**Historical dissertations on the law and practice of Great Britain, and particularly of Scotland, with regard to the poor; on the modes of charity; and on the means of promoting the improvement of the people; together with a selection of facts and documents, and miscellaneous inquiries, illustrative of the management of the poor in Scotland, and in various parts of the continent of Europe, &c; / by the Rev. Robert Burns.**


### Contributors

Burns, Robert, 1789-1869.
London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine

### Publication/Creation

Glasgow : Printed by Young, Gallie, and Company, for Peter Hill and Company, Edinburgh; Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, and Brown, London; Reid and Henderson, Glasgow; A. Brown and Co., Aberdeen; and Johnston and Deas, Dublin, 1819.

### Persistent URL

https://wellcomecollection.org/works/a5ngcucv

### Provider

London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine

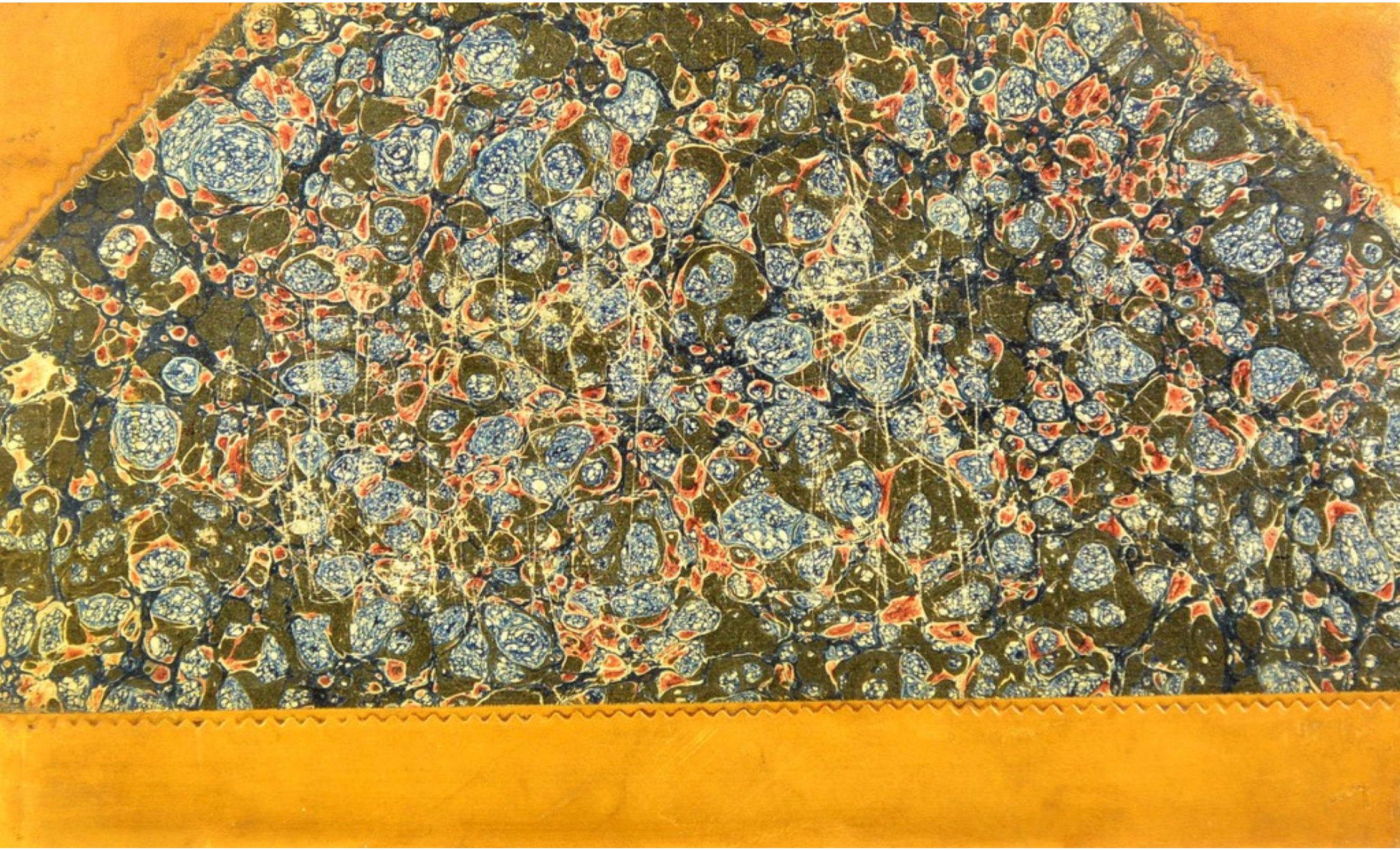
### License and attribution

This material has been provided by This material has been provided by London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine Library & Archives Service. The original may be consulted at London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine Library & Archives Service. where the originals may be consulted. This work has been identified as being free of known restrictions under copyright law, including all related and neighbouring rights and is being made available under the Creative Commons, Public Domain Mark.

You can copy, modify, distribute and perform the work, even for commercial purposes, without asking permission.

wellcome collection

Wellcome Collection
183 Euston Road
London NW1 2BE UK
T +44 (0)20 7611 8722
E library@wellcomecollection.org
https://wellcomecollection.org



LIBRARY

Author: BURNS (R)

Title: The Poor Laws

| Acc. No. | Class Mark | Date | Volume |
|---|---|---|---|
| 71189 | *ZVL | 1819 | |

LONDON SCHOOL OF HYGIENE
LIBRARY
9 JAN 1970
AND TROPICAL MEDICINE

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2015

https://archive.org/details/b21356889

# HISTORICAL
# DISSERTATIONS
ON THE
# Law and Practice of Great Britain,
AND PARTICULARLY OF
# SCOTLAND,
## WITH REGARD TO THE POOR;
ON THE
## MODES OF CHARITY;
AND ON THE MEANS OF
## *PROMOTING THE IMPROVEMENT OF THE PEOPLE;*
TOGETHER WITH
A SELECTION OF FACTS AND DOCUMENTS,
AND MISCELLANEOUS INQUIRIES,
ILLUSTRATIVE OF
THE MANAGEMENT OF THE POOR IN SCOTLAND, AND IN VARIOUS PARTS OF THE CONTINENT OF EUROPE, &c.


BY THE
REV. ROBERT BURNS,
ONE OF THE MINISTERS OF PAISLEY.


"It never was our guise
To slight the Poor; or aught humane despise."
*Odyssey, Book* xiv. 65.

"Patience, labour, frugality, sobriety, and religion, should be recommended to the Poor; all the rest is downright fraud." *Burke's Thoughts on Scarcity.*


Second Edition, Enlarged.

GLASGOW:
*Printed by Young, Gallie, and Company,*
FOR PETER HILL AND COMPANY, EDINBURGH;
LONGMAN, HURST, REES, ORME, AND BROWN, LONDON;
REID AND HENDERSON, GLASGOW; A. BROWN AND CO.
ABERDEEN; AND JOHNSTON AND DEAS, DUBLIN.

1819.

71189

LONDON SCHOOL OF HYGIENE AND TROPICAL MEDICINE
9 JAN 1970

To the Right Honourable

WILLIAM STOURGES BOURNE, M. P.

SIR,

I HAVE ventured to inscribe the following Work to you, as Chairman of the Committee of the House of Commons on the Poor Laws, from a full conviction that in the official capacity which you hold, you will feel it your duty to encourage every effort that may be made to illustrate one of the most complicated and difficult questions in political economy. My object in this work is, not so much to exhibit systematic views of my own, as to furnish some slender additions to the stock of materials on which the practical philosopher and economist may successfully operate. The larger our collection of well authenticated facts, the surer must be the foundation of our reasonings; and in exact proportion to our acquaintance with the state of man as it actually is, will be our distance of removal from the regions of conjectural hypothesis. If the appointment of Committees by both Houses of Parliament, to inquire into the subject of the Poor, should have no other result than that of adding to our stock of information, and thus paving the way for more successful proposals and arrangements in future, the labour which has been bestowed, or which may yet be bestowed, will not be the subject of regret.

The Committee, of which you are Chairman, has repeatedly expressed a wish for more full and detailed information regarding the state and management of the Poor in Scotland. The following work is the result partly of observation and experience, and partly of correspondence with different districts of the country. Accuracy and fulness of statement have above all things been studied; and I have felt more anxiety about the correctness of the premises, than about the legitimacy of my conclusions. The reason is plain; for, where facts and observations are accurately exhibited, every man is enabled to judge for himself. The great evil in all departments of philosophy has all along been, that men have grasped eagerly at the supposed result, before the real facts of the case have been clearly and decisively substantiated.

I have the honour to be,

SIR,

Your most obedient Servant,

ROBT. BURNS.

PAISLEY,
*May* 22, 1819.

# CONTENTS.

PAGE.

PREFACE, - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - xi

## Part First.

## HISTORICAL DISSERTATIONS.

### DISSERTATION I.

*On the Office and Duties of the Eldership in the Church of Scotland,* - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - 1

SECTION I.—Historical Sketch of the Constitution of the Scottish Church, and particularly of the Office of the Eldership, - - - - - - - - - 3

——— II.—The Divine Authority of the Offices of Deacon and Elder, - - - - - - - - - - - - 8

——— III.—Office and Duty of the Eldership, as it respects the Management of the Poor, - - - - - 14

——— IV.—The Duties of the Eldership, with respect to the spiritual concerns of the church, - - 26

——— V.—Qualifications of an Elder, - - - - - - - 41

——— VI.—Practical Inferences, - - - - - - - - 44

### DISSERTATION II.

*A comparative view of the English and Scottish systems of Poor Laws,* - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - 48

SECTION I.—Sketch of the rise and progress, and present state of the system of Poor Laws in England and Scotland, - - - - - - - - - - - - - ib.

——— II.—The English and Scottish systems of Poor Laws compared and contrasted, - - - - - - - - 61

——— III.—Practical Suggestions, - - - - - - - - 73

### DISSERTATION III.

*Historical Sketch of Statutes and Decisions respecting the Poor in England, with Remarks,* - - - - - - - - - - - - - 83

SECTION I.—Statutes and Decisions regarding the Poor, - - ib.

——— II.—Observations, - - - - - - - - - - - - 90

PAGE.

DISSERTATION IV.

*Historical Review of Decisions in the Supreme Court of Scotland respecting the Poor, with Remarks,* - - - - - - - - - 96

SECTION I.—Register of Decisions in the Court of Session, from 1711—1816, - - - - - - - - - 97

——— II.—Observations suggested by the preceding Review, - - - - - - - - - - - - - - 101

——— III.—Leading principles in the mode of managing the Poor in Scotland, - - - - - - - - 103

DISSERTATION V.

*On the moral tendency and effects of compulsory Assessments.* - 106

SECTION I.—Observations on the general principle of Assessment for the poor, - - - - - - - - - 107

——— II.—Effects of Assessment, particularly as exhibited in England, - - - - - - - - - - - - 111

——— III.—Tendencies of Assessment as exhibited in Scotland, - - - - - - - - - - - - - - 119

——— IV.—General conclusions, - - - - - - - - - 121

DISSERTATION VI.

*On the causes which prevented the introduction of Poor Rates into Scotland,* - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - 128

DISSERTATION VII.

*On the causes which have led to the introduction of Poor Rates into Scotland,* - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - 137

DISSERTATION VIII.

*Remarks on the Reports of the General Assembly to both Houses of Parliament, on the Management of the Poor in Scotland,* 149

SECTION I.—State and Management of the Poor in the Town of Paisley, - - - - - - - - - - - - 156

——— II.—State and Management of the Poor in the City of Glasgow, - - - - - - - - - - 162

——— III.—State and Management of the Poor in the Barony Parish of Glasgow, - - - - - - - 169

——— IV.—State and Management of the Poor in the parishes of Gorbals and Govan, Glasgow, - 174

——— V.—State and Management of the Poor in the Town and Parish of Ayr, - - - - - - 178

PAGE.

SECTION VI.—State and Management of the Poor in the Parish of Kirriemuir, Angus, - - - - - - 181
——— VII.—State and Management of the Poor in the City of Edinburgh, - - - - - - 183

DISSERTATION IX.

*On Voluntary Private Charity,* - - - - - - - - - - 188

DISSERTATION X.

*On Benevolent Associations,* - - - - - - - - - - - 199

DISSERTATION XI.

*On the moral tendency and effects of Sabbath Schools,* - - 216

DISSERTATION XII.

*On the causes which have injured the moral character and interests of Scotland, particularly in its more populous manufacturing districts,* - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - 240

## Part Second.

FACTS AND DOCUMENTS, AND MISCELLANEOUS INQUIRIES, ILLUSTRATIVE OF THE MANAGEMENT OF THE POOR IN SCOTLAND, AND COLLATERAL TOPICS, - - - - - - - 253

NUMBER I.—The Election of Eldaris and Deaconis in the Church of Edinburgh, - - - - - - - 257
——— II.—View of the law and practice of Scotland with respect to the Poor, - - - - - - - - 261
——— III.—Abridged view of the Law of Scotland with regard to Vagabonds and Sturdy Beggars, - 265
——— IV.—Acts of Assembly with regard to the Poor, - 268
——— V.—On the Pastoral Duty required of Ministers of the Church of Scotland, with regard to the Poor, - - - - - - - - - - - 269
——— VI.—Account of the Management of the Poor in the Parish of Jedburgh, - - - - - - - - 271
——— VII.—Testimony of the Church of Scotland on Assessments, and on the general Management of the Poor, - - - - - - - - - - 274
——— VIII.—Instances of the discontinuance of Assessments, - - - - - - - - - - - - 296

PAGE.

NUMBER IX.—Specialties in the Management of the Poor of Scotland, - - - - - - - - - - - 298
——— X.—Account of the Management of the Poor in the Town and Parish of Alloa, - - - - 303
——— XI.—Tendency of certain legislative enactments to promote pauperism, - - - - - - - - 308
——— XII.—Account of the Edinburgh Charity Workhouse, and of Mr. Brown's plan for its regulation, 310
——— XIII.—Queries and Replies respecting the Poor of Glasgow, - - - - - - - - - - - 313
——— XIV.—Mode of managing the Poor in the Abbey Parish of Paisley, - - - - - - - - - 331
——— XV.—Queries and Replies respecting the State of the Poor in the three Parishes of the Burgh of Paisley, - - - - - - - - - - - 338
——— XVI.—Letter to the Author from Mr. Crichton, Master of the Hospital, on the State of the Hospital and Poor of Paisley, - - - - - 352
——— XVII.—Expense of Managing the Session Funds, 371
——— XVIII.—Of the Hospitals of Paisley, Edinburgh, and Glasgow, with Remarks on Hospitals in general, - - - - - - - - - 374
——— XIX.—Case of the Hospital, or Poor House of Musselburgh, - - - - - - - - - - 386
——— XX.—Authentic account of a late scrutiny of the Poor in Glasgow and Paisley; with Remarks, 388
——— XXI.—Plan of Register for the Poor, - - - - 402
——— XXII.—State and Management of the Poor in the Town and Parish of Montrose, - - ib.
——— XXIII.—On the relief granted to the Poor by Dissenting Congregations, - - - - - 408
——— XXIV.—Management of the Poor in the City of Aberdeen, - - - - - - - - - - 416
——— XXV.—Management of the Poor in the Town and Parish of Stirling. - - - - - - - 417
——— XXVI.—Management of the Poor in the Town and Parish of Dunfermline, - - - - - - 421
——— XXVII.—Historical Sketches of Benevolence, - 427
——— XXVIII.—Management of the Poor in Greenock, - 435
——— XXIX.—Management of the Poor in the Parish of Eastwood, - - - - - - - - - 438
——— XXX.—On the New Prison and Bridewell for the County of Renfrew, - - - - - - 440
——— XXXI.—General average of Public Charities in Town and Abbey Parishes of Paisley, - - 442
——— XXXII.—Account of the Dollar Institution, - - ib.

PAGE.

NUMBER XXXIII.—Additional Decisions on the Poor, - 444
——— XXXIV.—Management of the Poor in St. Cuthbert's, Edinburgh, - - - - - 445
——— XXXV.—Account of the Destitute Sick Society, Edinburgh, - - - - - - - 447
——— XXXVI.—Progress of Infectious Fever in Paisley and Glasgow, - - - - - - - - 450

## Part Third.

SKETCHES OF THE STATE AND MANAGEMENT OF THE POOR ON THE CONTINENT, &c. - - - - - - - - 455

NUMBER I.—Regulations enacted by the Emperor Charles V. respecting the Poor of Holland and the United Provinces, with Remarks, - - - - - - ib
——— II.—Laws enacted by the States General of Holland, in 1614 and 1649, regarding the Poor, with Remarks, - - - - - - - - - 459
——— III.—On the reasons for the small proportion of Poor in Holland, - - - - - - - - 461
——— IV.—Method of providing for the Poor in Holland, 463
——— V.—Charities of Naples, and other Towns of Italy, 466
——— VI.—State of the Poor in Spain and Portugal, - 467
——— VII.—Philanthropic Society of Paris, - - - - - 468
——— VIII.—State and Management of the Poor in Iceland, - - - - - - - - - - 469
——— IX.—Management of the Poor at Manheim, - - 470
——— X.—Account of the Hofwyl Institution, - - - 472
——— XI.—Account of the Management of the Poor at Hamburgh, by the Bishop of Durham, - 475
——— XII.—Thirty-eighth Report of the Poors' Establishment at Hamburgh, - - - - - - - 481
——— XIII.—State of Receipt and Expenditure of the Hamburgh Institution, - - - - - - - 488
——— XIV.—Observations, by Sir Thomas Bernard, on the Hamburgh plan, - - - - - - - ib.
——— XV.—Comparative view of Hamburgh in 1789 and 1799, - - - - - - - - 490
——— XVI.—State of Mendicity in London, - - 492
INDEX, - - - - - - - - - - 496

# PREFACE.

The Author is not aware that there occurs a single speculation throughout the whole of the following work. His leading object has been to select and arrange a few of those practical experiments on the Poor, the merits of which have been actually tried. The province of the natural historian may not be so dignified or enticing as that of the philosopher; but it is not the least important or useful. To the historian, it belongs to collect the requisite materials of reasoning; while it is the province of genuine philosophy to interpret and explain the phenomena which may thus be exhibited, and to deduce from them those general principles by which human life and human affairs may be regulated.

Since the following work was put to press, some important steps have been taken in order to the better regulation of the concerns of pauperism, both in England and in Scotland. The Committee lately re-appointed have introduced into the House a Bill for ascertaining more easily and simply, the question of residence and title to parochial relief;—a Bill, the leading principle of which must approve itself to all as sound and seasonable, whatever sentiments may be held on the subordinate question as to the precise term which may be deemed reasonable, in order to entitle to the benefits of settlement.—Mr. Kennedy has introduced a Bill for regulating the concerns of the Scottish poor; the leading feature of which is the investiture of the parochial courts, with the exclusive right of determination in all cases of petition for relief. On this Bill, the Author has stated his sentiments in the following letters, which were lately published in one of our periodical prints.

## LETTER FIRST.

*To the Editor of the Glasgow Herald.*

Sir,

I read in your paper of yesterday, a few remarks on the state of the laws regarding the poor in Scotland, with a particular reference to a bill announced for introduction into Parliament on that subject. With the nature of the bill, the objects and provisions of it, and the reasons which may have dictated its introduction, I am entirely unacquainted. But I have full

confidence in the talents and intentions of the gentleman who has taken it in hand. Mr. Kennedy has, for a very considerable time past, made the subject of the poor in Scotland his peculiar study. He has personally ascertained the state of things in many districts; and he has corresponded with almost every part of the kingdom, in search of local and statistical information. It is to be hoped that he will in due time lay before the public the results of his inquiries; and there cannot be a doubt, that by the publication of such results, the best interests of the poor, and of the country at large, will be essentially promoted. In the meantime, he has thought it his duty, as a Member of Parliament, to call the attention of the House to the subject; and, perhaps, in doing so, he has been actuated more by a wish to excite an interest in the general question, and to cherish a spirit of inquiry in regard to it, than by any design of fettering us with the machinery of a complex series of legislative enactments. Still, I agree with your correspondent, that the proceedings, even of this respectable gentleman, require to be watched—that the ark of our safety, and the palladium of our national strength, ought not to be touched incautiously—that legislation is ever to be deprecated, when it interferes with the constitution of nature, and the current of social sympathy—and that the state of things in the southern department of our island, ought ever to operate with us, as a salutary warning against the multiplication of statutes, which, however benevolent in appearance, may ultimately produce effects the very reverse of their intention, and contribute to swell the tide of national degeneracy.

