

GUTTER CHILDREN

TO THE FRIENDS AND SUBSCRIBERS OF THE ABOVE CHARITY.

DEAR FRIENDS,

In the March of 1869 I was enabled, through the kindness of the Editor of the *Times*, to make an appeal on behalf of the Gutter Children of our great cities. That appeal was handsomely responded to, and the £1,000 I asked for was sent me, and rather more besides. I now come before you again to tell you what I have done both with my time and your money since that date. In May of the same year I collected one hundred young women and the money for their passages (a separate fund), and carried them over and placed them in Canada, where I am happy to say they have done well. At the same time that I crossed with these adult women, I took over a portion of the money you entrusted to my care, and, after travelling in the western parts of Canada and the United States, ultimately concluded a bargain with the authorities of the county of Lincoln for the purchase of the old gaol in the township of Niagara, a pleasant, healthy village, some ten miles from the celebrated Falls of the same name. I located myself in this neighbourhood that I might have the benefit of the experience and friendship of a family, long resident there, who had brought up and placed out in life no less than twenty-five orphans. The alteration of the gaol into a bright, pleasant, well-ventilated house took both time and money; but when I say that the purchase-money, and the moneys expended on alterations, will not exceed £600, and that the house is large enough to accommodate one hundred children and a moderate household, I think every one will be fairly satisfied with my bargain. In September, 1869, I returned to England, and remaining here just twenty-eight days, gathered up seventy-five children, nearly all orphans, and girls of from 4 to 12 years of age. We left Liverpool on 28th October, in the steamship *Hibernian*, and after a pleasant passage across the Atlantic, and a tedious railway journey west, reached Toronto about 13th November. Here we took the Lake steamer and crossed the Ontario, and met on our disembarkment at Niagara with a most cordial welcome from our future town-folks. The gentlemen farmers were there with waggons, carts, and buggies, and I was soon with my large family safely at the end of our long journey.

It was very hard work getting into an all but empty house with so many children, and so many boxes and bales—nearly 200 in all—for each child had her own little trunk, and it took a long time to find a place for everything, and still longer to keep everything in its place. But somehow we got along; we knew Whose work we were doing, and Whose blessing was ours; the children were happy, and healthy, and grateful, and if our bodies were often very weary, our heart was never faint. You may like to see what other people thought of us when we landed, so I reprint the notice (1) that appeared in the local paper of that date. After the place was a little in order, the House was formally opened with prayer, and in the presence of our neighbours; and the notice (2) of that day is here reprinted, as it is important to observe the very encouraging tone of the speakers (all Canadians) on that occasion. After that the distribution of the children commenced. Every person who applied for a child had to fill in, to my satisfaction, a regular set of questions, and to find two references who would answer for the applicant's respectability. After this the child went to her new home, and was regularly and legally placed under the care of her foster-parents. Sixteen of the children were taken and adopted as an own child; the remainder were bound out till they were eighteen years of age. From whatever age the child was, who was bound, till she was fifteen, the people who took her agreed to educate, clothe, and feed her, and see that she attended a place of worship on Sunday, and Sunday-school if possible. From fifteen to seventeen, in lieu of clothes, they covenanted to give her 3 dollars a month wages, with a rise to 4 dollars a month for the last year of her apprenticeship. The duties expected from the children are just suited to their age, and, in many instances, amounted to playing with another little girl and keeping her company—"our little one is so lonely without a sister"—and my greatest fear for my little ones is, that they will be too kindly treated and get spoilt.

The work of taking up characters of applicants, and of learning the railway geography of Canada, without even the assistance of a Bradshaw, kept me more than occupied up to the very last hour of my starting for England this May—for I am thankful to be able to add that not only have I very satisfactorily placed all the children whom I carried out there last October, but have opened the doors of quite two hundred other homes in Canada and the United States; where I can place as many more little ones, as soon as I can collect the children and the funds. Since landing in England the other day I have been before the select vestry of Liverpool, and given them, in writing, a detailed account of the fifty orphans whom I carried out for them in October; and they are so well satisfied with the work that they have just voted me again a second party of fifty more children, and the money for their expenses. I am now wanting more money for the other fifty children whom I am gathering to carry back with me to "Our Western Home," Niagara, in July, and I shall be grateful for more funds to continue the work.

