shall in any considerable number of instances voluntarily forego the pension." "It appears to the pauper that the Government has undertaken to repeal in his favour the ordinary laws of nature—to enact that the children shall not suffer for the misconduct of their parents, the wife for that of the husband, or the husband for that of the wife—that no one shall lose the means of comfortable subsistence, whatever be his indolence, prodigality, or vice—in short, that the penalty, which, after all, must be paid by some one for idleness and improvidence is to fall not on the guilty person or on his family. Can we wonder if the uneducated are seduced into approving a system which aims its allurements at all the weakest parts of our nature, which offers marriage to the young, security to the anxious, ease to the lazy, and impunity to the profligate?"

But it will be said, "This is not England, but the Colony of New Zealand, where the necessaries of life are so cheap." The answer is that even in New Zealand the baneful system of outdoor relief is pauperising our people to an extent that is incredible to any except those who know the facts and are able to estimate their significance. Every one of the chief evil results in England I could abundantly illustrate in any of our large towns; and I am certain that a very little personal study of the facts would convert the most sympathetic philanthropist in the world, if only he had as much intellect as feeling, into an uncompromising enemy of this system. Speaking for England, Sir G. Trevelyan said the other day: "By far the most demoralising influence of our time and country is poor-law outdoor relief. Upon indoor relief there is a natural check. Nobody asks for it as a favour, and there is a strong presumption that everybody who accepts it is really in need of it. Upon outdoor relief, on the contrary, there is no self-acting check, for it is a pension comfortably enjoyed at home in addition to every other advantage and source of income, and everybody is glad to have it. The more a man saves the less he gets of outdoor relief; if by industry and self-denial he entirely provides for himself he gets nothing; if he spends everything at the publichouse or in any other kind of indulgence he entitles himself to the full measure of outdoor relief at the expense of the honest and self-denying. It is useless to exhort to industry and thrift while in practice we hold out this lifelong encouragement to idleness and prodigality." Speaking for America, Superintendent McGonegal, of New York State, says: "Families are furnished a stated amount weekly or monthly, and this is continued week after week and year after year" (just as in New Zealand), "and I know of nothing which does so much to encourage pauperism and educate paupers for the next generation as this system, which I think is in operation in most of the counties, cities, and towns of this State. There is nothing except intemperance which is more demoralising to the head of a family, or more ruinous to children, than to become imbued with the idea that the public is bound to provide for them. And if people could only realise when they recommend, bring, or send a family of bright, intelligent children to the Poor-law Superintendent, and insist on aid being furnished, that such an act was almost sure to ruin them and educate them as paupers, it seems to me that such people should exhaust every other resource to provide a way for such a family to overcome its immediate difficulty before incurring the fearful responsibility of being instrumental in making them paupers. People very soon after commencing to receive public aid lose their energy and self-respect, find it easier to rely upon the industry of others to furnish them their daily bread than to exert themselves to gain a livelihood. Their children learn to think that getting provisions and fuel from the overseer is perfectly right and proper, and they are almost certain to follow in the footsteps of their parents, especially as it requires a great deal less exertion than to earn their living by honest labour." "There are cases where temporary relief is undoubtedly necessary; and if judiciously disbursed, and discontinued at the earliest possible moment, before it becomes permanent relief and the recipients become chronic paupers, then I have no doubt it is a real benefit to those who receive it. But after an experience of nearly twelve years in the care of the poor, and carefully studying during that time the effects of this so-called temporary relief, I am thoroughly convinced that the harm done by means of it greatly overbalances the good, and I think it is a question well worth considering whether it would not be better to abolish it entirely. I believe that three-fourths of what is called temporary or outdoor relief furnished in the State of New York is not only a direct injury to those who receive it, but is a great damage to society by encouraging indolence, and is an enormous unnecessary burden upon the industrious provident class, which is compelled to pay the expense."

The law of competition, being coextensive with organic life, has for its maxim, "The wages of sin is death," no matter whether the sin be individual shortcoming or inherited defect. Without this as its fundamental law, human society would either never have originated or, having, like Minerva, been miraculously born full-grown, it would straightway have rotted out of existence. This is the condition—namely, that each should be able to hold its own—that nature has made the test of survival or mere existence, as distinguished from well-being. In human society, however, this law, that each herring must hang by its own neck, is modified and controlled by a higher law on which depends the possibility of the family, the tribe, the nation—i.e., the golden rule of conscience.