There are *two* things in the system of poor laws established in England, from which much evil has arisen. The one is, *the excess of legislation which has been expended upon them*—and the other is, the extreme *particularity and minuteness* of the statutes, occasioned seemingly by the hopeless attempt to provide an express injunction and enactment for every possible emergency. In travelling through the poor laws of England, the pilgrim feels himself, as it were, immured in the recesses of a deep forest; the bye-paths and openings are numberless; every object distracts; and there are no land-marks, to guard against mistakes. Hence we find, that in England, the litigation between parishes, about settlements and claims, is endless, vexatious, and oppressive. The charities of neighbourhood and kindred are wounded. Parishes, and hamlets, which ought to help each other as brethren, are at war against each other in battle array. The funds provided for relief of

indigence are squandered on law to the extent of *hundreds of thousands* in the course of one year. Poor but industrious labourers are hunted and harassed with removals; and wherever their lot chances to be cast, there they fail not to experience the chilling influence of suspicion, jealousy, and distrust, in all their varieties of form. *Overseers of the poor*, in place of being the friends and guardians of the poor, too often become dead to the sensibilities of nature, and exhibit too near a resemblance to the executors of criminal law. In the English system there is a want of *simplicity*, and of reference to general principles. Too little has been left to the discretion of those personally interested in the business of the poor, and to the peculiarities of circumstances as they occur.

In Scotland the case is very different. Our poor laws are few—in some cases impolitic—in many cases indefinite—in not a few cases contradictory—and in all, declared to be subordinate to the judgment and discretion and good sense of those who are intrusted with their administration. This state of things has contributed to prevent the introduction of the system in many instances; and in general it has had the good effect of leaving much, very much, to the operation and influence of that common sense and sound discretion, which are superior to all law; and for the want of which, no statutory knowledge, however extensive or profound, can atone. It is a striking and a gratifying fact, that in the decisions of our courts on the subject of the poor, much deference has all along been paid to the principles of general equity, and to the local information and judgment of the parochial judicatories. Our civil rulers are fully aware that the care of the poor, and the execution of the poor laws, have been vested in those who are by far the most competent for the business; and they are always jealous of any needless interference. The *right of appeal* no doubt is the glory of a British subject; and there is no reason why any class of men should be deprived of it. But still experience warrants us to affirm, that in our legally constituted parochial courts, the interests of the poor have been safely and benevolently lodged;—*safely*, with regard to the interests of all parties concerned—and *benevolently*, with regard to the objects of charitable distribution. We express the general sense of the country when we say—let things remain as they are; let the established plan of procedure go forward as it has done during former ages; and let not the rage for legislation interfere with it. Still, let the system be improved where it is practicable—and there is no doubt that many improvements may be grafted

on the original stock. But these improvements will be brought about, not so much by new legislative statutes, as by the general good sense of the country directing its energies to the subject of the poor, and exerting itself in their behalf. Let the enlightened and the liberal condescend to take an interest in the business; let the rich and wealthy aid by their personal labours as well as by their purses; let a spirit of harmony and conciliation correct our religious differences; and let ministers and people combine their efforts to promote the influence of that true religion and morality which is alone "the glory" and the stability of a nation.

Although I am jealous of legislative interference, in so far as the leading features of the system are concerned, still there are *three* points on which I think some new legislative enactment appears to be expedient. In the *first* place, let the act of George II., commonly called the Vagrant Act, be modified and extended in its provisions to Scotland, as well as to England and Wales.—In the *second* place, let an obligation be laid on the public prosecutor to interfere in all cases of desertion and illegitimacy, at the simple instance of the parochial courts, and free of all expense, either to the party aggrieved or to the public funds of the poor.—In the *third* place, let some regulation be adopted for restricting the number of licences to ale-houses, according to the population, or peculiar circumstances, of each district. Intemperance is indeed "Scotland's skaith." Its prevalence has contributed, and will, we fear, contribute, to augment the evils of pauperism, and to poison the very fountains of our social prosperity.

I am, Sir, yours, &c.

A Reader.

*April* 13, 1819.

## LETTER SECOND.

Sir,

I lately addressed you on the subject of the poor laws of Scotland, and particularly on the Bill introduced into the House of Commons by Mr. Kennedy, for the better regulation of the concerns of the Scottish poor. I was then almost entirely ignorant of the provisions of that Bill; and, like many others, naturally felt a little jealous of any thing like legislative interference in a matter which has hitherto been managed so well, and almost entirely without any such interference. I had some suspicions also on another point. Not being acquainted

with Mr. Kennedy's private sentiments on the law and practice of Scotland regarding the management of the poor, I was afraid lest the object of his Bill should be, either to take the inspection of the poor, and the administration of the funds for their relief, out of the hands of those who, from time immemorial, have executed, and executed faithfully, this important trust; or to limit and restrain their operations in such a manner as might induce a feeling of dissatisfaction and jealousy. It is well known that in some districts, and among some descriptions of heritors, there has appeared of late a disposition to innovate on this point, and thus, though perhaps unintentionally, to weaken the hands of the ordinary administrators of the parochial funds. Many of the heritors of Scotland have yet to learn the unspeakable obligations they are under to the eldership of the church, for the gratuitous labours which they undergo, and the care, the assiduity, and the tenderness, with which they discharge the trust of almoners to the poor.

I am gratified to find that my fears were groundless; and that the Hon. Member, far from seeking to abridge the powers, or to weaken the influence of the parochial courts, has it in contemplation to extend their powers, and to augment their influence. The leading object of this Bill is, to make the decisions of the Kirk-sessions, acting along with the heritors, *final* in all matters affecting the poor. We know what evils have resulted in England from the unlimited power with which the justices are invested in regard to the allocation of allowances to paupers; and those who are acquainted with the Southern districts of Scotland, can bear testimony to the injury which has been done by the extended exercise of the right of appeal to the local magistracy. It may no doubt be thought harsh and even unconstitutional to deprive any class of British subjects of the right of appeal to a superior court, in cases where they think themselves aggrieved. But let us take the following considerations into view. In the *first* place; it will be allowed by all, that the local guardians of the poor, or in other words the members of the parochial courts, are, and must from the nature of things be, the most competent judges of the state and character of applicants; and in general of all those circumstances which are supposed to influence in the measure of charitable distribution. They are constantly resident among the people. They hold their office for no limited period; they are habitually engaged in the general inspection of the poor.—In the *second* place; it is not to be supposed as at all likely, that a body of men, acting independently—influenced like other bodies by

their individual sentiments—and controlled by the diversified ingredients of which the body is composed—will all combine in order to oppress a helpless pauper by depriving him of a reasonable allowance; and, *in fact*, very few instances of such oppression have ever been complained of. It is principally in the *districts bordering on England*, that the right of appeal to justices has been frequently exercised; and yet in those other districts where it is almost never thought of, I believe the really poor are fully as well attended to.—In the *third* place; it is hardly possible, in the nature of things, that a justice, or a bench of justices, who know little or nothing of the peculiarities of the case, and who look merely to the point of *residence*, can be competent to give a fair and impartial decision in those questions of local interest which may come before them; and hence we find, that in general the local magistracy are averse to interfere in disputes between the parochial courts and discontented applicants.

In the parochial schoolmasters' act of 1803, the judgments of presbyteries in all matters affecting the character, qualifications, and conduct of teachers, are made final. It has been acted on for the last sixteen years, and has been found productive of no inconvenience. The investiture of the parochial courts with a similar power in regard to the poor, may be vindicated on principles substantially the same.

It is not, however, I presume, the design of the Bill to free the parishes of Scotland from every species of control in the management of the poor's funds. Where the heritors and parishioners neglect to make adequate provision for their ordinary poor, the arm of law must still interfere to compel them. Where the claim of residence is disputed between different parishes, it must still belong to the competent courts to settle the matter. Where a Committee of overseers, appointed by the heritors, manage the poor's affairs, they must ever be amenable to the general body of proprietors and inhabitants. Where the kirk-session has the *exclusive* management, the heritors must still retain the right of control; and the presbytery of the bounds must still be supposed competent to redress any instance of tyranny or oppression on the part of the inferior court. In all these cases, things must remain as they are; and the design of the Bill merely is, to make the judgments of the parochial courts final in all cases of distribution to individual applicants.

Our views of this matter will be modified according to the opinion we entertain of the nature of that claim which the poor

are permitted to make on their richer brethren. In England, and in many districts of Scotland, much evil has been done by the ready adoption of the abstract principle, that *the poor have a right to support from the rich.* This principle, though apparently incorporated in our systems of poor laws, and specifically asserted and vindicated in Mr. Pitt's Bill on the poor laws in 1796, is palpably erroneous; and the ready acknowledgement of it has been one fruitful source of the evils attendant on poor's rates. On the plainest principles of morals, no man can have a right to that which he hath not acquired by his own exertions. No doubt we are bound by the laws of Christianity to "give alms;" but surely the claim of a poor man to compassion is of a very different nature from that of a servant to his wages. The right, if it exists at all, belongs to that class which moralists have termed *imperfect rights;* for this very reason, that they cannot be enforced by positive law. We are no doubt bound to give according to the law of kindness and christian love; but this will be modified by circumstances which can have no place in matters of common law. When a man becomes poor by habits of improvidence, does he thereby acquire a *right* to my property? Because a thoughtless youth makes a foolish marriage, and brings himself and his family to poverty, does he thereby acquire a *right* to maintenance? Because an operative does not choose to work for such wages as are current, or has neglected to lay up a little when wages were good, is he thereby entitled, in *rigid law,* to be maintained by the parish funds? If the right of a pauper to relief is the same with that of an industrious mechanic to his wages, there is clearly an end put to all charity, and a mortal blow aimed at the very vitals of all industry.

I am, Sir, your obedient Servant.

A Reader.

*May* 1*st*, 1819.

---

To those friends who have encouraged this work by their patronage and assistance, the Author takes this opportunity of expressing his obligations. Their names and services are too various to be minutely particularised. He cannot, however, omit mentioning, that he feels himself under particular obligations to those ministers and others in different parts of the country, who have so promtly and liberally attended to his communications. To Mr. Crichton, Master of the Hospital, Paisley, he is singularly indebted for the readiness with which

he communicated every information in his power respecting the management of the poor in Paisley, and various collateral points. To other members of the Eldership, both in and out of the establishment, he has also been indebted for some important particulars in their respective departments. To the Rev. Dr. M'Gill, Professor of Divinity, Glasgow;—James Ewing, Esq; Chairman of the Chamber of Commerce, and author of the comprehensive and interesting "Report of the Glasgow Poor"—James Cleland, Esq; Superintendent of Public Works, and author of that able and useful work, "the Annals of Glasgow;"—Alexander Campbell, Esq; Sheriff Substitute of Renfrewshire;—Mr. Gibson, Town Clerk of Paisley;—several members of the Faculty of Procurators;—and to other Gentlemen both in Paisley and in Greenock, his best thanks are due for accommodating him with books, and otherwise encouraging his labours.—In general, he begs it to be understood, that in hardly a single instance has a statement of facts been committed to the press before it had undergone the revision of those most competent to judge.

As it is the Author's wish to subject every topic to the most rigid scrutiny, he will esteem it a favour to be furnished, from time to time, with more correct or more enlarged information.

---

Since the publication of the first edition of this work, the Author has learned that one or two expressions in one of the Dissertations relative to the influence of manufactures and public works, on the education and morals of the young, have given offence to some. The Author begs to state, that he had not the most distant intention of imputing blame to those industrious classes of men, who, with the burden of large families, may be compelled, by dire necessity, to deny to their children those advantages which they would in other circumstances most cheerfully grant them. At the same time, as the facts noticed in that Dissertation are too well founded, the question as to the *reason* or *cause* why it is so, comes to be one of inferior importance, so long as the facts themselves are felt to operate with a malignant influence. There cannot be a doubt, that by many parents education is prized much less now than in former times; and there is reason to fear, that as Scotland advances in manufactures, its inhabitants will be found to realise, in a smaller degree, the characters of a well instructed and well behaved population.

PAISLEY,
*May*, 1819.

# PART FIRST.

# HISTORICAL DISSERTATIONS.

## DISSERTATION I.

### ON THE OFFICE AND DUTIES OF THE ELDERSHIP IN THE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND.

IN all the inquiries, and in all the reasonings of Scotchmen on the subjects of pauperism and of charity, the office and the duties of the eldership in the church must ever hold a prominent place. By the original plan on which the reformed religion in this country was settled—by a succession of Acts of Parliament, and decisions of the competent courts—and by the general consent and approbation of all classes in the community—the great burden of superintending, providing for, and managing the concerns of the poor, has devolved on the eldership of the church. Although, of late years, material changes have been introduced into the modes of management adopted, particularly in populous towns, and extensive landward parishes; still we find, that in all such cases, a large proportion of the labour and responsibility falls to the share of the elders; and to their information and testimony, the claims of pauperism must, in most instances, be ultimately referred. As the questions regarding the causes and cure of pauperism, and the best means of conducting the business of charitable provision for the poor have occupied, and are likely to occupy the public mind to an indefinite period; and as our brethren, in the southern parts of the island, have turned their eyes, with a kind of longing anticipation, to the modes of management

adopted in Scotland, it may not be thought unseasonable to offer to the public a short view of the nature of the office of the eldership, and the duties which it involves. By such a view, those who feel most deeply interested in the subject of the poor, but who may not be acquainted with the peculiar features of the Scottish system, will be enabled, in some measure, to judge of the fitness of that system to answer the ends designed by it, and thus to compare it with the established system of England.

It is not my intention, however, to sanction the too generally prevalent and pernicious opinion, that the care of the poor constitutes the whole, or principal part of the duties of an elder. The fact is, as we shall by and by shew, the care of the poor does not belong to the elder *as such*, but is devolved on him solely in consequence of his being called to occupy a double relation. The eldership is a *spiritual* office; and, as such, it comprehends certain spiritual duties, inseparably connected with the edification of the church, and the general interest of religion. It shall be our endeavour, then, to state distinctly, the *secular* and the *spiritual* relations in which an elder is placed, and to exhibit them in their mutual connexions and subserviency to one common end.

I have further to observe, as a preliminary which I wish to be kept in mind, that, although in the statements which may be given, a particular reference must be made to the office of the eldership, as sanctioned by the constitution, and illustrated by the procedure of the established church of Scotland; still the representation will be conducted in such a manner as to suit, with a few modifications, any of the other bodies of Christians in this country, and in other countries who hold the substantial principles of Presbyterian government. Every man is supposed to be best acquainted with the law and the practice of his own body; and, on that account, I consider myself fully warranted to take the measure of my statements and reasonings from the church of which I am a member. Let it also be recollected, that, with the subject before us, the questions at issue between the establishment and presbyterian dissenters in this country, can have no connexion whatever. The office of the eldership boasts of an existence and an age far beyond the era of secession. Independent of its scriptural authority, it holds a distinguished place in the early annals of the reformed church

of Scotland, and it flourished in all the vigour and maturity of its strength, at a period when, comparatively speaking, the members of the Christian community "were of one heart and of one soul." When the questions at issue between the adherents of the establishment and the seceders from it, were keenly agitated, the minds of all parties were happily united regarding the constituent principles of ecclesiastical jurisdiction; and from that period to the present, the eldership among presbyterian dissenters, and among the members of the establishment, has retained its substantial features of resemblance. Wherever the members of both communions have been actuated by a corresponding spirit of zeal and of Christian love, a frequent union of effort and of operation has been the result, and the best effects have been exhibited in the progress of religion and the moral improvement of the people.

## SECTION I.

*Historical Sketch of the Constitution of the Scottish Church, and particularly of the Office of the Eldership.*

On the establishment of the Protestant Reformed religion in Scotland, in the year 1560, one of the first objects of attention to Knox and the other leaders of the reformation, was the settlement of the form of ecclesiastical polity. Accordingly, a scheme of doctrine, government, and discipline, was prepared by order of the General Assembly; and, after much discussion, and no little opposition from certain quarters, it was finally approved and ratified by the parliament of the kingdom. According to this scheme, the care of the moral and spiritual concerns of the people was entrusted to certain office-bearers, whose particular departments were, in general, indicated, by the names which distinguished them. These were superintendents—pastors—doctors—ruling elders—and deacons.

The office of the *superintendent* was to plant churches and ministers: and to take an inspection of the conduct of the clergy, and of ecclesiastical affairs in a particular district, which was committed to his charge. That the original plan of the reformed church of Scotland was, in all substantial respects,

presbyterian, will not be disputed by any one who is tolerably conversant in the history of the subject. Most unquestionably, Scotland was reformed by presbyters; and the letter and spirit of its reformed constitutions establish, beyond a doubt, the prevalence of sentiments decidedly presbyterian. Some have thought indeed that the establishment of an order of Superintendents indicates an attachment to episcopalian forms. But there are two matters of fact, which go directly to disprove and to set aside any such conclusion. The one is—that the church itself, in its corporate capacity, expressly declared at the time, that the institution of the order of superintendent was merely designed as a *temporary expedient*, rendered necessary by the scarcity of preachers, and by the demand from all parts of the country, for the benefits of religious instruction *. And hence we find, that when the originally appointed superintendents were removed by death, no successors were appointed in their place. The state of things had changed, and necessity for such an expedient could no longer be pleaded. The second fact is—that the office of superintendent, even supposing it to have been designed for permanence, was so regulated and controlled, as to be perfectly consistent with the leading principles of presbytery. The superintendents were either ordinary ministers, who acted by virtue of their clerical office; or respectable laymen, who were vested with a special commission by the appointment of their brethren. They had no jurisdiction of their own, but were merely agents or commissioners for others. They derived their power from the General Assemblies of the church—to them they were at all times amenable—and their conduct was by them regularly scrutinised. They were, in fact, merely commissioners appointed by the General Assembly, in order to watch over the general interests of the church, and to report, from time to time, to their ecclesiastical superiors. And hence we find,

* The authoritative words of the First Book of Discipline are these: "We consider that if the ministers, whom God hath endowed with his singular graces amongst us, should be appointed to several places, there to make their continual residence, that then the greatest part of the realm should be destitute of all doctrine; which should not only be the occasion of great murmur, but also be dangerous to the salvation of many. And, *therefore*, we have thought it a thing, *most expedient at this time*, that, from the whole number of godly and learned men, now presently in this realm, be selected ten or twelve, (for in so many provinces we have divided the whole,) to whom charge and commandment should be given, to plant and erect kirks; to set order, and appoint ministers, as the former order prescribes to the countries that shall be appointed to their care, where none are now." The First Book of Discipline, chap. vi. of Superintendents.

that, after the death of the first five superintendents, the ends and purposes of their appointment were substantially answered by the temporary commissions which were, from time to time, granted by the assembly, to certain ministers and others, to act as *visitors* of particular districts, and to report their sentiments of the state of religion, in so far as actual inspection enabled them to judge of it. On these grounds, we are authorised to conclude, that the office of superintendent was not disigned to be permanent in the church, and that, although it had been so designed it would not have inferred the subversion of consistent presbyterian principles.