I cannot now give any balance of the moneys received during the past year for this work, as I did not commence spending until September, and left workpeople on the premises when I started for England this May, so thought it would be better to render my account at the end of the working year—viz., September, 1870. I am very anxious to collect more money, as there are still many absolute necessities to be got to secure the comfort of those, who, like myself, live and work on the premises—viz., for Venetian blinds for the summer, and double windows for the winter, both of which are greatly needed—a serious item, as we have forty-three windows.

I print a few of the letters the children have sent me from time to time, together with a postscript to a letter from a Presbyterian minister who has one of my children; and part of another letter from a clergyman's wife—living in quite an opposite neighbourhood—where some of my children are also settled.

As to the limits of the work of placing out pauper orphans and gutter children in Canada and the States, it is absolutely unlimited; and with God's continued blessing I do not hesitate to say that there is no reason why I should not plant out literally some thousands of our poor little perishing ones, and that in a way by which they may become useful, happy, and good Christian women, a blessing to themselves and to all around them.

Hoping for your renewed support,

Believe me,

Yours very faithfully,

MARIA S. RYE.

418, Strand, London, W.C.
June 2, 1870.

MISS RYE AT NIAGARA.

(No. 1.) (From the "Niagara Mail," Nov. 17, 1869.)

On Thursday last Miss Rye arrived safely at Niagara from England, with the orphan children whom she brought out with her—about seventy little girls of the ages of between five and ten years, seven boys of various ages, and a few grown-up girls. The steamer City of Toronto arrived about 6 p.m., and a number of the townspeople were on the wharf to welcome Miss Rye and her little flock. A number of kind-hearted farmers and others were in waiting with carriages and waggons to convey the children to their new home, at the building so nicely fitted up for the purpose of a home for them. Miss Rye also brought out with her iron bedsteads, bedding, and many other articles, for the purpose of furnishing the asylum—the gift, we believe, of benevolent manufacturers in England, whose sympathies have been awakened by the philanthropic exertions of Miss Rye in behalf of the poor and destitute of her own sex—those who are least able to help themselves—whose claims press strongest on every humane heart for relief, and who, but for tender loving hands like those of Miss Rye and those Christian men and women in England, who assist her in her truly apostolic work of saving both souls and bodies of these poor children, would never be able to rise from the depths of destitution in which they have been found. About fifty of the children are from the Protestant Industrial Schools of Liverpool; fine, bright-looking children, who have had the advantage of considerable training in those institutions, and been taught the primary branches of reading and writing and girls' work, to an extent quite equal to girls of their own age generally. These little Lancashire lasses are a credit to the institutions that have had the care of them. The other little girls are from other parts of England. The children are healthy and intelligent, prompt in their replies to questions, and modest and respectful in demeanour. The children are all well shod and warmly clad in woollen dresses suitable to our winter season, and each one had a neat little trunk of her own, with her name painted on it, filled with the outfit of clothing, &c., presented to each child on her departure from England; everything showing the greatest forethought and

active benevolence of those who had co-operated with Miss Rye in the emigration of these children.

The children were soon conveyed to the home provided for them, and seemed lively as squirrels, notwithstanding their rough passage across the Atlantic and the fatigue of a long journey from Quebec to Niagara. The sight of so many little orphans—nearly all of whom are, we believe, deprived of both father and mother—moved all hearts with sympathy. Supper was ready for the children on their arrival. They were not very hungry, having been plentifully supplied on the way. After singing a short grace, in which all joined, they took what was prepared for them, and their modest, quiet behaviour at table was very pleasing, showing that they had had the benefit of good training. The confidence and trust of these children in Miss Rye is unbounded. They regard her with the strongest affection, which they show in a thousand artless ways—fondling round her, kissing her hands, and the like; and when that good lady arrived at the home, an hour or two after the children's arrival, the way they ran clustering round her with exclamations of joy was a pleasing sight. Still more affecting to see them all kneeling round her in the attitude of profound devotion while she read a portion of the evening service, and put up a prayer of thankfulness to Almighty God for having brought them safely to the end of their long and toilsome journey. The children joined in the prayers and sang beautifully a little hymn; after which they all retired for the night, perfectly confident and happy in the knowledge that Miss Rye was with them and that God watched over them all. Next morning the children got washed, combed, and cleaned up after their long journey, and turned out a lot of as rosy, pretty children as could be seen anywhere.