Among the ordinary and permanent office-bearers of the church, the *pastor* and the *doctor* held the first place. It belonged to the first, to take the immediate inspection of the particular flock which was intrusted to him—to inquire into, and watch over its spiritual concerns—to preach the gospel publicly, and on stated occasions—to administer the sacraments—to visit and exhort from house to house—to attend to the religious education of youth—and to exercise, faithfully, the discipline of the church. It belonged to the second, to interpret and explain, critically and practically, the sacred scriptures—to watch over the interests of theological literature—to examine and confute the errors which might arise among the members of the church—to aid the pastor in matters of ecclesiastical jurisdiction—and to assist in the education of young men for the work of the ministry. It would appear that the name and office of doctor were confined almost exclusively to the professors of theology and the regents in the different universities, and to the rectors of particular academical institutions. No doubt, in large towns and populous parishes, where the labours of two ministers were necessary, the one generally took the name of pastor, and the other that of doctor, or teacher—the one attending more immediately to the *practical* part; and the other to what may, for the sake of distinction, be termed the *doctrinal* part of the ministerial office. But as the two departments, though speculatively distinct, were in fact extremely apt to run into each other, we find, that, in the course of things, the distinction gradually died away, and the ordinary name of pastor, or minister, was employed to designate all who exercised the functions of the clerical office. The pastor of the parish was neither more nor

less than the spiritual teacher and guide of the people—the superintendent of their moral interests—the guardian of the flock to whom he was attached.

The original design of the office of *elder*, was to assist the ordinary pastor in exercising ecclesiastical discipline and government; and hence, in virtue of this, those who held the office were termed *ruling elders*. In the discharge of the numerous and difficult duties of the ministerial office, it appeared to our forefathers wise and proper that the pastor should receive the assistance of his people in so far as they were competent to give it. Accordingly it was appointed that, from each parish and congregation, there should be selected a certain number of the more judicious and respectable members, who might be aiding to the minister by their advice and co-operation, and along with whom, as his cabinet council, he might consult and determine in all matters which affected the interests of religion and of the church. While in the public preaching of the gospel, and the administration of the sacraments, the pastor acted alone; in all other matters affecting the public concerns of the parish or congregation, he was supposed to co-operate with the members of the eldership.

As in the days of primitive Christianity the care of the poor members of the church devolved, as a sacred duty, on the office-bearers of the Christian community, so, at the era of the reformation from popery, the same great principle was practically recognised. Although the fathers of the reformed church of Scotland did not succeed in their wishes to have a part of the ecclesiastical revenues appropriated to the support of the poor, they did not retaliate on the rapacity of those who combined to defeat their intentions, by resigining all charge of the objects of social beneficence. By general consent the care of the poor was intrusted with the clergy, and they cheerfully undertook the trust. But as the discharge of the duties which this trust involved, required far more time and far more labour than the ordinary pastors of the church could bestow from their peculiar avocations, it was found expedient, as it was certainly agreeable to the primitive model, to appoint an order of men who might assist the minister in the charge of providing for the wants of the poor, inquiring into their situation, and administering, from time to time, to the supply of their necessities. These men, thus chosen and set apart,

were called *deacons*, and their office was clearly designed to remain permanent in the church. It is obviously distinct from that of the eldership, inasmuch as it implied no power of ruling or governing in the spiritual concerns of the people. Although it is certain that the duties of both may be performed by the same individual, yet as the offices in themselves are different, and as they require very different qualifications, it is certainly desirable that they should be kept in all cases clearly distinct. Their union, in the same individuals, is a modern departure from ancient usage, and from express statute.

At the commencement of the reformation, by reason of the scarcity of ministers, and the extent of particular charges, private individuals were occasionally selected to the office of *readers* and *exhorters*, whose duty it was to read the scriptures publicly on the Lord's day; and, in the absence of the officiating minister, to expound them, and enforce their practical application on the consciences of the people. But, as this was merely an appointment dictated by necessity, it cannot, and ought not to be recognised as an established part of the constitution of the church. It was terminated by a decree of the General Assembly, 1581 *.

The standing office-bearers, then, in the reformed Church of Scotland, are, the minister, the elder, and the deacon. These constitute together what is termed the *consistory*, or *kirk session*, to whose office it belongs to manage all matters which affect the moral and religious interests of the district over which it presides †. In the presbyterian churches on the continent, and in America, and among the original bodies of dissenters from the established church of Scotland, the same constitution of things is found to obtain. There will, no doubt, be diversities of modes according to local circumstances, which affect different churches, and the same church, at different times. But still the grand features in all are the same—and in all we are able to trace the lineaments of a common ancestry.

* Buik of the Universal Kirk, April, 1581, quoted by M'Crie in his Life of Knox, Vol. II. p. 283.

† Let it be recollected that *deacons*, as such, have no voice in the judicatories of the church, except on subjects which respect the concerns of the poor. The office of ruling and judging in matters of discipline, and in all affairs of a spiritual nature, belongs exclusively to the elder.

By the act of settlement, in 1690, the affairs of the church of Scotland were declared to belong to the office-bearers now enumerated; and its government was vested in classes or societies, composed of such office-bearers, and rising above each other in a regular gradation, from the simple parochial judicatory of a *kirk session*, to the more august procedure of a provincial or national assembly. From that period to the present, the scheme has remained without any essential alteration. The only change of any consequence, which time and custom have introduced, is the junction of the offices of elder and deacon. This is a change which has by no means been universally gone into, and it has never received the sanction of ecclesiastical authority. Among our dissenting brethren the distinction is generally kept up; and their example, in this respect certainly demands our imitation. *

## SECTION II.

### *The Divine authority of the Offices of Deacon and Elder.*

THERE cannot be a doubt that the offices of deacon and of elder, as held in the church of Scotland, are strongly recommended by sound judgment, and enlightened experience. The duties of a minister, particularly in an extended and populous district, are so numerous, and so complicated, as imperiously to require the aid of prudent and skilful assistants. The weekly preparation of two or more discourses for the pulpit—the annual or occasional visitation of all the families under his immediate inspection—the private instruction of the young and the ignorant—the frequent calls to enter the house of mourning, and to administer the consolations of religion to the children of sorrow—the dispensation of ordinances—the impartial exercise of discipline—and the thousand nameless duties of a positively religious nature, which devolve on the ordinary minister of a parish or congregation in Scotland, are far more than sufficient to occupy all the thoughts, to engross all the energies,

* It ought at the same time to be noticed, that in many congregations of presbyterian dissenters, there is no order of deacons distinct from that of elders. The concerns of the poor of the congregation are sometimes conducted conjointly by the elders, and the *managers* of its pecuniary affairs.

and to fill up all the time of the most laborious and active. It seems truly reasonable and desirable, therefore, that in those departments of duty which are more properly of a secular character, as well as in several of those which are exclusively spiritual and ecclesiastical, an order of men should be set apart to officiate in the capacity of assistants and counsellors. But further, a minister, who is subject to like passions with other men, and who is exposed to temptations, peculiarly his own, may often be imposed upon as to the character, circumstances, and claims of those who solicit his pastoral regard. It seems desirable, in this view, that he should be furnished with a regularly constituted and perpetually recurring system of means, by which error may be detected, and information of the most important nature acquired. And what means can be better adapted for this purpose, than the establishment of those ecclesiastical orders whose peculiar office it is to ascertain the facts of every case that comes under ministerial review, and who, living among the people, and taking a perpetual and narrow inspection of them, are qualified to furnish information and advice of no common importance and value. Once more; as every order of men, when left to itself, is extremely apt to indulge the *esprit du corps*, and, as the love of power and authority is a natural principle of the mind, which, unless guarded and controlled, is peculiarly exposed to the danger of excess; it seems right and proper that the authority and the privileges of an eccesiastical judicatory should be vested in a *mixed society*, in which the tendencies of each separate element are counteracted and harmoniously controlled by the spirit of the whole.

But, in matters which affect so deeply the constitution and principles of the Christian church, we naturally require something more than reason and experience as the basis of our conduct. However useful an ecclesiastical institution may be, it cannot demand our adoption, until it has substantiated its claims to Divine authority. The office of the eldership, however venerable for age, and however useful in every point of view, would lose much of its esteem, in the opinion of the Christian community, were its claims to the high distinction of a Divinely constituted office incapable of being proved. From the first settlement of the reformed faith in Scotland, down to the present moment, the office of the eldership has been uniformly classed among Divine institutions; and the men who hold it have been considered as deriving their authority from the sovereign Head and Legislator of his church.

In regard to that part of the elder's office which respects the concerns of the poor, there can be no room for a moment's hesitation. The office of *deacon*, to which we here refer, is sanctioned by apostolic authority and example, equally plain and decisive. When the limits of the church were enlarged, and when the number of the disciples was multiplied, the cares, and duties, and difficulties of the apostolic ministry increased and multiplied accordingly. To the ordinary and direct avocations of the Christian ministry had been superadded the charge of the community of goods, and the concerns of the poorer members of the church. The load, at first perhaps easy, soon became intolerable, even to apostolic men; and they called in the aid of the private members of the sacred society. Several men of judgment and piety, and prudence, "full of faith and of the Holy Ghost," were selected from the general body, and ordained as superintendents of the concerns of the poor *. They received the name of *deacons*, or ministering assistants, to the apostles and evangelists, who continued to act towards them in friendly and active co-operation. As the causes which gave rise to the appointment are not of a local and temporary nature, but must, in a greater or less degree, affect every age and every department of the church, we may rationally infer that the office was designed to occupy a permanent place. Accordingly, we find that wherever Christianity has prevailed in any degree of purity, there the institution of deacons, or something analogous to it, has retained its existence and its rights. The inspired history of the institution authorises us to maintain, as agreeable to the will of God, that the care of the poor members of the church ought to devolve on the general body, and that, for this end, an order of men ought to be specially constituted. Indeed, one of the worst consequences which has been observed to result from the practical dereliction by the church, of the active management of the poor, has been the gradual decline, and, in some instances, total annihilation of a scriptural and apostolic institute.

The evidence for the Divine authority of the *eldership*, as distinct from that of the deacon, appears to us perfectly satisfactory. In the 12th chapter of Paul's Epistle to the Romans, we find the office of a "ruler" in the church, expressly mentioned as distinct from that of the teacher, the pastor, and the deacon. The object of the apostle, in that chapter, is to draw

* Acts vi.

a parallel between the various office-bearers of the church and the members of the human body. As in the corporeal constitution of man, every member has its distinct place and its separate office assigned to it; so, in the spiritual body of Christ, which is his church, "whereof he is the Head," there are distinct places and departments of duty assigned to different office-bearers. One man may be fitted for the discharge of one class of duties, while another is fitted for the discharge of a different class of duties. A man may be qualified to rule and govern in the church, who may not be qualified to minister, or to teach. At the same time, as in the human frame, every place and every member has its use, in subordination to the order and harmony of the whole; so, in the spiritual body, every department has a relative importance, and every office-bearer is designed to prove subservient to the stability, the beauty, and the perfection of the system. Now, as all the members of the natural body are not qualified for performing the same offices; so it is obvious that all the private members of the ecclesiastical body do not possess the qualities necessary for ruling or governing in the church. On this account, it is clear, that, according to the mind of the apostle, the office of ruler is distinct from all others, and can and ought to be held only by those who possess the requisite qualifications. In point of number, they may be more or fewer according to the circumstances of individual churches, but still they must be held as constituent office-bearers, and, as such, distinguished at once from the pastoral superintendents, and from the private members.

In the 12th chapter of the first Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians, we find an enumeration of offices and office-bearers in the church; and, among these, a place is assigned to what the apostle terms "helps, governments." It is obvious that by these abstract terms, are designed to be denoted the persons who held the offices of *helpers*, or assistants, and *governors*, or rulers. The precise nature and extent of these offices are not precisely defined; but there can be little doubt that they held a place totally distinct from that of pastors or teachers. We may reasonably understand the word "helps" as referring to the office of *deacons*, who were originally appointed as helpers, or assistants to the apostles, in all matters connected with the temporal necessities of the poor: and the word "governments," we may consider as comprehending in it, such persons as were

set apart to the office of ruling and directing in all matters connected with the jurisdiction and discipline of the church. This appears, at first sight, to be the natural meaning of the words, and, in this sense, we view them as a strong incidental testimony to the existence of an order of rulers, and superintendents in the church, distinct from the ministers of the word.

But the clearest and most decisive testimony to the existence of an order of ruling elders in the primitive church, is derived from the first Epistle of Paul to Timothy, chap. v. 17. where we find the following injunction:—"Let the elders who rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine." It was never denied that this is the literal and correct rendering of the passage as it stands in the original, nor was the accuracy of the original ever called in question. Now, let any man of plain common sense, who knows nothing of the controversy on the point, read the injunction as it stands, and there cannot be a doubt as to the inference which it will suggest. To adopt the parallel instance adduced by an able writer on the subject;—Suppose such a declaration as this to be made—'all who study the sciences at an university are deserving of approbation, *but especially* those who engage in the study of theology'—would we not instantly infer that *all* who attended the university *did not* engage in the study of theology? In like manner, when we hear it declared, that elders, in general, when they rule the church well, are entitled to honour and esteem; but, that a special degree of honour and esteem is due to such as labour in the ministry of the word, are we not warranted to conclude, that there were at least, *some who did not* "labour in word and doctrine?" It is of no consequence to ascertain the precise nature of that honour which the apostle claims on behalf of elders. It may include a right to maintenance, or it may not. But certain it is, that, whatever be its nature, those are found specially entitled to it, who, *in addition* to the ordinary duties of ruling and governing in the church, are invested with the more difficult and laborious offices of teachers and guides to the people. Such appears to be the plain meaning of the passage, when cleared of the mist which party contentions have thrown around it.

That the order of elders, obtained in the primitive church,

is clear from the testimony of the fathers, from whose works I shall make a few selections. In the year 103, we find the following order given on a very particular occasion: "And the fellow-clergymen and *elders* of the people, ecclesiastical men, and let them inquire diligently what are these dissensions." * "There are *some rulers* appointed, says Origen, who may inquire concerning *the conversation* and *manners* of those that are admitted, that they may debar from the congregation such as commit filthiness."† "Both the Jewish synagogue and the Christian church," says Ambrose, "have *elders*, without whose counsel nothing is done in the church."‡ It is well known that the Jewish synagogues had elders who ruled, but never officiated as priests. Augustine, that distinguished luminary of the primitive church, addresses one of his letters to "the beloved brethren, the clergy, or clergymen, the *elders*, and the people of the church at Hippo," over which he presided.‖ He also speaks, in another place, of the "presbyter and elders of a particular district."§ Chrysostom, one of the most renowned of the fathers, in explaining the "helps, governments," noticed by the apostle, understands by the first, "those who took care of the poor;" and, by the second, "those who presided over, and managed and governed the spiritual concerns of the church."¶ If it were necessary, various other testimonies of the fathers might be adduced, to shew that the office of elders had a place in the purest times of the church. We shall only add, that, even in the darkest ages, this order of rulers was kept up by those societies and churches who retained something of the purity of the faith. According to Bucer, one of the German reformers, the office of the eldership was established in the Bohemian churches, and among the Waldenses and Albigenses, who, to use his expressive words, almost alone preserved, in the world, the purity of the doctrine, and the vigour of the discipline of Christ.** At the

* Gesta purgationis Cœciliani et Felicis.
† Origen contra Celsum.
‡ Ambrose Comment. in 1 Tim. v. 17.
‖ Epist. cxxxix.
§ Treatise against Cresconius, lib. iii. chap. lvi.
¶ Comment. on the place.

** Bucer, Scripta duo adversaria, &c. p. 77. On the whole of this subject, as well as on the collateral topics, I have much pleasure in strongly recommending the careful perusal of Mr. Brown's "Vindication of the Presbyterian Church Government." The respectable author will see that I have availed myself of some of his quotations and views.

era of the reformation, the office was restored to its original purity and vigour, and has, since that period, found a place in most of the churches of reformed Europe.

## SECTION III.

*Office and Duty of the Eldership, as it respects the Management of the Poor.*

That part of the elder's office which respects the management of the concerns of the poor, belongs to him in his capacity of *deacon*. We have seen that the standards of the church recognize such an office, and have made provision for its permanent establishment. In so doing, they have followed the warrant of scripture authority, and the practice of the Christian church in its purest times. Through custom and use, the duties of deacons have, in a vast majority of instances, devolved on the elders; and, on that account, the term eldership is now generally understood to embrace, not only the departments of duty which it originally and properly represents, but also those varied obligations, under which we are brought, as stewards, for the interests of the poor. For the sake of simplicity, we shall comply with this understood application of the term; although we can by no means allow, that the application, thus made, is either accurate or scriptural.

In order to exhibit the sentiments of the reformed church of Scotland, on this important department of duty, as devolved on the office-bearers of the church, we shall refer to the express statutes which have been enacted on the subject, and to the universal practice, as founded on these statutes.

In the Second Book of Discipline, agreed upon by the General Assembly, 1578; inserted in the registers of Assemblies, 1581; sworn to in the national covenant; revived and ratified by the celebrated Assembly at Glasgow, 1638; and which contains the matured sentiments of the church, as established by law, 1592, and 1690; we have the following statements respecting the department of duty now under consideration.

"The word Διακονος sometimes is largely taken as comprehending all them that bear office in the ministry, and spiritual function in the kirk. But now, as we speak, it is taken only for them unto whom the collection and distribution of the alms of the faithful and ecclesiastical goods doth belong. The office of the deacon, so taken, is an ordinary and perpetual ecclesiastical function in the kirk of Christ. Of what properties and duties he ought to be that is called to this function, we remit it to the manifest scriptures. The deacons ought to be called and elected as the rest of the spiritual officers. Their office and power is to receive and to distribute the whole ecclesiastical goods unto them to whom they are appointed. This they ought to do according to the judgment and appointment of the presbyteries or elderships, (of the which the deacons are not,) that the patrimony of the kirk and poor be not converted to private measures, nor wrongfully distribute." "In the apostolical kirk, the deacons were appointed to collect and distribute what sum soever was collected of the faithful, to distribute unto the necessity of the saints, so that none lacked among the faithful." "These collections were not only of that which was collected in manner of alms, as some suppose, but of other goods, moveable and immoveable, of lands and possessions, the price whereof was brought to the feet of the apostles. The ancient canons make mention of a fourfold distribution of the patrimony of the church, whereof one part was applied to the pastor or bishop for his sustentation and hospitality; another to the elders and deacons, and all the clergy: the third, to the poor, sick persons, and strangers; the fourth, to the upholding other affairs of the kirk, specially extraordinary. We add hereunto the schools and schoolmasters also, which ought, and may well be sustained of the same goods, and are comprehended under the clergy. To whom we join all clerks of assemblies, as well particular as general, syndicks or procurators of the kirk affairs, takers up of the psalms, and such like other ordinary officers of the kirk, so far as they are necessary." * In the "form of church government, agreed upon by the Assembly, at Westminster, and ratified by Act of Assembly, 1645," we have the following short, but comprehensive statement: "The scripture doth hold out deacons as distinct offi-

* Second Book of Discipline, chap. viii., ix. In the First Book of Discipline (1560) the same general view of the deacon's office is given; though it seems that the power of *ruling* was at that time also given to the deacons. Dunlop's Confessions, Vol. II. p. 517.

cers in the church, whose office is perpetual. To whose office it belongs not to preach the word, or administer the sacraments, but to take special care in distributing to the necessities of the poor." In "Pardovan's Collections," we have the following distinct and accurate statement of the duties devolved by the statutes of the church, on those who exercise the office of deacons. "1. That they take exact notice of the poor, and that they timeously make their case known to the session, to the end their straits may be relieved, and so their breaking out into begging may be prevented. 2. They are to collect and receive that supply for the poor, which the members of that congregation, or strangers, shall be inclined to offer. 3. That the money, so received, be faithfully delivered to the session, according to whose judgment and appointment the deacons are to distribute the church goods. In which matters they have a decisive vote with the elders; but, in other cases, their opinion is only consultative, and they may be always present. 4. That they take care of orphans and idiots, and such as want knowledge and ability, to dispose of, and order the things that concern their food and raiment. 5. They are to take care that what belongs to the poor be not dilapidated or misapplied. 6. They are to acquaint the ministers and elders of the sick within their quarters, that so they may be visited, and, if need be, supplied. 7. They may be employed to provide the elements, to carry them, and serve the communicants at the Lord's table."* The officers for the discharge of these duties were appointed in the reformed church at Edinburgh so early as in the year 1557.† It appears, however, that the office of deacon, as well as that of elder, was then held only for one year, although the same individuals might be re-elected. The mode of election was this: "The old session, before their departing, nominated 24 in election for elders, of whom twelve were chosen" (by a majority of the votes of the people) "and 32 for deacons, of whom 16 were elected" in the same manner. Those who had a majority of votes appeared before the congregation on the Sabbath immediately following the day of election, and were set apart to their respective offices by the prayers of the minister, after which the office-bearers and the people were exhorted to their respective duties. ‡

* Pardovan, p. 37, Edition 1773.