Miss Rye has inaugurated a novelty in emigration. For the first time that we ever heard of has occurred the emigration of orphan children of tender age. The scheme of relieving destitute children is a most judicious movement. It enables the children to be trained here and begin life under better auspices than they would generally meet with at home. They will grow up in this country,

become easily assimilated to its ways—though in this respect they have little to unlearn. It is a great work that Miss Rye has undertaken, but it is such a good one, and one that appeals so strongly to all the better feelings of human nature, that it must succeed. The importance of Miss Rye's practical and extensive scheme for the emigration of girls and female children is beginning to be realised by benevolent people in England, and we are satisfied that so soon as they discover that it is a real vital movement of practical benevolence, aid will flow in from all sides to assist her in carrying out on a still larger scale, what, in its beginning even, is one of the most important emigration movements that has been made for many years. In our humble opinion, Miss Rye has done more to promote the cause of emigration than all our societies together. The Government of Ontario—which is doing so much, and trying to do more, to promote emigration in this province—cannot help, we think, but recognise this great benevolent work of Miss Rye's as one that calls for its sympathy and support. We trust it will not be overlooked by the Legislature now in session.

We are informed that the children will remain in the institution for the present, and there will be no distribution of them until everything has been done and arranged about the home, which requires some time to get everything in complete working order. The ladies of the town are very attentive and kind, and do much towards assisting Miss Rye in settling arrangements for her new and extensive housekeeping.

OUR WESTERN HOME.

[No. 2.] (From the "Niagara Mail," Dec. 7, 1869.)

On the 1st of December "Our Western Home" at Niagara was formally opened. A number of invitations had been issued to those thought to be interested in the work, and a very cordial response was made. At the hour appointed the large hall was very well filled; among those present were noticed a good number from a distance. The Rev. Dr. McMurray, of Niagara, offered up a very suitable prayer; after which, Mr. Robert N. Ball, by Miss Rye's request, explained the object of their being called together, referring to Miss Rye's past work of sending adults both to Australia and Canada, and also to the motives which led her to engage in the present undertaking.

Miss Rye then, in a very appropriate speech, more fully explained her plans and the means by which she hoped to carry them into effect. First, to redeem her pledge to the British public, that she had opened a suitable Home for the children committed to her care; 2ndly. That those present might see the children and judge for themselves; and 3rdly. That she might explain the conditions upon which the children were to be placed out. On the latter point it is intended that those to go as servants shall be bound in the name of Miss Rye, as the Honorary Secretary of the Society, and in the name of the Mayor of the Town of Niagara, which renders the document a legal one. Until each child attains fifteen she is to receive her clothes, food, and education suitable to her position; from fifteen to seventeen years she is to receive three dollars per month in lieu of clothes; and from seventeen to eighteen years, to have four dollars per month, after which the girl is free to stay or go. In the course of her remarks, Miss Rye said that it was not the want of money that prevented a large flow of little immigrants to our country. The large-hearted British public only wanted to see that a suitable outlet can be had for their homeless little ones, and the means for sending aid for keeping these for a time would not be wanting. And that now more than a hundred thousand could be had if we, on our part, can find homes for them. Miss Rye said that she did not ask the people of Canada for money, but for their sympathy and moral support in finding places for the orphan children, where they would receive good, sound religious instruction, and have thrown around them the advantages of home influence, a blessing that but few of them ever knew.