† M'Crie's Life of Knox, Vol. I. p. 229.

‡ Election of eldaris and deaconis in the church of Edinburgh. Dunlop's Confessions, Vol. II. p. 636.

It might be easy to quote a variety of other statutes and declarations of the church regarding this department of duty, but the passages already adduced are sufficient to shew the idea which the church entertains of the deacon's office. It would appear that, at its first appointment, it comprehended under it the official management of the *whole* patrimony of the church, including the funds appropriated for the support of ministers and teachers, and various other ecclesiastical uses. In a word, it embraced the whole of what may be termed the pecuniary or secular concerns of the ecclesiastical constitution. In the course of things it was naturally to be expected that such a comprehensive and difficult charge would prove by far too laborious and intricate for one class of men to undertake; and accordingly it was found necessary, in a very short period to restrict the duties of deacon to the single department of managing the affairs of the poor. In the year 1719, the General Assembly recommended to all the ministers of the church, to take care that deacons, as well as elders, be ordained in such congregations where deacons are wanting, but declares that deacons, as such, shall have no decisive voice in the calling of ministers, or in the exercise of church discipline.*

What was originally a voluntary office, and spiritual in its nature and design, has, in the course of things, been incorporated with the established constitutions of the country, and is now recognised by the laws of the land. By a succession of decisions in the supreme courts, it has now been established beyond a doubt, that the care of the poor, legally and constitutionally belongs to the kirk session, consisting of ministers, elders, and deacons—that there are certain funds such as fees for proclamations, baptisms, &c. to which, by immemorial usage, it has an exclusive claim—that it has a co-ordinate power with the heritors of parishes in all matters which regard the interests of the poor—that, in case of necessity, it can call upon the heritors, and compel them by law to provide for the poor in cases where the ordinary funds are insufficient—and that one half of all collections made at the church doors it has a legal right to apply to pious purposes at its own discretion. † "To the kirk session," says a competent judge, "is intrusted the ordinary management of the parochial poor, the application of

* Acts of Assembly, Sept. 5th, 1719.
† Hutcheson's Justice of peace. Vol II. *Of the Poor.*

the weekly collections made at the church for their benefit, and of any voluntary donations which they receive in aid of the weekly collections. When their funds are not sufficient to provide for the poor, a joint meeting of the heritors and kirk session is empowered and required, by act of Parliament, to assess the parish in order to make up the deficiency; the one half of the assessment being raised from the landlords, and the other from the tenants. It should be mentioned, at the same time, that the kirk session is entitled to retain in their own hands, the one half of the collections made at the church, to defray the expense of the clerks and officers of the inferior ecclesiastical courts, and to meet the demands for occasional charities not included in the ordinary management of the poor.*" At the same time, it appears that the heritors have it in their power to call the session to account for the manner in which they apply this portion of the funds.† "But," says another very competent judge, "in most parts of Scotland the minister and elders are left by the heritors, some of whom are commonly members of the kirk session, to make the weekly distributions to the poor according to their discretion; and, except in large towns, the permanent funds, aided by the voluntary collections on the Lord's day, are generally sufficient without any poors' rate, not for inviting persons to come upon the poor's roll, nor for superseding that assistance which ought to be given by the relations of the distressed, but for preserving the poor from the extremity of want. This method of providing for the poor, which generally prevails throughout Scotland, is the most effectual and the most frugal that can be conceived.‡"

Let us now advert to the leading principles which are incorporated with the statutes and constitutional practices enumerated, and endeavour to ascertain the leading features of this department of the eldership.

I. An elder must consider himself as the *guardian* of the poor. As an established office-bearer in the church of Christ, he is required, by the very terms of his appointment, to watch over the interests of the poor—to attend to their character and circumstances—and to use such means as Providence furnishes

* Sir H. Moncreiff's Life of Dr. Erskine. Appendix I. p. 408.
† Judgement of the Court of Session in the case of Humbie, 1751.
‡ Principal Hill's Theological Institutes, p. 407.

for alleviating and supplying their necessities. It is peculiarly agreeable to the genius of Christianity to attend to the poor of the spiritual flock of the Redeemer. To them the gospel is preached—for them its ample treasures are disclosed—and among them the graces of the Christian character have not unfrequently been seen to flourish in all their vigour and in all their loveliness. The indigent members of the flock of Christ then are objects of peculiar interest to their appointed superintendents. Whatever may be the form or external character of the society with which he is connected, the person invested with the office of deacon in the church is constituted the guardian and protector of the indigent and dependent.

With the spirit and institutions of the gospel, the laws and usages of society do in this matter closely coincide. By these laws and usages, the care of the poor has, in almost all reformed countries, been devolved on the office-bearers of the church. The appointment must be recognised as wise and salutary, although it must be attended with *one* weighty inconvenience. So long as the care of the deacon or elder is confined to the poor of the flock, or the indigent members of the Christian community, the labour which it implies, though great, is mixed with a peculiar pleasure. There is the high mental gratification resulting from the thought, that, while engaged in this "labour of love," they are ministering to not a few, who, though poor, "are rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom." When, on the contrary, the care of *all the poor*, however diversified in character or conduct, is committed to the same individuals, it is plain that the labour must be of a very different complexion, and the same feelings of interest cannot be cherished. Still let it be recollected, that the grand features of the office remain the same, whatever be the objects in whose favour it is exercised; and, on that account, the man who holds this office must consider himself as, in the most comprehensive sense, the appointed guardian of the poor, engaged on their side, pledged to attend to their interests, and to plead their cause in opposition to all that is contracted and selfish in the human heart. Viewed in this relation, the man who holds such an office ought to cherish in his heart the principles of Christian benevolence and social sympathy. Under their control he will undertake and discharge his duties with cheerfulness; and whether he receives the gratitude of the poor or not, he has the satisfaction to think that he has discharged his duty.

II. An elder, as the guardian of the poor, must make himself *well acquainted with their actual character and condition.* Among the poor, as among the rich, there are all the varieties of character and condition. Some there are who are really and truly objects of the sincerest sympathy, at once from their destitute circumstances, and from the worth of their character. Others there are whose poverty has been the result of their own misconduct, and who, on that account, are the objects of blame as well as of pity. A third class there is, who make it a rule never to be satisfied; who pretend that their situation is much worse than it is; and who invent the tale of falsehood in order to extort a larger allowance from the ignorant and the unsuspecting. Besides, it ought ever to be kept in mind, as a general principle of unspeakable importance, that, in the business of charitable distribution, we ought to proceed in such a manner as will most effectually alleviate the wants of the poor, without encouraging their evil propensities, or checking the honourable spirit of industry and independence. In order to this, it is absolutely necessary that every claim however imposing, be narrowly examined—that every character, however specious be studied—that the actual circumstances of applicants be ascertained by experiment—and that relief be proportioned according to real character and circumstances. Now, in order to conquer such difficulties, and to secure at once the ends of discretion and of charity, the elder must make himself accurately acquainted with the state of the poor. And what may be the best means of gaining this object? We answer,

1. He ought to direct his attention, primarily and specially to the *district over which he presides.* The elder, or rather the deacon of a parish or congregation, ought unquestionably to possess a general acquaintance with the state of the poor *at large* belonging to that parish or congregation ; and the more enlarged his acquaintance with pauperism and charity is, the more fully is he qualified for discharging his appropriate duties. Still the grand and leading object of his attention ought ever to be, the district over which he is appointed to preside. In every parish of Scotland, and in every presbyterian congregation, whether of the establishment or out of it, each elder or deacon has assigned to him a particular proportion or quarter, as it is usually termed, in which, or near to which he is understood to reside; and to which his labours are specifically directed. A conscientious office-bearer will consider this department as

the field marked out for his exertions; and, while he extends a benevolent eye over the general scene, he will ever revert to this as the centre of his affections, and the sphere of his efforts.

2. He ought to have at all times by him, an *accurate list of the inhabitants of his quarter*—distinguishing them according to their respective circumstances—their religious connexions—the state of their several families—their age—their employments—and the time of their residence in the place. It is particularly necessary to have at all times a list of this kind, in order to detect the impositions which are so frequently attempted and in order that there may be no interference between one office-bearer and another. When a poor person leaves one quarter and goes to reside in another, it is absolutely necessary that he be transferred from the list of the one to that of the other; and that the elder into whose quarter he goes be put in possession of all the information that can be procured respecting him.

3. In order to have an accurate knowledge of the state of the poor in his district, the elder will find it of essential consequence to *discriminate* among them, according to the class which they are found to occupy. In every parish and congregation of Scotland, an important distinction is recognised between *regular* and *occasional* poor—the former holding the place of permanent pensioners on the roll, and, as such, receiving weekly, monthly, or quarterly, a stated aliment—the latter, obtaining partial relief from time to time, as their circumstances render it necessary. The one class having been placed by circumstances or having placed themselves in the ranks of pauperism, seldom rise above them; the other may have been reduced to straits solely from unexpected calamities, and may, by means of the occasional help received, be reinstated in all the credit of independence. As the distinction is one of the highest importance, it ought in no case to be overlooked.—Again; among the occasional recipients of charity, there is an obvious distinction between respectable and industrious labourers, who, through the vicissitudes of Providence, may be reduced on some very special occasions to the necessity of asking a temporary boon;—and that numerous class of persons, who, through imprudence, or thoughtlessness, or bodily inability, are frequent, and even incessant in their demands.—There is another most obvious distinction to be recognised between those applicants, who, having acquired a residence in the place, have an equitable claim on the established funds; and

those strangers who can advance no other plea than that of simple poverty. The history of this class, an active elder will find it his duty to trace; and, if practicable, he will adopt the best means of getting them translated to the place which properly owns them. *—There is just one other distinction which it is necessary to notice; and that is between *common street beggars* and orderly industrious poor. To the disgrace of our country, the practice of common begging, with all its demoralizing effects, is permitted in most places to pass with impunity. So long as the interference of law is not employed for its suppression, the office-bearers of the church can do nothing more than refrain from giving it encouragement; and with this view, it is highly expedient at all times to draw a broad line of distinction between the

* The law of settlements, which in *England* is the most uncertain and perplexed that can possibly be conceived, is, in Scotland, comparatively simple; and hence we find, that while in the one country thousands are annually spent in litigations between parishes, about the right of maintaining paupers, the sum applied in the other, to this purpose, is trifling. The general outline of the laws, regarding settlements in Scotland, is as follows:

1. A settlement is in all cases obtained in a parish, by an independent residence in it for the space of three years immediately preceding the pauper's falling into poverty.

2. If a pauper has never acquired a residence this way in any parish, he must be maintained by the parish where he was born.

3. Children being considered as part of the family, must be maintained by the parish, which would have been liable in the maintenance of the father, had he been the claimant: even although the children were neither born, nor ever had a residence there. The same thing takes place as to the *mother* herself, who, in all cases belongs to the parish of her husband, unless she hath acquired an independent right after his death. Judgment of the Court in the case of St. Vigeans, 25th January, 1800.

4. If the father's parish cannot be found, then recourse is had on that of the mother; and if the mother acquires a residence in a parish after her husband's death, the right descends to the children.

5. Illegitimate children belong to the parish where the mother had acquired a settlement; though to this there are several exceptions.

Lastly, The *doctrine of removals*, from which England has suffered, and at this moment suffers so much, is happily unknown among us. In the fullest enjoyment of civil liberty, and under circumstances "that promote the free circulation of labour and remove the obstacles by which industry is prohibited from availing itself of its resources *," the Scottish artisan or labourer, may, at his own discretion, change his abode without challenge or controul, if only he avoid those idle and vicious habits which expose him as a rogue or vagabond to the cognisance of the criminal magistracy. Hutcheson's Justice of Peace, Vol. II. p. 65.—This subject will be more fully noticed in the Dissertations which follow.

* Mr. Pitt's Speech on the Poor Laws.

regular and sober, and the wandering and worthless votaries of mendicity. I notice these things merely as illustrative of the great importance of marking, accurately, the *class* to which every applicant belongs, and proportioning his treatment accordingly.

4. The elder who wishes to become acquainted with the state of the poor under his charge, will *visit them* frequently at their own houses. There is a *twofold* visitation of the poor, which will receive the attention of a conscientious office-bearer. There is that more general visit, which he will pay either once a-year, or oftener, to the houses, not of the poor only, but of all the inhabitants of the district, with the view of marking the changes which may have taken place in it—ascertaining what number of strangers may have taken up their residence within its bounds—investigating the character and circumstances of these strangers—and making such observations as may be found serviceable to the discharge of his appointed functions. This visitation he may either make in company with the pastor, or by himself; and there is no doubt he will reap from it the most valuable advantages. There is another mode of visitation, which may be termed *occasional*; and it has for its special objects the indigent and the afflicted. When an application for aid is made, the case must be accurately inquired into by means of a personal visit to the house and family of the applicant. When a family is visited with affliction, and when "the elders of the church" receive notice of it, and are requested to give their attendance and sympathy, it is their duty to comply with the invitation. On such occasions as these, there is a moral charm felt in the visits which are paid. The ties of brotherhood are drawn closer and closer. The sympathies which connect man with man are strengthened; and the advice and the consolation which are administered, give a double value to the pecuniary gift that may be bestowed. But I speak of them at present principally as affording to the elder an opportunity of familiarizing himself with the character and circumstances of those in whose welfare he is interested.

5. In order to acquire and retain an accurate and comprehensive knowledge of the state of the poor, the office-bearers of each congregation or parish, will feel it to be their duty frequently to *communicate with each other*, not only at the stated meetings of the kirk session, but also privately and voluntarily as they shall see cause. In this manner, may useful information be given and received—important errors and mistakes time-

ously corrected—proposals for the good of the poor carefully weighed—and mutual advice and encouragement afforded. Thus will the office-bearers understand each other, and a spirit of mutual harmony will mark their procedure.

III. It belongs to the eldership, as guardians of the poor, to *receive* and to *distribute* the funds destined for their relief. Under the charge of the eldership, acting in concert with the heritors, are placed the whole funds destined for relief of the poor. These funds, it is well known, arise from the weekly collections made at the places of worship belonging to the establishment—the dues paid at proclamation for marriage—registration of baptisms—use of the public mortcloth, &c.—donations or mortifications of money, and such like. In those places where assessment has been introduced, a class of men, called *overseers of the poor*, are sometimes* appointed by the heritors; but, even in this case, the elders have a co-ordinate power, and the whole fund, whether arising from collection or assessment, is managed by the associated body of overseers and elders. In most cases, the permanent poor on the parish roll are paid by one person, who holds the office of treasurer, or clerk, or superintendent; and who acts by order from the general body, and is responsible to them as his constituents. But in all cases, much must still be left to the discretion of the individual elder of the quarter. He must judge of the cases which are from time to time brought before him. He must give temporary relief till the case be fully scrutinised. He is called on to give his opinion of the character of every application from his district, when it comes before the general body. In one word, every individual elder is a *receiver* and *distributor* of the public fund of charity within the circle of his immediate inspection. And if so, how important the trust! How serious the obligation! In the discharge of it, much judgment and prudence are necessary in the selection of objects;—much careful and cautious economy in the appropriation of relief;—and a habit of accuracy in the statement of receipt and expenditure. The man who holds such an office is an almoner of the public bounty, and a steward in the household of God.

* In many instances, such, for example, as the Barony Parish of Glasgow, and St. Cuthberts, Edinburgh, the whole active management of the poor and of the aforesaid fund, is committed to the elders exclusively.

IV. It belongs to elders, as guardians of the poor, to watch over their *moral* and *religious interests*. The mere exercise of giving and receiving, for the temporal support of the objects of charity, is, comparatively speaking, an inferior matter. An elder or a deacon who does nothing more than this, divests himself of the *spiritual* part of his character and office. As a permanent office-bearer in the church, the deacon or elder must render his efforts subservient to the moral improvement of his brethren. As a kind friend, he must enter the cottage of poverty and distress. With the donations of the Christian society, he must give, also, his sympathies, his advices, and his prayers; he must converse with, and admonish the ignorant and uninstructed; he must advise and reprove the careless and the improvident; he must attend to the want of the scriptures, and to their cautious distribution among the poor; he must check every appearance of profligacy and irreligion that comes under his notice; he must always be ready to give information to the pastor of the flock of the characters and circumstances of his indigent parishioners or hearers; he must attend to the general interests of charity and benevolence, and be qualified to act as a guide to private individuals and voluntary associations, in the business of charitable distribution. In a word, whatever affects the moral character and circumstances of the poor, and whatever may advance or retard their improvement, comes naturally under the review of the elder as their constitutional guardian. And every man who engages in this labour of love from proper motives, and who has the time necessary for such duties, will prosecute them with avidity and perseverance.

Such is a sketch of the office and duties of the eldership, as it respects the management of the poor. On a survey of them it is natural to infer, that the establishment of an order of men to hold this interesting office, and to discharge, from the single principle of Christian love, all these duties, must be hailed as one of the most valuable benefits to a civilized and Christian community. The concerns of the poor and destitute are not devolved on strangers who care not for them—or on hirelings whose sole pursuit is mercenary interest. They belong to a class of men residing in the midst of their poor brethren—personally and intimately known to them—respected for their moral worth—removed from them at no unapproachable distance—and bound to the discharge of their obligations by all

the solemnities of a public ordination. A bond of reciprocal feeling is established between the distributors and the recipients of charity; a vigilant local inspection is taken of the moral and physical state of the dependent and indigent; mutual acquaintanceship and attachment are formed; vice is detected and exposed; and the moral aspect of society is powerfully improved.

But, in order to form a full idea of the moral influence of the eldership on the habits and manners of the people of Scotland, we must proceed to some further views of its design, chaacter, and effect.

## SECTION IV.

*The Duties of the Eldership with regard to the Spiritual Concerns of the Church.*

We shall throw together a few of the statutes and declarations of the church on this head; and then advert to the general principles which they involve.

"The elder's office," say the compilers of the First Book of Discipline, "is to assist the ministers in all public affairs of the kirk, to wit, in determining and judging causes; in giving admonition to the licentious liver; in having respect to the manners and conversation of all men within their charge; for, by the gravity of the seniors, (*seniores* or elders,) the light and unbridled life of the licentious must be corrected and bridled. Yea, the seniors, also, ought to take heed to the life, manners, diligence, and study of their ministers." * "The word *elder*, in scripture," says the Second Book of Discipline,† "sometime is the name of age, sometime of office. When it is the name of office, sometime it is taken largely, comprehending, as well the pastors or doctors, as them who are called seniors or elders. In this, our division, we call those elders whom the apostles call presidents, or governors. Their office, as it is ordinary, so is it perpetual and always necessary in the kirk

* Chap. x. Of Elders and Deacons.

† Chap. vi. Of Elders.

of God. The eldership is a spiritual function, as is the ministry. The number of elders in every congregation cannot well be limited, but should be according to the bounds and necessity of the people. What manner of persons they ought to be, we refer it to the express word, and namely, the canons, written by the apostle Paul. Their office is, as well severally, as conjunctly, to watch diligently upon the flock committed to their charge, both publicly and privately, that no corruption of religion or manners enter therein. As the pastors and doctors should be diligent in teaching and sowing the seed of the word, so the elders should be careful in seeking the fruit of the same in the people. It appertains to them to assist the pastor in examination of them that come to the Lord's table; also, in visiting the sick. They should cause the acts of assemblies, as well particular as general, to be put in execution carefully. They should be diligent in admonishing all men of their duty, according to the rule of the Evangel. Things that they cannot correct by private admonitions, they should bring to the eldership (or session.) Their principal office is, to hold assemblies with the pastors and doctors, who are also of their number, for establishing of good order and execution of discipline, unto the which assemblies, all persons are subject that remain within their bounds."—In the "Form of Church Government," agreed on by the Westminster assembly, we have this comprehensive statement regarding the office of the eldership. "As there were in the Jewish church, elders of the people joined with the priests and Levites in the government of the church; so Christ, who hath instituted government, and governors ecclesiastical in the church, hath furnished some in his church, beside the ministers of the word, with gifts for government, and with commission to execute the same when called thereunto, who are to join with the minister in the government of the church; which officers, reformed churches commonly call elders." The following summary, by Pardovan, gives a very correct view of the elder's office.

"He is called a *ruling elder*, because to rule and govern the church, is the chief part of his charge and employment therein; and albeit, he may act as a deacon, yet his principal business is to rule well, and it belongs not to him to teach or preach. If there be a total vacancy of ministers and elders in a parish, the presbytery should intimate to the heads of families to meet with some of their numbers on an appointed day, and

then name elders. But if the masters of families do not keep the appointment, then the presbytery are to nominate and to chuse the persons to be elders. In case the vacancy be not total, then the ministers and elders do chuse such as should be added to their own number from among the heads of families, and the fittest and most experienced of them may be supposed to be among the deacons. See Assembly, August 1, 1642. The trial is to be by the minister and eldership (session) of the congregation, or, in case of the want of these, by the presbytery; and they are to be tried both with respect to their conversation, and also of their knowledge of the principles of religion, and their ability and prudence for government. Before ordination of elders, the names of the persons nominated and tried, in order thereto, are to be publicly intimate to the congregation; whereby, all are required, in case of their having any objection, that is relevant and true against their ordination, to represent the same to the kirk session. Their ordination is to be by the minister of the congregation, or by one from the presbytery, in the case above supposed, in presence of the congregation, upon a Lord's day, after sermon is ended in the forenoon; at which time, the minister calling upon the persons chosen to be elders, they are to be interrogate concerning their orthodoxy, and to be taken solemnly engaged, to adhere to, and maintain the doctrine, worship, discipline, and government of the church, and to lay themselves forth, by their office and example, to suppress vice, cherish piety, and exercise discipline faithfully and diligently. Then the elders chosen, still standing up, the minister is next, by solemn prayers to set them apart, in *verbis de præsenti*. After prayer, the minister is to exhort both elders and people to their respective duties. In case an elder change his residence, by removing into another congregation, if the session, upon a savoury report concerning him, shall think fit to add him to their number, then, if he be content to accept, his edict is to be served, and he is thereafter admitted into the session; his qualifications having been tried already in the congregation where he was ordained. By the ecclesiastic remedies against profaneness, enacted in the assembly, August 10, 1648, it is appointed, that every elder have a certain bounds assigned him, that he may visit the same, every month at least, and to report to the session what scandals and abuses are therein, or what persons have entered without testimonials, and it were fit that then some time were set apart for prayer;

and it were also fit that elders should always keep an exact list of all examinable persons within their quarters, and thereunto put marks, to distinguish communicants from the ignorant and scandalous, and the poor and indigent from such as need not. The duties of elders which are more public, are those which lie upon them in the assemblies of the church; in which ruling elders have right to reason and vote in all matters coming before them, even as ministers have; for, to general assemblies, their commissions bear them to the same power with pastors. Howbeit, by the practice of our church, the execution of some decrees of the church doth belong to the pastors only; such as the imposition of hands, the pronouncing the sentences of excommunication and absolution, the receiving of penitents, the intimation of sentences and censures about ministers, and such like. In short, the elder is to speak nothing to the church from the pulpit." *

The elders, whose office and duties have been thus described, along with the minister as moderator, constitute the kirk session of the parish or congregation, whose duties, as they respect the spiritual concerns of the people, we shall describe in the words of two most competent judges. "Besides the care of the poor," says Sir H. Moncreiff, † "the kirk session has a general inspection of the morals of the parishioners, and a right to administer the discipline of the church according to established laws. To the effect of ecclesiastical censures, it has the power to institute processes, to cite parties and witnesses, to examine witnesses on oath, and to pronounce sentences, and to inflict censures, according to the evidence adduced. But both its citations and its sentences depend on ecclesiastical authority alone, and seldom either receive or require any assistance from the civil power. The proceedings of a kirk session are matter of record; and the record is regularly kept, so as to be preserved or extracted for the benefit of the parties, or for the information or inspection of the courts of review. Every proceeding or sentence of a kirk session is subject to the review of the presbytery of the district; and can be brought there, either by a reference made by the kirk session itself; by a complaint at the instance of any member of the court, who may be dissatisfied; or by an appeal

* Pardovan's Collections, p. 34—36.

† Appendix to Dr. Erskine's Life, p. 409.

from the parties who may think themselves aggrieved. If any striking irregularity, or any real injury can be substantiated, the control of the presbytery is always sufficient to correct or redress it But the usual management of the kirk sessions is favourable to all the best interests of the parishioners; and, *comparatively*, few instances occur in which it becomes a just subject either of complaint or remonstrance."—"In teaching, in dispensing the sacraments, in presiding over public worship, and in those private functions by which he ministers to the comfort, the instruction, and the improvement of the people committed to his care, a pastor acts within his own parish according to his discretion; and for his discharge of all the duties of the pastoral office, he is accountable only to the presbytery from whom he received the charge of the parish. But in every thing which concerns what is called discipline, the exercise of that jurisdiction over the people with which the office-bearers of the church are conceived to be invested, a presbyterian minister is assisted by lay-elders. They are laymen in this respect, that they have no right to teach or to dispense the sacraments; and, on this account, they form an office in the presbyterian church inferior in rank and power to that of pastors. They generally discharge the office which originally belonged to the deacons, of attending to the interests of the poor. But their peculiar business is expressed by the name ruling elders; for, in every question of jurisdiction within the parish, they are the spiritual court of which the minister is officially moderator; and in the presbytery of which the pastors of all the parishes within its bounds are officially members, lay-elders sit as the representatives of the several sessions or consistories."—"The session is legally convened, when summoned by the minister from the pulpit, or by personal citation to the members. But it cannot exercise any judicial authority, unless the minister of the parish, or some other minister acting either in his name or by appointment of the presbytery, constitute the meeting by prayer, and preside during its deliberations. It has a clerk of its own nomination, and an officer to execute its orders." * It is hardly necessary to state, that all the powers and offices of the eldership, as thus described, are amply ratified and confirmed by the act of the Scotch Parliament, June 1592, which we justly view as the *magna charta* of presbyterianism in Scotland—by the act

* Hill's View of the Constitution of the Church of Scotland, p.p. 171, 213.

of William and Mary, June 7, 1690, ratifying the Confession of Faith, and settling presbyterian church government—and by the act for securing the Protestant religion and presbyterian church government, passed in the first parliament of Queen Anne, and incorporated with the treaty of union between the kingdoms of England and Scotland, January 16, 1707.

In regard to the qualifications of elders, and their moral and religious conduct, the statutes already referred to, and a variety of acts passed by the general assembly, furnish many wholesome admonitions. By an act of assembly, 1722, the elders and deacons are exhorted and required to be faithful in the discharge of their respective offices; tender and circumspect in their walk, and punctual in their attending upon ordinances, and strict in their observation of the Lord's day, and in regularly keeping up the worship of God in their families; and the inferior judicatories are exhorted to take good heed that none shall be admitted to, or continued in their offices, but such as are found qualified, and do behave themselves as above required. By the assembly, 1727, an order to the same effect was again issued, and presbyteries are instructed to have a strict regard to it, and to see that it be duly acted on. In 1737, the assembly strictly prohibits presbyteries from sending up, as elders to the assembly, persons who are not duly qualified according to the statutes and practice of the church. By a standing law of the church lately past (Assembly 1816) with the view of correcting some irregularities that had crept in, it is enacted and ordained, that "in addition to all the other qualifications required by former acts and statutes, no person shall be set apart to the office of an elder unless he hath attained the age of 21, and is a regular communicant with the church;—that no person shall be admitted to the office who is not an inhabitant of the parish, or who does not reside therein at least six weeks annually, or who is not an heritor in the parish, liable to pay stipend and other parochial burdens, or who is not the apparent heir of an heritor of that description in the parish—that when any person who does not generally reside, but only occasionally, as aforesaid, shall be proposed to the kirk session to be ordained an elder, there shall be produced a certificate, under the hands of the minister and kirk session of the parish where he generally resides, that he is of unblemished character, and regular in giving attendance on the public ordinances of religion; but that in any city

or town where there are more congregations than one, they shall be held as one parish." *

Having thus exhibited some of the leading appointments and statutes of the church, regarding the office and duties of the eldership, as they respect the spiritual interests of the people, we shall now endeavour to collect the substance of the whole, and to state the leading features by which this department of the office is distinguished.

1. By the letter and the spirit of his office, an elder is required to interest himself in whatever concerns the general business of religion. He is constituted a guardian of its interests; and whatever may advance or retard these interests, must possess a high degree of importance in his practical feelings and views. He must be alive to the infinite value of religion to every human being; and its importance as the grand pillar of civilized society. Impressed by a sense of personal piety, he must redeem the pledge which was given at his ordination, and "lay himself out" to promote the progress of godliness and virtue. While he feels himself bound to promote the interests of religion in general, he is required to devote his attention specially to that particular district, or quarter, over which he is appointed to preside. Within the limits of that district, he must stand forth as the public and accredited advocate of religion. Whatever affects its private or its public interests, must receive a portion of his regard; and nothing is below his notice which may promote its success, or accelerate its triumphs.

2. An elder is required to take a close inspection of the *moral* and *religious* character of the people with whom he stands related. The statutes of the church, indeed, give no countenance to a system of inquisitorial procedure—a system which claims a jurisdiction over the thoughts, and principles, and feelings of men, as well as over their words and their actions—and which requires for its support, a habitual officious intermeddling with the private and domestic concerns of human beings. But, although such a system is utterly discarded, the

* It would be endless to notice all the acts and regulations of the church, regarding the office and duties of elders. They will be found by reference to the printed acts of the following dates. Act 13, 1694.—11. 1697.—7. 1699.—11. 1704.—15. 1706.—9. 1722.—13. 1746.—12, 1779. See Gillan's Abridgement of the Acts of Assembly.

duty of taking a close and vigilant inspection of the moral and religious character of the professing Christian people, is clearly and decidedly inculcated. It is declared to be one great design of the eldership to assist *the pastor* in his appropriate duties; and with this view he must make himself acquainted with the state and character of *the people*, in order that he may supply the pastor with that regular and full information, which is absolutely essential to a right division of the word of truth. He has his station in a certain district of the parish, or in a particular division of the congregation, that he may observe what is taking place in it—encourage what appears praise-worthy—reprove and counteract what is positively sinful—give notice to the pastor of whatever seems to require his official interference—and thus aid him in acquiring that knowledge of men and things, which may prove essentially beneficial to the cause of religion and of truth.* Such a vigilant inspection of the morals of the people, has the happiest effects on the people at large, and on the pastor in particular. Vice is discouraged—religion and virtue are cherished—gross ignorance is detected—and the beginnings of evil are traced out and checked. To the pastor it is of essential value inasmuch as it promotes that practical acquaintance with human nature which is the best foundation of ministerial duty, and fits him for the difficult task of distributing to every one, his "portion of meat in due season." In order to counteract iniquity of ever kind, it must be traced out and exposed; and, in order to preach *to* the people, and not merely *before* them, it is absolutely necessary to have a comprehensive and accurate knowledge of their characters and prevalent propensities. Now, in order to this, what can contribute more than the close and vigilant inspection which is taken by judicious, and prudent, and conscientious men, looking round them with a benevolent eye on the moral state of their brethren, and guarded against any serious abuse of their trust, by the awful responsibility which is attached to their office? And how encouraging to the pastor to be informed, by his elders, of instances in which the interests of religion have been promoted, and his own pastoral labours crowned with success? This is what our statutes mean, by elders "seeking out the fruit of the word sown" among the people.

* The elder must pay particular attention to the manner in which parents, especially in the lower ranks of life, watch over the *general* and *religious* instruction of their children.

3. An elder watches over the purity of *religious ordinances.* In all the presbyterian churches of Scotland, it is well known that elders are exclusively employed in assisting the ministers in the regular and solemn dispensation of religious ordinances, and particularly the ordinance of the supper, and this department of duty must be performed with exemplary decency and gravity of demeanour. But it ought to be recollected that this is a very small part of their duties in regard to the ordinances of the church. It belongs to them to watch over the purity of their dispensation, and to inspect the moral character and conduct of those who partake of them. There are two ways in which this may be most effectually accomplished. In the *first* place—the elder is required to certify the characters of such as apply, in the first instance, for admission to the privileges of the church. We are all agreed in holding the absolute necessity of a competent degree of knowledge, and a regular, consistent deportment, in order to admission to the sealing ordinances of Christianity. With regard to the first of these, the pastor is constituted peculiarly the judge; while, with regard to the second, the elder of the bounds is supposed to be fully qualified to give a definite opinion. I do not mean to say, that an elder is in no case required to judge even of the religious knowledge of the applicants. What we intend to affirm is, that this matter does not so naturally and so fully come under his notice, as it belongs specifically to the pastor of the people. There is one case, however, in which this duty is specially intrusted to elders by the statutes of the church, and that is, in the case of young persons making application, for the first time, to be admitted to the Lord's table. Of such, elders are constituted the guardians; and the statutes of the church expressly require, that they shall take them under their cognizance, and ascertain the measure of religious knowledge which they possess previous to their being received under the peculiar inspection of the pastor. But it is with regard to *character*, chiefly, that the certificate of the elder is required; and it is obvious that, in this matter, a trust is reposed in him of no common magnitude and importance. The right discharge of it requires no small portion both of judgment and prudence; and, when rightly discharged, it must have a salutary influence both on the purity of Divine institutions, and on the general interests of religion at large. * But,

* It ought to be distinctly understood, that *on no occasion* is an elder obliged to give a line of character without first consulting the session.

in the *second* place, an elder is required to guard the purity of sacred institutions, by marking what is glaringly inconsistent in the conduct of such as are their ordinary attendants. When inconsistencies in the character of professing Christians become so glaring as to attract the notice of spectators, and to grieve the hearts of their brethren, it becomes the elder of the bounds not to allow the matter to pass, but to act in regard to it according to the express injunctions which are laid on him. He must inquire into the matter quietly and cautiously. He must report it to the minister and session, and afterwards proceed in the way of private admonition or censure, or in such other modes as the nature of the case may demand. In this way much may be done to guard the purity of Christian institutions, and to promote the edification of the people.

On this head it is proper to observe, that, by the letter and spirit of his office, an elder is constituted particularly the guardian of that blessed institution, the *Christian Sabbath.* Over its purity, he is required to watch with incessant care. In doing so, he must be particularly guarded in his own conduct; he must testify against public profanations of the sacred day; he must admonish, rebuke, and exhort transgressors with all boldness; and, on particular occasions, he must call in the aid of the civil magistrate to check those abuses over which reason and religion have no control. *

4. An elder presides, as a judge, in all matters of *ecclesiastical discipline.* Under the jurisdiction of the various church courts are comprehended all matters which affect the character and conduct of private members of the church—the interests of piety and morals, within particular districts or parishes, and the general prosperity of religion at large. To these assemblies are

* The legislature of Great Britain, anxious to watch over the purity of morals among the people, and deeply sensible of the importance of the Sabbath, as essential to the very existence of religion in the country, has at different times passed a variety of acts, by which all public profanations are prohibited under pecuniary penalties. The particulars specified are—holding of fairs and markets—all buying and selling—working—gaming—playing—resort to alehouses or taverns—fishing—going of salt-pans, mills, or kilns—hiring of reapers—and, in general, all use of ordinary labour, employment, or sport. If the persons offending cannot pay the fine, the justices are authorised to punish them by imprisonment, placing in the stocks, and such like. The Justices in their commission, are expressly ordered to attend to this matter. The last act on this subject, and which sanctions all the preceding, bears date, 1661, Parl. I. Char. II.

committed the exercise of government and discipline, according to certain laws and forms which have been enacted and specially enjoined. Now, in all these assemblies, the elder possesses a co-ordinate rank and power with the minister. It would be altogether out of place to specify here the particular cases which come under the cognisance of the spiritual courts, or the precise form and plan according to which they must be treated. For these we must refer to those authorities which expressly treat of them; and would simply remark, that a conscientious elder will consider it his sacred duty to acquaint himself with the laws and constitutions by which he is to be guided, and will rigidly adhere to them in all matters which come under his review; he will respect the discipline of the church, and will enforce it with judgment, so far as the interests of public morals require its enforcement; he will be *impartial* in its execution, and although there may be reasons, which, in the present state of things, require some modifications of it, still he will venerate and defend it, as essential to the purity of the church, and the best interests of the human race.* An elder, who is determined to do his duty, will not be deterred from it by the cold indifference of some, or the determined hostility of others.

5. There are various *private duties* connected with the ministerial office, in which the elder is required to take part with the pastor, at once for the purposes of counsel and assistance. In the regular visitation of families †; in the duty of catechising; in

* In order clearly to understand his rights and duties as a Judge, in all matters affecting the discipline of the church, as well as to be guided in the right discharge of office, I would recommend to every elder the frequent perusal of such books as these—The Confession of Faith, &c.—Pardovan's Collections—The Books of Discipline, with Form of Process—Gillan's Abridgment of the Acts of Assembly. Indeed, every kirk session is required to have a copy of all the Acts of Assembly.

† In attending to this important, but much neglected department of duty, an elder, whether by himself or in company with the pastor, will find it of advantage to keep in view the following objects:—To obtain an accurate list of all the inhabitants of the place, specifying their names, occupations, religious connexions, &c.—to see what strangers may have taken up their residence, and whether they have brought certificates of character—what number of paupers, or persons likely soon to become paupers, have intruded—how the children of the different families are occupied—and, particularly, whether or not they are receiving suitable education—who are communicants, and who not—what the general character of the families—have they copies of the scriptures—do they attend regularly the public ordinances, &c. &c. An admirable summary of clerical duty on this point, is recorded in the Acts of Assembly, 1708.

visiting the sick, the aged, and the dying; in examining the various seminaries for moral and religious instruction;—in these and in similar departments of duty, the elder is expected to accompany the minister as an auxiliary. In a word, he is expected to countenance and encourage, and aid the pastor in every measure of a private nature, by which the good of the people may be promoted, and the general interests of piety secured. While, on the one hand, a judicious pastor will not make unreasonable demands on the time and labours of his office bearers, a zealous and active elder will never grudge to devote a portion of his time, his thoughts, and his energies, to aid in carrying on the great, and difficult, and salutary work of ministerial duty.

It is hardly necessary to notice that load of secular or civil duty, which the government, in some cases, and use and wont in others, have devolved on elders, in company with their pastors. It is well known, that for a long time past, there is scarcely one communication made between the civil government of our country, and the lower orders of the community, which, in one or other of its stages, does not pass through the hands of the minister and elders. We regret that it is so, and particularly because the multiplicity of secular business, thus thrown on their hands, tends in no slight measure to withdraw their time and attention from the peculiar duties of their office. But since it must be so, a conscientious elder will endeavour to discharge this part of his duty with diligence and caution. Conscience, and the fear of God, will be the guides of his conduct; and although in particular cases he may be betrayed into error and mistake, he will nevertheless have the satisfaction of thinking that he hath conscientiously used the means for knowing and doing his duty.