Upon Miss Rye's concluding her remarks, the little ones marched down from the dormitory two and two, singing as they went to the dining-room. After being seated and singing the usual grace, the ordinary dinner was served. After seeing the children at their meal for a while, invitation was given to inspect the house. The dormitory was first visited. It is a large airy room about fifty feet by forty feet, in which were a sufficient number of iron bedsteads, which Miss Rye brought out with her; and good beds with plenty of sheets and blankets presented a very comfortable appearance. The bath room, and boys' room, and indeed every part, seemed admirably adapted for the object in view, and all seemed agreeably disappointed at the capacity and adaptability of the old goal for the New Home. The dining-room is 50 by 40ft., well lighted and heated. The grand hall is 60 by 40ft. in the form of a cross, with a broad stairway leading to the rooms above. Miss Rye intends to put a wide verandah around the whole building, which will afford ample room for recreation during inclement weather. New open fences are to replace the present wall. Underdraining, trees, flowers, and gardens, are visions which it is hoped will be realised in another year. In the meantime every comfort that kindness and untiring energy can procure will be given to the inhabitants of "Our Western Home," whose circles will rapidly contract if the applications already received are any indication of what are yet to come.

After inspection the visitors were invited to a substantial lunch, of which many availed themselves—at the close of which Judge Lawder made a suitable reply to Miss Rye's speech, followed by Mr. D. W. Beadle, in his usual happy style. The Rev. Dr. Reid and Rev. Mr. Holland extended to Miss Rye and her proteges a cordial welcome to the New Dominion. The following was unanimously adopted:—Moved by Judge Lawder, seconded by Geo. P. M. Ball, Esq., "That the thanks of this community on the opening of 'Our Western Home' by Miss Rye, are justly due, and are hereby tendered to her, and that we cannot allow the present occasion to pass without expressing the pleasure we derive in inspecting the admirable arrangements she has made for the orphans under her charge."

The whole affair passed off very pleasantly, each one carrying home the recollection of a happy day.

St. Catharine's Ontario.

From REV. MR. BURSON.

"We are very much pleased with Maria, and she appears to be contented and happy. I am delighted to hear of your success, and rejoice with you, and the more so that the children from your Western Home, with the families in St. Catharine's, are doing well and making your enterprise deservedly popular."

"Mrs. Burson joins with me in kind regards." "G. B."

April 26th, 1870.

"DEAR MISS RYE,

"I felt disappointed when I found you had left Canada without our having met. I much wished to engage your kind services in finding for me two little girls of about 12 years of age, good-tempered, tidy, well-principled children, such as you think would be safe about little ones of the family, or useful in doing light work in the house. Your last little flock seem to have given the greatest satisfaction. I have heard several of them highly spoken of, and should feel it a great kindness if you procure useful little ones for me, and I trust they will find safe and happy homes amongst us. One is for my daughter, at Hamilton, the other for myself. With warmest wishes for your success in your labour of love and your own happiness, I remain, dear Miss Rye, very truly yours,

"KATE GREEN.

"Rectory, Wellington Square, Ontario, Canada West."

"William Street, Oshawa, Ontario.

"DEAR MADAM,

"We arrived at aunt's at three o'clock the day you left us. I like the place very much, and I should not like to go back to England again. But I should like to see all the kind friends there. I am going to write to Mr. Northcott as soon as I can. I have written to the matron of the home where I left. My brother has gone into the cabinet manufactory to learn a trade; he has agreed to work a month to see what he would like to do. He has chosen a trade so that he might set up a business. I have no more to say at present.

I remain gratefully,
"ISABELLA THOMAS."

December 1st, 1869.

"William Street, Oshawa, Ontario.

"DEAR MADAM,

"I feel it my duty to write to you to return thanks for the kind care and protection. In regard to the orphans Thomas, they came safe to Oshawa, and they speak in high terms of your kindness to them. You have made my heart glad. I am sure they never could have come if you had not taken them with you. May your life be preserved for many years to carry on your great and good work, and may the new year meet you with every blessing that this world can afford, and may you have a long and happy life, and at the end may you have everlasting life and be rewarded for all your kind and good works, is the wish of your grateful servant,

"SUSANNA MALLETT."