I am aware that the above forms a very imperfect sketch of the various and complicated duties of the eldership in the Scottish churches, and yet, imperfect as it is, it may suffice to give a stranger some idea of the nature of that spiritual superintendence and inspection under which all the parishes, and all the presbyterian congregations of Scotland are placed. Under this inspection, in which it ought ever to be remembered that ministers and elders go hand in hand, Scotland has arrived at that distinguished place which it occupies in the scale of intelligence and of morals. Other causes, of a moral nature, such, for example, as the general establishment of schools, have no

doubt, co-operated in accomplishing the effect. It ought to be recollected, however, that the school establishment of Scotland forms only another branch or department of the same great system; and that the same wisdom which originated the plan of regular elementary tuition, established, at the same time, the order of the presbyterial eldership. In judging of the moral effect of the one, we must view it in connexion with the other; and while the different parts of the system are separately contemplated, they ought ever to be viewed at the same time in their mutual dependence, and harmonious co-operation.

We shall finish this view with an extract from an author whom we have had occasion formerly to quote. "Ever since the reformation," says he, "the office of lay-elders has formed an essential part of the constitution of the church of Scotland; and it has been productive of very important advantages. To the readiness with which the elders undertake the office of deacons, Scotland is indebted for the easy maintenance of her poor; for men who live amongst the people with a kind of inspection over them, are qualified to distribute the funds provided for the support of the poor, with a proper attention to their real necessities, and without waste. The presence of a respectable eldership in the parochial consistory, has a tendency to vindicate the exercise of ecclesiastical discipline from the charge of partiality, and to render it an instrument of general edification, by procuring a ready submission to every sentence. The eldership may also correct that love of power of which clergymen have often been accused. If we should at any time discover a desire to act as judges, or dividers, and to employ, for the gratification of our own ambition, avarice, or resentment, the spiritual powers with which we are invested for the good of others, a firm union of the lay-members in the church courts would effectually defeat every scheme of ecclesiastical tyranny. These advantages of an eldership depend, in a great measure, upon the character and condition of the persons by whom the office is held. The exercise of censorial power requires a prudence, a delicacy, and an acquaintance with the world, which are seldom found in the lowest orders; and if all the lay elders of the church of Scotland were mean unlearned men, they would probably bring, from their ordinary habits and views, the unwise, illiberal, and violent spirit, which has often exposed to contempt the decisions of ecclesiastical assemblies. But if

a clergyman is able to prevail on persons to take part in the office of eldership, whose education gives them some influence in particular districts of the parish, and who, with unblemished morals, possess sound sense and good temper, he will have the happiness of knowing, that no kind of church government is better calculated to conciliate the respect and good-will of the people, to restrain their vices, and to minister to their improvement, than that in which a faithful and diligent pastor, who maintains the dignity and independence of his own office, is supported by the co-operation of ruling elders in those matters which belong jointly to his office and theirs." *

Before concluding this section, it may be proper to give the following slight sketch of the constitution of the church of Scotland, and particularly of its judicatories, in all of which, elders as such have a place. The lowest of these judicatories, is that of the kirk-session, composed of the minister of the parish, who is officially moderator or preses, and lay-elders. The next in point of rank is the Presbytery, which is composed of all the ministers in a certain district, with one representative from the session of each parish, possessed of equal power in all ordinary cases with the ministers. The number of parishes which may compose a Presbytery is indefinite, and must obviously depend on local circumstances. In some populous districts, there are between 30 and 40 ministers in a Presbytery; in some remote situations, where a few parishes cover a great district, not more than four. At present there are 78 such Presbyteries in the church; but the number may be altered by order of the supreme ecclesiastical court. In the case of those Presbyteries, within whose bounds Universities are situated, the professors of divinity are *ex officio* members. The moderator of this court, who must always be a minister, is chosen twice in the year. The times of meeting vary with circumstances. In some places the presbytery meets once a month; in other places, once in two months; and so on. But besides regular meetings for ordinary business, extra meetings may be called for special purposes, when the interests of the district seem to require it. Three or more presbyteries, as the matter happens

* Hill's View of the Constitution of the Church, p. 174—176.

to be regulated, compose a *provincial synod*, which is the court *third* in order in the church. There are at present 15 synods, most of which meet twice in the year. Every minister of all the presbyteries within the bounds of the synod, is a member, and the same elder who had last represented the kirk-session in the presbytery, is its representative in the synod, so that the number of ministers and elders may, as in the presbytery, be equal. Neighbouring synods correspond with one another, by sending one minister and one elder, who are entitled to sit, to deliberate, and to vote with the original members of the synod to which they are sent.—The highest ecclesiastical court is the *general assembly*. In this court, the church meets by its representatives. Presbyteries composed of 12 parishes and under, send two ministers and one elder:—of eighteen or under, three ministers and one elder:—of twenty-four or under, four ministers and two elders:—those consisting of more than twenty-four, but under thirty, send four ministers and three elders:—and those which exceed thirty, send six ministers and three ruling elders. The 66 royal burghs of Scotland, are represented by ruling elders: Edinburgh sending two, and every other burgh, one; and each of the five Universities in Scotland, is represented by one of its members, who may be either a minister or a lay-elder. Thus, the general assembly at present, consists of the following members:

| | |
|---|---|
| 200 | Ministers representing Presbyteries. |
| 89 | Elders representing Presbyteries. |
| 67 | Elders representing Royal Burghs. |
| 5 | Ministers or Elders representing Universities. |
| 361 | |

The assembly is honoured with a representation of the Sovereign, in the Lord High Commissioner, whose presence is the gracious pledge of protection and countenance to the established church. The general assembly meets annually in May—it sits generally ten days—and if the business brought before it is not finished during that time, it is left to the charge of the *commission*, which is just a *committee of the whole house*, and which meets once a quarter during the intervals of assemblies.—All these courts are subordinate to each other; and ecclesiastical causes may be brought from one to another in one or other of the following modes; by reference for advice in doubtful cases—

by appeal from a member or members of the inferior court, who feel themselves aggrieved by its decisions—or by complaint, by one or more of the members, against the conduct of the majority of the court, in particular instances. Thus there is a regular subordination of courts, and a due distribution of power amongst them all. By the principle of review and control in all cases, provision is made at once for the dispensation of justice to individuals, and the security of the general interests of the community at large. *

## SECTION V.

### *Qualifications of an Elder.*

From the review which we have taken of the office and duties of the eldership, a pretty accurate idea may be formed of the kind of qualifications which are necessary in the man who holds it. I shall, therefore, do little more than give a simple statement of them, with the view of enabling the reader to form a comprehensive conception of the character which ought ever to distinguish office-bearers in the Christian church.

In regard to the *external circumstances* of an elder, it is hardly necessary to say one word. Local circumstances and peculiarities must determine on this point. At the same time, we may be permitted to remark, that, according to the letter and spirit of our constitution, some degree of respectability, in point of worldly station, is truly desirable, and even requisite in those who officiate as elders. It is not necessary that they be all taken from the higher classes; neither is it desirable that they should. But, on the other hand, they ought if possible, to belong to a class, who are considerably elevated above the lowest of the people. And it is certainly to be wished in all cases that those to whom God hath given wealth, station, and influence, in society, were endowed with those higher qualities of mind and of heart, which would at once incline,

* On this subject, the reader is referred to Dr. Hill's View of the Constitution of the Church of Scotland; and to Sir H. Moncrieff's Life of Dr. Erskine, Appendix I. from both of which, much useful information may be obtained.

and fit them for the suitable discharge of this interesting office.

But it is of more importance to ascertain the personal qualifications of elders, than their outward rank in society. We observe, then,

1. That *personal religion* is indispensibly necessary, in order to the right discharge of the office of the eldership. Suppose for a moment, that the care of the poor comprehended the whole of the office, still that care could not be properly exercised, where the fear of God and the love of holiness were not: But when we consider the eldership as a spiritual office, and designed expressly for the promotion of piety and goodness, the importance and necessity of personal religion must become peculiarly apparent. The man who is to be an example to the flock, in personal and family religion, must be characterized by habitual piety—by domestic devotion—by punctuality of attendance on public ordinances—and by undeviating correctness in outward deportment. When men who are not thus distinguished intrude into the office, or are thoughtlessly received into it, they lower its respectability, and clog its powers as an engine for promoting the moral improvement of the people.

2. *Good sense, sound judgment*, and *discretion*, are necessary. Piety the most sincere, and zeal the most ardent are but imperfect qualifications where good sense and judgment are wanting The weaknesses of a pious man, and the excrescences of a zealous Christian, may not injure his own personal interests as a private member of the church, but they may do incalculable mischief, unintentionally, when exhibited in connexion with a public and official station. In the discharge of the elder's office, a multiplicity of cases daily occur for which no human statutes *can* provide, and where no specific law is applicable. In such cases, dependence must be placed on that common sense which is better than all law; and that sound judgment and discretion, for the want of which, no *statutory* knowledge, however accurate, can atone.

3. A competent knowledge of the *constitution*, and *history*, and *laws* of the church is necessary. I do not mean that no man ought to be admitted into the office *until* he possesses this qualification, but simply that, in order to the right discharge

of his official functions, he ought to make himself well acquainted with the more important particulars respecting the history and constitution of the church of which he is a member. On this topic, ignorance is disreputable even in a private member, and much more in one who stands forth as an office-bearer in the sacred society. Profound knowledge of this subject, indeed is not at all necessary; but certainly such a portion of knowledge is necessary as will preserve from palpable mistakes, and guide in the due discharge of duty.

4. *Kindness* and *benevolence* of heart are necessary. The man who is set apart to take care of the poor, ought to have a fellow-feeling of their distresses and wants. He ought to engage in their complicated concerns, not from a principle of political expediency alone, but also from a real wish to alleviate the sufferings of man, and to add to the sum of human enjoyment. A cold hearted and selfish disposition of mind is unfriendly to the calls and the exertions of charity. That heart alone is the receptacle of the benevolent affections which is naturally open, and generous, and kind; and whose feelings have been purified and exalted by the sacred efficacy of Christian principles. But there may be an excess of feeling, which, when not properly regulated, leads insensibly into mistakes.

I observe, then, in the 5th place, that an elder ought to be distinguished by *firmness* and *decision* of character. The avocations of the eldership will inevitably bring many difficulties along with them—difficulties, too, of which men in the ordinary walks of life can have no conception. By virtue of his office, an elder must listen with patience to the ever-varying tale of poverty, and disease, and wretchedness. If he is a man of feeling, as he ought to be, he cannot listen without interest, and he must feel inclined to administer relief. If *feeling* be his predominant character, he will readily yield to the representation that is made to him. The tale of woe will at once reach his heart; and, without perhaps making any cool investigation of the facts of the case, he may be inadvertently lavishing on the worthless impostor, what is designed exclusively for the real children of indigence and sorrow. To counteract this tendency, there must be associated with his feelings of sympathy, a firm and undaunted principle of decision and cool discriminating deliberation. Every *new* case which comes before him he must calmly examine, and lay his plans precisely according to

the evidence that is before him. Thus will imposture be checked, and the tales of fiction divested of their fascinating influence. I add, in the

6th, and last place, that an elder will necessarily require, in the prosecution of his duties, a habit of *patient* and *active perseverance*. If he uniformly relies on the *gratitude* of the poor, he will be inevitably disappointed; and if he lays his account in no case with painful disappointments, after tedious and minute inquiry, and a long course of disinterested toil, he will sooner or later find himself mistaken. In no department of duty is *patience* more requisite than in that of the eldership. There must be patience exercised in hearing the statements of the applicants for aid; in ascertaining the truth or falsehood of the statements; and in bearing the reproaches of ingratitude. While patience is necessary, there must be also exercised a spirit of *active perseverance*. A desponding temper of mind will never suit the man who has to contemplate the species in all its aspects—who has to inspect the never-ending diversities of human character—who has to visit the abodes of squalid wretchedness—who has to "take the gauge" of sin and of misery, in the length and breadth of them—and who must ever be on the alert to seek out opportunities of usefulness. Such a man must be cool in thought, judicious in laying his plans, and resolute and persevering in their execution.

## SECTION VI.

### *Practical Inferences.*

I. As the office which has been considered carries along with it a high degree of respectability and usefulness, the men who hold it, and who discharge its duties with credit, are justly entitled to the *respect*, the *esteem*, and the *encouragement* of the people with whom they stand connected. A stranger to our ecclesiastical constitution may very naturally put the question; And what is the remuneration which the elder receives for all this complicated and laborious system of duties? He will be

surprised when we tell him that the whole is a "*labour of love*," and that the only principle which is recognised throughout, is the principle of zealous regard to the interests of the Christian people. His surprise will be much increased when he hears that the toils of office are not unfrequently rewarded with the ingratitude of the poor, and the cold indifference and ridicule of not a few who occupy a very different station, and whose countenance and support are essential to the effective discharge of official duty. The *duties of the people to their elders* are seldom thought of or practised as they ought. What may these duties be? It requires no lengthened statement to put you in possession of them. The people ought to respect the office of the eldership as a *Divine* institution, and as admirably calculated to promote the best interests of men. They ought to respect and esteem very highly "in love for their works' sake," those faithful men, who, without fee or reward, give their best thoughts and feelings, and no small portion of their time to the labours of no easy occupation. They ought to take part with them and vindicate their character, and the character of their office, when unjustly aspersed. They ought above all, to *co-operate* with them in attending to the business of the poor, in watching over the interests of religion and morals, in checking vice wherever it comes under their observation, and in countenancing every effort of a public or private nature which pastors and elders may make for the good of the people. Thus will they most effectually *strengthen the hands* of their spiritual rulers, and give new energy to an institution whose right discharge is closely associated with the advancement of the glory of God, and the best interests of the human race.

II. We infer, from what has been stated, that every Christian minister is bound, by a very solemn obligation, to *maintain* with zealous diligence the office of the eldership, and to *keep it in vigilant operation*. I regret to think that the conduct of many ministers is so reprehensible in this respect. In some instances, there are *no elders whatever*. In others, the elders, too few in number, are chosen from a class of persons who can be of little service to the great objects which their office contemplates. In others, again, more attention is paid to external rank and fashion than to *moral* and *religious* character. We are aware that, in some instances, all this may be owing to dire necessity, which obliges us to do the best we can. But we are fully convinced, that, in by far the greater number of

instances, it is owing either to carelessness, or to indolence, or to the love of power, or to religious indifference on the part of the minister. Were every pastor to do the best in his power, there would be no room for complaint. *

III. It is the duty of private Christians *cheerfully* and *readily* to undertake this office when called upon to do so. There is a wonderful backwardness on this head, even among those who are acknowledged to possess, in a high degree, the requisite qualifications. The excuses which are most commonly made are altogether frivolous and futile. Perhaps the only apologies which ought to hold in all cases, are, the want of *time*, and the want of *health*. I do not mean to say that there may not be other strong reasons which may warrant individuals to decline accepting the office; but, most certainly, the reasons commonly adduced are very seldom satisfactory. They generally all originate in that slavish "fear of man which bringeth a snare." Those who excuse themselves on the ground that they are not qualified, ought to recollect that they are not the best judges of their own characters, and that those who are most ready to think they have the qualifications, are not always the persons who are really in possession of them. Christians should consider seriously the importance of *strengthening the hands of their ministers*; and most certainly they can never do so more effectually, than by accepting a place in the consistory of the church. Let them not be hasty in declining the offer when it is made to them, and let them distrust their own judgments in the matter, and yield to the wishes and feelings of those who are most competent to judge and to decide.

IV. From the survey which has been taken, we may infer the duty of both ministers and elders to encourage one another, and to cherish mutual harmony, and the most active co-operation. They are all pledged to the same cause, and are bound by the same obligations. When any thing like a misunderstanding or a division takes place amongst them, the injury done to the interests of religion and morals is incalculable. On the other hand, when a spirit of union and brotherly love pervades their assemblies and their councils, the happi-

* There is a great negligence among ministers in not sending elders to represent them in the several presbyteries and synods.

est effects may be expected to follow on the improvement and happiness of the people. They will go hand in hand in every measure which promises to be successful in promoting the interests of piety; and the zeal of the body will animate and encourage the efforts of individual members. A judicious pastor will seldom adopt any measure of extensive and permanent effect, without taking the counsel of his brethren and coadjutors in the eldership; and a conscientious and zealous elder will ever be ready to listen attentively to the proposals of his minister; to weigh them seriously and to give them all the patronage and encouragement which it is in his power to give. On the one hand, it belongs to the pastor to remind elders of their duty, and to encourage them in its due performance; on the other hand, it belongs to elders to stir up the zeal of their pastor, and to encourage it cordially, by cheerfully going along with him in every measure that promises to be useful in reviving religion or promoting its progress.

To conclude, Let professing Christians recollect, that all this system of means, and all this complicated scheme of pastoral superintendence, has, for its direct object, *their spiritual good.* For *their* improvement and happiness, the church, with all its compartments and all its institutions, has been established among men; and with the vigour, and the progress, and success of religious institutions, are inseparably linked the moral prosperity of the people. Let them be thankful that such institutions have been established and upheld, and that such a rich variety of means have been put, and are kept in operation for their real benefit. Let them profit by such institutions. Let them study to prosper by such means. Let the cold-hearted and indifferent professor be ashamed of his supineness and sloth; and let the people of God redouble their zeal. "Iniquity hath come in on us like a flood." Let us, through the energy of the Spirit, "lift up a standard against it." "Pray for the peace of Jerusalem. They shall prosper that love thee. Peace be within thy walls, and prosperity within thy palaces. For my brethren and companions' sakes I will now say, Peace be within thee. Because of the house of the Lord our God I will seek thy good." *

* Psal. cxxii. 6.—end.

# DISSERTATION II.

## A COMPARATIVE VIEW OF THE ENGLISH AND SCOTTISH SYSTEMS OF POOR LAWS.

THERE is reason to suspect that many modern publications have betrayed their readers into gross mistakes, from their having confounded together the English and the Scotch systems of poor laws, both in regard to principle and practice. It is too readily assumed as an incontrovertible fact, that because both England and Scotland have their statutes on the subject of the poor, that the legislative interference in both is literally of the same complexion, and must necessarily be productive of the same effects. Now, in order to correct some palpable errors on this head, and to exhibit the truth as it literally is, we propose in this Dissertation, in the first place, to give a short historical sketch of the rise and progress, and present state of the poor law system both in England and Scotland: In the second place, we shall exhibit a comparative view of the character and effects of the system in both countries; and then conclude with come practical suggestions.

### SECTION I.

*Sketch of the rise and progress, and present state, of the system of Poor Laws in England and Scotland.*

IN the times of primitive Christianity, the poor members of

the church were liberally provided for from the funds of the Christian community. Whether there ever was literally a common stock formed, out of the property of individual members, by mutual agreement, or in the modern sense of the words, an intercommunity of goods, is, indeed, a matter of uncertainty; but there can be no doubt, that occasional voluntary contributions from different churches and individuals, were resorted to, in order to alleviate the wants, and to multiply the comforts of the indigent and afflicted. How long this state of things continued in the church, it is not in our power to ascertain; but it is certain, that throughout the first three centuries of the Christian era, the professors of Christianity were in nothing more conspicuous than in their zealous and beneficent attention to the state of the poor. When Christianity obtained a legal establishment under Constantine in 320, its charities assumed the more splendid appearance of hospitals for the aged, for orphans, for the sick, for travellers, and others; besides endowments in favour of the church. During the long reign of the Antichristian hierarchy, provision far more than sufficiently ample, was made for the poor, by means of those richly endowed abbeys and monasteries, which opened their gates indiscriminately to the indolent and indigent. In some countries of Europe, and particularly in England, a fourth part of the tithes was set apart for the maintenance of the poor. When, at the period of the reformation in this country, the establishments of the Romish hierarchy were swept away, the poor were left without any established resource. It was at this time, and principally by reason of this cause, that legislative aid was first demanded and obtained, in their favour. * Previous to this period, indeed, there were enacted certain statutes with regard to the poor, from which it may be fairly concluded, that the English legislature considered itself as bound to attend to the concerns of pauperism. But a slight inspection of these statutes must convince us that they all had for their object, not so much the provision that was to be made for the relief of the poor, as the manner and mode in which that provision was to be applied. By the common law of those days, the poor are ordered to be

* There were various other causes besides the demolition of monasteries, &c. which led to the establishment of poors' rates, such as the change in the prices of labour, and in the value of money, the increase of population, and so forth. Still there is reason to consider the demolition of monasteries, and the alienation of ecclesiastical property, as the circumstances principally in operation.

supported "by pastors, rectors of churches, and the parishioners, so that none of them die for default of sustenance:" And by the statutes 12, Richard II. chap. 7, and 19, Henry VII. chap. 12, the poor are directed to abide in the cities and towns wherein they were born, or such wherein they had dwelt for three years;—one or other of these conditions being considered as necessary, in order to constitute a settlement, and legal title to relief. By other statutes, also, both English and Scotch, the qualifications necessary to entitle to aid are marked out; and methods devised by which the vices of idleness and profligacy among the poor might be checked. But it does not appear that the poor had in those days any other resources than the funds of the church, and the casual charities of the humane.* After the commencement of the reformation, Henry VIII. sequestered all the hospitals, and demolished all the monastic institutions. By this means, the poor were reduced to absolute want, particularly as private charity was a virtue hardly known, there having been so little occasion to exercise it. In addition to this, it is obvious, that the habits of indolence and improvidence which the monastic institutions tended so strongly to cherish, had the effect of encreasing tenfold the evil which they were designed to cure. Multitudes of the idle and dissolute were sent forth from these haunts of profligacy; and the votaries of indolence and beggary who were daily fed on the alms distributed at the doors of the religious houses, soon spread their debasing and demoralizing influence through the land. To counteract these evils, and to provide permanently for the poor, a variety of statutes were enacted during the reigns of Henry VIII. and his immediate successors. The poor were divided into two kinds; the sick and impotent who could not work; and the idle and sturdy who would not. To provide for these different classes, hospitals and bridewells were erected in London, and in the larger cities and towns of the kingdom. This plan which was devised, and partly carried into execution, by the pious and benevolent king Edward VI. the experience of a very few years soon proved to be altogether inefficient as a general measure; and besides, although an order had been issued for the erection of such establishments, there does not appear to have been, as yet, any regular and systematic plan for their permanent sup-

* These charities were principally in the shape of legacies, mortifications, &c. for behoof of the poor, and particularly, the endowment of hospitals.

port. Accordingly, additional statutes were past; and it is at this period that the system of English poor laws first exhibits to us its simplest rudiments. In the fifth year of Elizabeth, Justices of the Peace were empowered to raise a weekly sum for the poor, by taxing such as refused to contribute. In the 14th year of the same reign, the law proceeded a step farther, and empowered Justices to tax the inhabitants of every parish generally, for behoof of the indigent. The 18th of Queen Elizabeth contains provision for the conveyance of rogues and vagabonds from one parish to another; for providing a stock to set the poor on work in every city and town corporate; and for establishing houses of correction in every county. The 39th of the same reign directs who shall be overseers of the poor, by whom, and when they shall be appointed, their office and duty, their accounts, their forfeitures, &c. At length the system was completed by the statute of the 43d of Elizabeth, which empowers the church-wardens and overseers of every parish with consent of two Justices residing in or near the parish, to raise a fund weekly, or monthly, or otherwise, by taxation, to any amount they please, for the maintenance of the poor. If the individual parish cannot afford to maintain its own poor, recourse may be had to the neighbouring parishes, or to the county at large. By statute, church-wardens are, *ex officio*, overseers of the poor; and besides them, the Justices may appoint two, three, or four, substantial householders, as assessors for every parish. If a parish is divided into smaller districts called *townships*, and is so large, that some townships cannot reap the benefit intended by the act, in that case it is provided by later statute, that separate overseers may be appointed for each township.* The overseers are nominated annually, in Easter week, or within a month after; and it would appear that no individual is obliged to serve above one year at a time. Their office and duty, according to the statute, as judiciously summed up by Judge Blackstone,† are principally these: first, to raise competent sums for the necessary relief of the poor, impotent, old, blind, and such other, being poor, and not able to work: And secondly, To provide work for such as are able, and cannot otherwise get employment. For these joint purposes, they are empowered to make and levy rates upon the several inhabitants of the parish.

* Christian's Note to Blackstone's Commentaries, vol I. p. 360.

† Com. on the Laws of England, vol. I. p. 360.

Since the days of Elizabeth, a variety of additional statutes have been passed by the legislature, not so much with the view of enlarging the original enactments, which remain, at present, on precisely the same footing as they have ever done, but chiefly with the view of ascertaining the limits within which parochial relief ought to be given; or, in other words, in order to determine the law of England in regard to *settlements* and residence in a parish. The original law of settlement was very simple. Every applicant was declared to have a right on the parish where he had resided and maintained himself and his family for three years at one time: * or failing this qualification, on the parish where he was born. By another statute, persons who held the character of *vagabonds*, were declared to have a full settlement in a place after one year's independent residence. The law, as it *now* stands, so far as I can understand it, is this: A settlement is acquired either by birth; or by parentage, or the settlement of the father and mother; or by marriage; or by *forty day's* residence in a place. This last qualification is guarded or explained by such provisions as these:—The person thus residing must give due notice to the overseer, of his place of residence, and the number of his family; or he must rent a house for one year, to the value of £10 sterling, and reside in it himself at least forty days together; or he must pay public taxes and levies, with the exception of those for high-ways, scavengers, and house and windows; or he must have executed a parochial office; or he must be hired for a year when unmarried, and serve for a year in the same place; or he must be bound apprentice, and serve as such forty days; or he must have an estate of his own in the place, however small the value of it may be. All persons not settled in one or other of these modes, may be removed to their own parishes, on complaint of the overseers, by two Justices of the peace, if they shall adjudge them likely to become chargeable to the parish into which they have intruded.

From this general sketch of the laws regarding settlements, two things are very obvious: first, That as the law stands, nothing can be easier than for a pauper to gain a parochial settlement in England. And secondly, That nothing can be more difficult than to ascertain in each individual instance, whether

* It was originally *seven* years; but afterwards limited to *three*.

the law has been infringed or obeyed. And hence we find, that in England an infinity of expensive law-suits are yearly carried on between contending neighbourhoods, concerning settlements and removals; thus destroying the harmony of parishes, and squandering at law the money destined for the relief of the poor.

With respect to the annual amount of money raised and expended for behoof of the poor, the following statements have been published by parliamentary authority:

| | | *Raised.* | *Expended.** |
|---|---|---|---|
| Average | 1748-49-50..... | £ 730,135..... | £ 689,971 |
| Year. | 1776..... | 1,720,316..... | 1,530,864 |
| Average | 1783-84-85..... | 2,167,748..... | 2,004,237 |
| Year. | 1803..... | 5,348,204..... | 4,267,963 |
| Average | 1813-14-15..... | 8,164,496..... | 6,129,844. |

The sum raised during last year throughout England and Wales is estimated at *nine millions;* and this in addition to the immense expenditure on hospitals and charitable establishments of all kinds for relief of the aged, the young, and the destitute, amounting, it may be guessed, to about *six millions* more. We may now consider ourselves as approaching the period, when the anticipation of a distinguished member of parliament, in the debate on the poor laws in 1788, has been fulfilled; that as the poor rates within the nine years before had encreased one third, they would, at the same rate, amount at the end of 50 years to the sum of £ 11,230,000; "A burden which" says he "the country could not bear."† The ratio of increase has been enlarged instead of being lessened.

The number of paupers relieved in the various modes of parochial charity, was

In 1813—971,913
1814—953,995
1815—895,973.

* The reason of the distinction appears to be, that a considerable part of the money raised in name of poor rates is expended on objects of local concern, such as, the repairs of roads, bridges, &c. besides the actual expense of management.

† Speech of Mr. Beaufoy on Mr. Gilbert's Bill, 1788.

Average of these three years 940,626, exclusive of any children of those permanently relieved at their own houses. The population of England and Wales by the census of 1811, was 10,150,615; so that the number of persons relieved from the poor rates appears to have been $9\frac{1}{4}$ in each hundred of the population.*

Such are the leading facts illustrative of the origin, progress, and present state of the poor law system in England. Let us now advert to the same system as it has been planted and germinated in Scotland.

The same causes which led to the establishment of poor rates in England operated in Scotland, with this additional circumstance. The reformed clergy in England contrived to keep possession of a very large share of the spoils of the church. The reformers of Scotland were less fortunate. The scheme for the appropriation of the funds of the Church which was proposed by them, and which certainly reflects no little credit on their generous and disinterested liberality, was, by those who had the power of adopting it, summarily rejected. It was proposed that the ecclesiastical revenues should be divided into *three* equal parts—one part to defray the expenses of the reformed establishment—another, for the erection and endowment of colleges and schools—and the remaining third to be applied to the relief of the poor, and to charitable purposes of all kinds. The barons of the land having enriched themselves

* Mr. Wardlaw, in his excellent Essay on Benevolent Associations, p. 29, states the number of paupers at about *two millions and a half*, making *one fourth* in place of *one ninth* of the population. I am inclined to think this average rather high; and as the statements given in the text are derived from the most unexceptionable authority, they must be implicity relied on. At the same time, it ought to be recollected, that in these statements are not included, the persons receiving charity from *other funds* besides the poor rates; nor the children and other relatives of persons not actually residing in work-houses. If these are taken in, the number may probably be doubled; so that the statement of my respectable friend may not be very far from strict accuracy.—In the report of the Parliamentary Committee regarding the city of Coventry, the *out poor* alone are represented, by a very competent witness, as amounting to "*one third* of the whole population." p. 212:—There are many other instances of the same kind. Two things, however, should be kept in mind;—the one is, that the population of England and Wales must have in 1815, considerably exceeded 10 millions;—the other is, that the parochial returns may reasonably be supposed to exhibit an average rather *below* than above the fact. Perhaps these two considerations may balance each other.

in the scramble for the spoils of the hierarchy, were not disposed to refund any part of their wealth for charitable uses; while the clergy, by the pitiful allowance which was made to them, were themselves hardly raised above the ranks of pauperism. * As the attempt to obtain an allotment from the general fund was thus unsuccessful, it was found necessary to have recourse to legislative enactment.

Before stating the measures then adopted, it may be proper to look back to the acts which were passed by the Scotch Parliament at periods prior to the era of the Reformation, in order that we may form a more accurate idea of the state of the country and of manners at the time. In the reign of James I. A. D. 1424 it was enacted that all *sornares* or masterful beggars who shall be troublesome to the lieges, by their importunity and greed, shall be punished by the Sheriff and find security for their good behaviour In the same year it was ordered that no persons be allowed to beg between 14 and 70 years of age—that poor persons of this class be attended to by Councils in towns and Justices in landward parishes—that those allowed to beg shall have a badge given them by the Sheriff—and that all other persons not having such badges "shall be charged by open proclamation, to labour and pass to crafts (trades) for winning of their living, under the pain of burning on the cheek, and banishing from the country." It was further enacted that all hospitals should be appropriated strictly to the sick and poor; and be regularly visited by the chancellor or by the Bishop and Clergy. In the reign of James II 1449 it was statute and ordained, that "all sornares, overlyars, and maisterful beggars" shall be imprisoned—shall have their ears nailed to the market cross—be banished the country; and if they return, that "they be hanged." By James IV. in 1503 it was enacted, that authorities, civil and ecclesiastical, shall "thoil nane to beg, except cruiked folk, seik folk, impotent folk, and weak folk, under the paine of payment of ane mark for ilk uther beggar, that beis foundin." By James V. in 1535 it was decreed, that all beggars should be confined to their respective parishes, and that such as serve beggars not belonging to them shall be fined. There are various other acts of a similar kind, which it is unnecessary to quote. From a review of the whole it is obvious that the object of them all is not so much to make provi-

* The highest Stipend was about £15 sterling *per annum*; but the great majority did not exceed a third of that sum; and this miserably paid.

sion for the poor, as to suppress begging, or to place it under such strict regulations as might render it harmless.

At length in the year 1579, a law was passed by the Scotch Parliament of James VI. enacting that while idle and viciously inclined persons, calling themselves objects of charity, should be severely punished, legal provision should be made for the maintenance of such as appeared to be suitable objects of benevolence. The legally constituted authorities, both in towns and in country districts, are ordained to make minute and accurate inquiry into the circumstances of all the persons claiming relief; and to levy on themselves and the whole inhabitants of the town or district, according to personal or heritable property, such a sum as may appear necessary for meeting the existing exigency. It is particularly ordered—that the Magistrates of towns and the Justices in country districts, shall from time to time take inquisition of all aged, decayed, and poor persons claiming relief, by inquiry into their history, age, occupation, and character—that they shall make up an accurate statement of the circumstances of each, and the rate of maintenance that may be necessary— that they shall tax and stent the whole inhabitants of the parish, according to their substance, without respect of persons—that they shall appoint collectors and overseers for collecting and receiving the said tax, and apportioning it to each pauper, according to the rates adjudged by the general meeting—that every year a new stent-roll, as well as a new roll of poor, shall be made, and alterations entered according to circumstances—that the civil authorities shall remove with the requisite certificate, to their own parishes, such as have no legal residence—that the collectors shall account to the judges every half-year, and if found negligent or dishonest shall be punished by fine and imprisonment—that the paupers able to work but unwilling shall be punished by imprisonment, scourging, and such like—and that licences to beg shall only be given at the discretion of the judges. In 1617 an act was passed ordaining—that the children of the poor shall be kept and educated at the sight of the parish—that the price of their labour shall go to their maintenance—and that they shall not be their own masters till they arrive at 30 years of age. The act of Charles II. 1663, while it confirms all the preceding acts, orders the erection of work-houses in every county for reception of the idle and profligate; an act which appears to have been very partially put in force. It also ap-

points—that one half of the stent, or assessed tax for the poor, shall be paid by the heritors according to their valuation, or in any other proportion that the majority shall fix:—And the other half, by the tenants and possessors according to their means and substance.* By later enactments and decisions of the ordinary courts, the ministers and elders and deacons, forming the kirk session of parishes, are entrusted with a co-ordinate power along with the heritors in settling all matters relating to the support of the poor. One half of the money collected at the several parish churches, may be claimed by the heritors for the ordinary maintenance of the poor; the other being at the discretion of the session for payment of necessary expenses, and for occasional charity; while both heritors and session form one corporate court, by whom the whole transactions relative to the poor are regularly and systematically conducted. In the terms of the several acts of William and

* The rate is *now* frequently fixed according to the *real*, and not the *valued* rent; and this by agreement among the heritors. The court found this competent in the case of the West kirk assessment, Jan. 12th, 1773. The act 1663 is so broad as to comprehend not heritable property merely, but also coal-works, mills, manufacturing establishments, and other subjects which yield a revenue to the proprietor or undertaker. Hutcheson, vol. I. p. 42. "No precise mode is specified by the statute for ascertaining the substance of individuals. Various modes have therefore been adopted in the different royal burghs. In Edinburgh, the house-rent has been adopted as the rule of assessment. In Glasgow," and in Paisley, "the tax is levied according to what is supposed to be the fortune or wealth of individuals, exclusive of heritable property *without* the burgh; so that the Magistrates assess them according to their heritable property within the burgh, and their personal funds wherever situated. In one case, (the case of Dreghorn, Dec. 2, 1797.) where this last method was objected to, as arbitrary and oppressive, the Court did not find it illegal; but in general seemed to think "the rule adopted in Edinburgh of making every person pay according to the rent of the house which he inhabits preferable, as affording a *datum* sufficiently accurate and in no case liable to partiality." Ibid. p. 46. It is very questionable whether the *datum* in this case is sufficiently accurate. It often happens that persons in business, having great *personal* property, and deriving large profits from trade *within burgh*, satisfy themselves with a very small dwelling house adjoining their place of business, and retire for the greater part of the year to a splendid residence in the vicinity, or in the country. It is not easy to fix one plan which will be free from all objection. But I may safely say, that although in Glasgow and in Paisley the more indefinite mode has been acted on for a long period of years, very few instances of partiality or oppression have been complained of. In the case of parishes, partly burgh and partly landward, the mode of assessment is various. In some, as in the West kirk parish, it is laid on the whole *real* rent, whether land or houses. In others the stent is laid on precisely as if the burgh were one parish, and the landward district another. In the case of *burghs of barony*, such as Greenock, the law as it regards landward parishes takes effect. In the case of the Magistrates of Musselburgh, May 1794, it was found by the court that *corporations* as well as individuals are liable to assessment for the poor.

Mary from 1692 to 1699, it is expressly appointed, that the heritors, ministers, and elders of every parish, shall meet on the first Tuesday of February, and the first Tuesday of August yearly, to make lists of all the poor in the parish—to settle the sum total that may be necessary to their relief for the time being—to assess the same, the one half on the heritors, and the other half on the householders—to collect the same weekly, monthly, or annually, as may be agreed on—to appoint overseers to distribute to the poor, and to expel all beggars and unlawful intruders—and to consult and determine in all matters affecting the poor, according as they shall see cause. In the case of burghs, it is ordered, that Magistrates shall meet and stent themselves conform to such order and custom, use and wont, in laying on stents, annuities, or other public burdens in the respective burghs, as may be most effectual to reach all the inhabitants.*

The objects in whose favour all these enactments have been made are described in general, as "those who may not win their living otherways." (act 1424, chap 25.) They are elsewhere described as "poor, aged, lame, and impotent:" and by the act 1579, as "poor, impotent, and decayed persons, who of necessity must live by alms." Under these general terms are comprehended, such as have been in the course of Providence reduced from affluence to poverty, persons insane, orphan children, and others who obviously require benevolent aid, though not expressly noticed in any of the statutes. In the process of distribution, a clear and obvious distinction is made between *ordinary* poor, who are altogether incompetent at any time, or in any circumstances to earn by their own exertions alone, a subsistence for themselves; and extraordinary or *occasional* poor, who by reason of temporary or local circumstances have been reduced to unlooked for distress. In favour of the former class, the provision is permanent. In regard to the latter class, such partial and temporary relief is given, as may enable the unfortunate objects of it to regain the place they may have lost; and thus prevent them from becoming permanently a burden on the public. The wisdom and policy of this distinction are plain to every observer. By administering an occasional temporary relief, the existing or impending distress is alleviated or warded off, while the spirit of manly independence is not materially impaired. The donation is

* Act William and Mary, 1693.

viewed somewhat in the light of a loan or temporary gift, which, in not a few instances, has been repaid by the future industry and gratitude of the recipients. As it is an established principle, that to prevent an evil is better than to remove it after its existence, so it must be allowed, that the charity which administers occasional relief to the industrious, but unfortunate, and thus prevents them from falling into the degrading ranks of pauperism, is infinitely preferable to that which merely secures the prolongation of a degraded existence.

It does not appear that the law has made any provision for *absolute strangers*, who have no claim on the funds; and perhaps it is a wise appointment that the care of such should devolve on the sympathies of the people at large. At the same time, it ought to be noticed that according to the enactments of the church, the care of "strangers" as well as of "the poor and sick" members of the community, belongs to the deacons of the congregation;* who are supposed to have the administration of the parochial funds The simple fact is; that according to the poor laws of Scotland, strangers have no legal claim on the established funds; while, according to the spirit of our ecclesiastical establishments, the sympathies of the christian community are commended to the "stranger who sojourneth among us;" and occasional aid is given at the discretion of the elders out of that part of the funds which arises from the collections and voluntary contributions of the people. But it would obviously prove a most impolitic measure to place on the same footing, our own stated pensioners:—and strangers who may be with us to-day, and are gone to-morrow. Law must define its objects, and it must discriminate and guard its provisions.