"DEAR MISS RYE,

"I am very well, and I hope you are so, and I thank God for it. I arrived at Mrs. McKendsey's save, and I was treated very kindly while I was in the train, and Mr. and Mrs. McKendsey is very well, and they are very kind and good to me; and I am very happy, and I hope you are happy, and I hope the children are very well, and I hope Lucy James is getting on very well, and the book. And please, Miss Rye, if you have heard from my uncle, will you please to let me know, for I only wish I could hear from him, I would be very glad. And please let all my friends know, you no who I mean—all the children—that I am very well and in good health. I hope you spent a good Christmas and had a happy New Year's day. I hope you spent both well, and I hope the children did to. I know you have got shut of some more since I left. I hope Bobby is getting on, and I hope Charlotte Smith is a better girl, and I am very thankful to you, Miss Rye, for bringing me to Niagara, for if it had not been for you I would not have been where I am now, and I am in a good home, and I am very well fed and kindly treated, and Mr. and Mrs. McKendsey and myself are very well and happy. So no more from your scholar,

"SARAH ANN MOSELEY."

"Dornoch, April 7th, 1870.

"DEAR MISS RYE,

"I am very sorry I did not write to you before this, and I am very glad that you have found for me a good and kind mistress, and master; and will you please tell me who the girl was that died, for I am very sorry to hear of her. And please, Miss Rye, will you tell in the when you are going to England, and if you are Kirkdale again. And please, Miss Rye, will you please tell me if Charlotte is a better girl. And please, Miss Rye, how many of the girls have you got now? And, dear Miss Rye, will you please answer this letter before you go back to England? So no more at present from your affectionate scholar,

"MARY ANN KEELEY."

"New Jersey, Union Farm, February 7th, 1870.

"I now write these few lines to tell you that I like my place very much, and my mistress is very kind to me and gives me all I want, and it is a very nice place indeed, and I only got there on Saturday morning at 2 o'clock, and I was very glad to get there. And would you please tell me how you are getting on, and I like to know how the children are getting on. And would you please tell how Mrs. — is getting on, for I like to know very much how your two children are, and I hope they are quiet well, and I hope all is well, and would tell me how Catherine Travis is, for I like to know very much how she am, and I like to know how you are getting on, and would please tell Priscilla Elliot that I will soon send her a letter soon, and I send my kind love to Priscilla Elliot and Mary Hodson, and to Louisa Burden, and would you please tell me how George is getting on, for I like to know very much, and I thank him very much for carrying my box over, and I want know how you are getting on, and I send my kind love to you, and I very happy, and I am very sorry to that I cannot write any better, for it is my first time in writing a letter to you and write it all myself, and I am going to put a few verses in this letter, it is about it is well.

"TIS WELL.

"Beloved, 'tis well!"

God's ways are always right;
And perfect love is o'er them all,
Tho' far above our sight.

Beloved, 'tis well!"

Tho' deep and sore the smart,
The hand that wounds knoweth how to bind
And heal the broken heart.

Beloved, 'tis well!"

Tho' sorrow cloud our way,
'Twill only make the joy more dear
That ushers in the day.

"So no more at present from your affectionate,

"MARTHA SINCLAIR."

"Niagara, Canada."

"MY DEAR MRS. RYE,

"I am getting well, and I like my home very well, and I am very happy; and, if you please, will you be so kind as to let me know wear my sister Matilda has gone? My mistress has bought me a great deal of clother. My eyes are very bad, and I cannot go out, and I am taking medicine and powders.

"ELIZA TAYLOR."

Cobourg, Ontario.

"Canfield, February 4th, 1870.

"DEAR MISS RYE,

"I now take the opportunity of writing you a few lines. We received your kind letter on the 3rd, and was glad to hear from you. I am well and in good health as this letter leaves me at present, hoping that it may find you the same. As regards the book, I gave Margret Carr a pitcher for the book, and will you please ask Margret Carr about it; will you please ask Lucy James and Eliza Villiards about it, and I hope Lucy is getting on very well; and when you write please let me know how Louisa Burden is, and I like my home very well, and they are all very kind to me and sister, and I could not be better treated than what I am, and that I would rather be hear than with my own sisters, and I think that their is no better home about Canada than what it is, and my mamma treats me and my sister as if we were her own children.

"EMILY CLAYTON and
"LOUISA CLAYTON."

[The writers of the five last letters were children from the Kirkdale (Liverpool) Workhouse Schools, the spelling unaltered, and the composition evidently unassisted.—M. S. R.]