A question has been asked; What is the provision made for transporting from the parish where a poor person has happened to become unable, through sickness or otherways, to prosecute his journey, such poor person to the parish to which he belongs? Are the intermediate parishes bound to pay the expense of transporting him, each to the next adjacent parish on his route, and have these parishes no way of receiving the money thus expended? The reply is not difficult. By the letter and spirit of the statutes, and by frequent decisions, the

* Second Book of Discipline, chap. IX.

burden of providing for such occasional emergencies falls on the parish to which the unfortunate individual belongs; and from the funds of that parish, the money expended, whether by one or more parishes, may be recovered by law. At the same time it is very plain, that the case supposed is one to which all our parishes are equally liable in a greater or less degree; and hence we find that, *in practice*, it has been common for parishes to defray such occasional expenses without insisting rigidly on the *rights* of the case; as they must always view it as an object of importance to have removed from their bounds, as quickly as possible, those who might otherwise become a permanent burden. The expense is seldom great; and if it is likely to prove heavy, nothing more is necessary than to inform the parish legally bound, of all the circumstances, and obtain legal redress. When a man belonging to one parish has become poor in another parish, in which he for the time resides, this parish has unquestionably a legal right (after duly intimating his condition to his proper parish) to supply his present necessities according to the dictates of a sound discretion, and to obtain remuneration from his own parish. In such cases, supply is commonly understood to be given according to the standard or rule adopted by the parish, in regard to *its own* poor, when placed in similar circumstances. If his own parish shall choose to let the pauper starve or half starve, the parish in which he resides, after adopting every practicable method of persuasion without effect, is authorised to represent the case to the local magistracy, who on proper evidence laid before them, are empowered to fix the allowance which appears adequate, and to subject the parish legally bound, in payment of that allowance. Besides this measure, there is another alternative allowed in law; and this is, to remove the pauper to his own parish at its expense. But we may safely lay it down as a general principle, that parishes will always consult their own interest best, by leaving a great deal to the discretion of those whose local circumstances, and connexion with applicants at the time of application, render them the most competent judges of the merits of the case. It can never be the interest of parishes, but the opposite, to allow to strangers a greater aliment than they usually grant to their own dependents.*

* For further information on the statutes and decisions relative to the poor see Dissertation IV.

## SECTION II.

*The English and Scottish Systems of Poor Laws compared and contrasted.*

HAVING taken this review of the history, progress, and present state of the poor law system in England and in Scotland, it will not be difficult to perceive wherein they agree and wherein they differ. They agree, where every system of the kind *must* agree, in applying legislative interference for behoof of the indigent population. This is the leading principle of the system; and every new act which is embodied in it, is only an additional instance of this legislative interference. But while the English and Scottish systems of poor laws proceed on this as an essential principle, they differ most materially in the manner in which they have applied that principle to practice; and in order to form an accurate estimate of each, it is necessary to notice the circumstances of discrimination.

1. The systems differ in the *object* which they undertake to accomplish. In the English system, the attention of the legislature has addressed itself to two measures—the one is, the actual relief and support of the poor, the impotent, and the destitute—the other is, the supply of work to such as are able and willing, but who are thrown out of employment. With respect to these last, the law requires and enjoins on overseers the duty of providing employment for such, and that within the bounds of the parish or district where they happen to have acquired a legal settlement. In default of this, they fall to be maintained in idleness by the funds of the parish. It is no doubt true, that this part of the duty of overseers is in general, as Blackstone says, "shamefully neglected;" but what is the consequence of this?—The work-houses, which, according to their original meaning, were designed exclusively to be the nurseries of industry and good morals, have been crowded with an indolent and dastardly population. Every man who happens for a few weeks to be out of work, or who does not choose to employ himself at the labour which may offer to his hand, throws himself upon the parish, and the overseers, unwilling to give themselves trouble, send him to the work-house, or give him an aliment out of the general fund. I do not say, that this

is generally prevalent; but this I will say, that it is an evil, which the law, as it stands, must inevitably encourage.—In Scotland, the case is different. The law requires, that the indigent and impotent shall be relieved, and that the idle and profligate shall be punished. But it does not lay on the managers of the poor the burden of getting work for the idle; nor does it require the exclusive maintenance of such as are thrown out of employment. If work can by any means and in any place be obtained, the applicant must go and find it for himself, and he has no right to refuse the labour which may offer. If through stagnation of trade or other casualties in the course of Providence, a number of tradesmen and labourers have been thrown out of employment, and cannot by any exertion of their own obtain it, in such a case, the system of poor laws is not brought forward as a scheme of relief. It does not appear to have been designed for such a purpose. What then is done? —A separate subscription is entered on—temporary aid is obtained for temporary distress—the unemployed are set to labour at something or other, and paid at a moderate rate—while the established fund is reserved for its appropriate and exclusive object. In this way the respectable operative classes are saved from the degradation of being, on the approach of every successive calamity, in the course of events, precipitated into the ranks of pauperism. A broad line of distinction is thus drawn between the proper objects of parochial relief, and those who on account of peculiar circumstances have been reduced from comparative comfort to temporary indigence. Hence it is that in Scotland we know nothing of the very impolitic and pernicious practice of making up the deficiency of wages for work done to private individuals, by grants out of the parochial funds.*

I mean not to deny that the overseers of the poor in Scotland as well as in England, are empowered to give work *if they please* to the idle and sturdy; nor would I conceal the fact that partial aid may at times be given to the young and able, who happen to be out of work: But this I maintain as incontrovert-

* A strong and most decisive view of the "*injustice*, *impolicy*, and *cruelty*" of this plan has been given in the "Memorial of the magistrates of the county of Suffolk," submitted to the Parliamentary Committee, and published in their Appendix, p. 228. So long as relief may be had from the poors' rate, we need not wonder that the wages of the Manchester weavers should at this date (Sept. 1818) be so low.

ible; that the able, and healthy, and young, are *not* the objects contemplated by our laws as proper objects of relief. The provision made is *for the poor* or indigent part of the population, whose poverty has been caused by old age, sickness, or unavoidable calamities. So long as a man is *able to work*, he is *ipso facto* excluded from the rates. He may be in need from want of work, and he may obtain a little temporary relief; but he cannot be viewed as an ordinary recipient; and it is very questionable whether the existing law allows of an assessment being levied for the express benefit of such cases. If it does, this is clear that such assessment must be kept *perfectly distinct* from the rates usually levied for the ordinary purposes of *the poor*.

There is another radical difference between the systems in so far as their object is concerned. According to the law of England, as it has been interpreted from time immemorial, it seems to be understood, that a pauper applying for alms must be placed in as comfortable a situation as he held before his application for relief; and hence it is that when the rate of wages happens to fall below the average of former years, the parish officers are called upon to make up in full the deficiency. In many instances, the sum of 8, or 10, or 12, or 15*s.* is given weekly to poor families, according to the circumstances of each. According to the system of Scotland, the great object of the legal provision for the poor is simply to keep them from being reduced to *beggary*: * and hence, *in fact*, such a pittance is given, as, along with their own efforts, the kindness of friends, and the private charity of the public, is reckoned sufficient to raise above actual want. The average rate, so far as it has been ascertained, seems to run between one shilling and five shillings per week; and this last is seldom given except in cases of peculiar emergency. Common sense dictates, that when a person falls into indigence, he ought to descend considerably *below* the station he was accustomed to occupy. The neglect of this rational principle, and the custom of giving too liberal supplies to the applicants for aid, has been one great cause of the misery that has resulted from the poor laws in England. Whenever we hold out to the people the prospect of as comfortable a maintenance *without work* as *with it*, we need not wonder at

* The expression made use of in the statutes is, "that the poor may be enabled to live *unbeggand*."

the rapid growth of an idle, and dastardly, and vicious population.

2. The systems differ in the manner according to *which the funds for relief are raised.* In England, two justices of the same or of a different parish, are vested with the power of nominating and appointing overseers, who, along with the churchwardens, are entrusted with the power of stenting the inhabitants to the amount which they think necessary; and of applying the fund thus raised. The Justices can in no case appoint more than four of such overseers; so that the whole power of raising and managing the parochial fund is in the hands of a few individuals who may not have much personal interest in the business. In Scotland the law is very different. Here, the heritors, personally or by proxy, along with the Minister and Session, constitute the legal court by which, and by which alone, all matters belonging to the poor are adjudged and determined. They meet by regular citation twice every year for investigating the state of the poor—calculating the extent of relief that may be necessary—and apportioning it according to a fixed measure. As the heritors themselves are the persons to be assessed, they may be supposed to exercise the greatest care in the allocation of the assessment. A committee of their number is appointed to attend to the business; and thus there is a regular system of inspection which is well calculated to check imposture, and to secure the great ends of a public trust. In Scotland, the whole procedure in regard to the poor is conducted by persons of the greatest respectability and influence in the district: In England, the heritors and clergy rather act by delegation than by personal interference. In the former country there is all the security which any legislative enactments can give in favour of the right allocation of the tax: In the latter country, the security is, to say the least of it, by no means so great. In Scotland, the public burden is imposed by voluntary agreement, among those who are themselves to pay their several proportions: In England, there is by law committed to a set of men called overseers of the poor, a power of compulsory taxation, greater than is possessed by the Parliament of Great Britain. In a word, an accurate review of the Scottish system of poor laws will convince us, that the great end designed, and the great end actually accomplished by it, is simply this:—to bind upon the rich and wealthy part of the community the duty of providing for the wants of the poor; leaving the particular *extent* and *manner* of

its application to the wisdom and discretion of those who are most competent to judge.*

3. The systems differ *in the mode of their application.* In England the overseers are left with the sole power of appropriating the relief, and with almost no control; while it commonly happens, that their duty and responsibility are limited to a single year. In Scotland, the application of the fund is by express statute, committed to the charge of a committee of managers, consisting partly of the minister and elders, and partly of a certain number of proprietors or respectable inhabitants in the parish. It is obvious, that in this way there is all the security for a right appropriation of the funds, that the nature of human things can afford. The Session have an interest in seeing that the monies entrusted peculiarly to them are properly administered, and that the growth of pauperism is not encouraged. The managers appointed by the joint meeting of heritors and session have, in almost every case, a personal interest in the assessment, and must therefore be pledged to attend to its due appropriation. The elders hold their office *for life;* and those associated with them as overseers are commonly retained in office for a succession of years; and this is uniformly a proof of tried experience and fidelity in the discharge of the trust. I make no doubt that a great proportion of the abuses which are committed in the management of the poors' rates in England, arise from the circumstance of the overseers being for so short a time in office. They want experience in the business; and they do not feel very deeply the responsibility attached to an office which is of so short continuance. "The parish that is fortunate enough to meet with an overseer who executes the duty in a right and conscientious manner, cannot continue to avail itself of his services, but *must* change him every other, if not every year." † Besides, let it never be forgotten, that while in Scotland there is a legal court constituted for the very purpose of trying the cases of applicants, and distinguishing between the really indigent and those who are idle and dissolute: In England, there

* It has been clearly found by the Court of Session, that the heritors and kirk session *alone* have the power, in the first instance, of fixing the amount of aliment to each pauper; and that neither Sheriffs nor Justices have any right to interfere. See Case of Paton against Rutherford, 20th Nov. 1772.

† Saunder's Observations on the Poor Laws, &c. 1799. It ought in justice to be stated that overseers may be re-elected for a period beyond the time expressly specified in the law; and there are several decisions to this effect on record. See Const on Poor Laws, vol. I.

is no such court;* and hence it is, that "not unfrequently one half of a parish continue idle, dissolute, and unemployed." † In Scotland, there is in every parish a legally constituted court, consisting of minister and elders—possessing a local and permanent influence—vested with a co-ordinate voice in all matters affecting the poor—and controlled to every reasonable extent by the committee of heritors: In England there is no such court, and the want of it is severely felt. "The whole business of the poor," says a very competent judge, "hinges on the duties of overseers, and the manner in which they are executed; for (except the right of appeal on the part of the pauper to the bench of justices) there is hardly any check on their conduct; and the powers with which they are invested are immense, which I consider as the foundation of all the evils that attend the system. It is a medley of confidence and of menial duty that has done the mischief. The overseers, in the first place, have the purse of the parish so completely put into their hands, that the statute authorises their calling *weekly*, if they see proper, for a rate, and without the least limitation with respect to its quantum; and in this respect *the concurrence of the inhabitants in making a rate is not necessary.* Two of his Majesty's Justices of peace *must* confirm the rate by signing the same. I say *must*, for this is so perfectly a ministerial duty on their part, that if they refuse, the Court of King's Bench would grant a mandamus to compel them. Here is unbounded confidence on the part of the legislature."‡

4. The systems differ most essentially in their several regulations respecting the *settlement* of paupers. We have seen that the laws of England on this department of the general subject are very numerous—very minute—and very difficult of

* A *single* Justice may, on complaint from a person seeking relief, order him *instanter* to be put on the roll of paupers; and this order must be obeyed without delay for appeal; for, says the decision, K. V. N. Shields, Hil. 20. Geo. III. "No appeal lies from an order of maintenance, lest, while the point is litigating, the poor starve." This reason must, to every one reflecting on the subject, appear very injudicious; for the very point in dispute is, not whether the applicant has a legal claim, but simply, whether he or she *be really poor* and needs supply; so that the law seems to ground its reasonableness on the *very point to be proved.*

† Blackstone, vol. I. p. 365.

‡ Observations on the Present State and Influence of the Poor Laws, founded on experience, &c. by Robert Saunders, Esq. of Lewisham, 1799.

application: and hence arise the numberless law-suits between parishes, and the vexatious processes about removals; by which individuals are harassed with relentless severity—the peace of the country disturbed—industry discouraged—and thousands of pounds annually squandered. In Scotland the law of settlements, as we have stated it before,* is exceedingly simple. It is very seldom that parishes feel any difficulty in applying the law to particular cases when all the facts of these cases are before them. There is a difficulty, no doubt, in obtaining an accurate and consistent statement from the parties applying for aid; and it may not be easy at once to verify their statements by means of independent evidence. But these difficulties, it is obvious, grow out of circumstances over which we can have no control. In Scotland, a little patient investigation is absolutely necessary; but when once the precise facts are before us, we have seldom any difficulty in applying the law. In England, on the contrary, the facts of the case may be all stated fairly and accurately; and yet the application of the law to the case may be so difficult as to render legal interference indispensably necessary. As a decisive illustration of the difference between the Scottish and English systems of poor laws on the point of settlements, we may state the simple fact, which, however, speaks volumes on the subject, that while in England the expense of litigation for the last ten years, amounted to about *two millions*, the whole law-expenses of the Scottish system for the same period, did not amount to £2000. "By the law of settlements as existing in England," says a very competent judge, "not only have the industrious poor been restrained from seeking employment where they would otherwise have been received with joy, and confined to their own parishes, in which they were regarded with an evil eye; but for want of competition, the price of labour to the manufacturer has been much enhanced. With a certificate, indeed, the poor are permitted to reside in any parish where work is to be had; but then a certificate is not easily obtained. Now it is evident, that by raising the price of labour, you must directly check the progress of the manufactures, and by experience it is found, that the same effect arises indirectly, to a more considerable extent; for in proportion as you advance the wages of the poor, you diminish the quantity of their work."†

* Page 22.

† Townshend's Dissertation on the Poor Laws, p. 28.

5. The Scottish system differs from the English farther in this; that on many points it wants that degree of *definiteness*, and *minute particularity* which the other possesses. It is perhaps a fortunate circumstance for Scotland, that the poor laws of that kingdom are in many particulars so inconsistent with each other as to render it almost impossible to act on them according to the letter of strict law. By the act 1579, the persons appointed to make up the poors' roll are, Magistrates of Burghs, and the Justices in landward parishes. By the act 1663, it is the heritors of each parish. By the act 1672, it is the Minister and Elders. By the act 1692, it is the heritors, Minister, and Elders. By the act 1693, it is the Magistrates and heritors, without either Minister or Session. A similar variation exists with regard to the persons who are to pay—the mode of assessment—the specific objects of relief—and the application of the funds. On account of such variations in the statutes, they have, in the great majority of cases, been suffered to fall into desuetude. It is perhaps fortunate that there should have been such inconsistencies in the acts, as they have had the effect of preventing the system from being generally introduced. The existence of such acts has indeed had the effect of securing attention to the general duty of relieving the poor; while it has failed in enforcing an involuntary poors' rate.

There cannot be a stronger proof of the *indefinite* character of the Scottish system of poor laws, than that furnished by the diversified modes according to which the assessment is enforced and levied. In one place, the rule adopted is, the valued rent. In another, it is the real rent. In a third it is neither the one nor the other, but the supposed means and substance of individuals, estimated in ways too various to be specified. In a fourth, the rule assumed, is the rent of the houses whose inhabitants are liable to assessment. What is very remarkable, the Court of Session has repeatedly sanctioned *all these* modes, however different, and even contradictory; and indeed, it would appear that the court would readily approve of *any* mode agreed to by the general body of heritors, provided it were not grossly tyrannical or unjust. All this goes to prove an essential difference between the law as it stands in Scotland and in England, while it secures against some of the worst evils of compulsory assessment, by leaving so much to the discretion and voluntary agreement of the parties concerned.

6. There is a very remarkable difference to be noticed between the systems as they respect the *duties entrusted to overseers of the poor*. From the view exhibited of the duties of the Eldership in the church, in so far as the concerns of the poor are interested, some idea may be formed of the obligations incurred by every man who undertakes the management of the poor, whether in the capacity of an Elder or Overseer. From that view it is obvious that nothing is legally required of the managers of the concerns of the poor that is at all derogatory from the respect and the delicacy that are due to men in the more respectable walks of life. In the English system the case is very different indeed. There we find that there is not a duty, be it ever so menial and degrading, which relates to the poor, that is not to be performed personally by the overseer. He must collect the tax; he must summon defaulters; he must give his personal attendance in levying by distress, &c; he must personally remove a pauper from one parish to another, as without actual delivery by his own hand, there is no obligation on the part of the parish to which he is removed to receive him. The clear effect of this part of the law, is, that while in Scotland we obtain the services of men respectable alike for station and character, the burden of the poor is in England devolved on the lower and meaner part of the community. In those places where a collector or manager with a large salary is appointed, the responsibility is devolved almost exclusively on him; and what was formerly a degrading and bustling *democracy*, is converted into a stern and repulsive *monocratic despotism*.

7. While there are such points of difference between the systems themselves, there are still greater in the *several modes of their application*. In England, the stent for the poor is raised along with a great variety of other taxes for local purposes, so that the poors' rate becomes as completely a public burden as any of the taxes imposed by government: In Scotland, the poors' rate is kept distinct from all others, so as to occupy its own peculiar place; and the advantages of this arrangement are practically felt. In Scotland, there has always been an union of voluntary benevolence with compulsory enactment; In England, the system as exhibited in practice, has been, and is compulsory, in the most rigid sense of the term. Under the system of English poor laws, " thousands and millions are annually thrown away in suits relative to parish settle-

ments, and squandered by the church-wardens and overseers in their feasts, &c. with several other species of misapplication and fraud;"* under the Scottish system, the whole expense of conducting the assessment does not exceed £2000 per annum. In Scotland, the poor are generally relieved or provided with work at their own houses; In England, they are generally accumulated in one common work-house; "a practice," says Blackstone, which puts the sober and diligent on a level, in point of their earnings, with those who are dissolute and idle; depresses the laudable emulation of domestic industry and neatness; and destroys all endearing family connexions, the only felicity of the indigent."† In England, while the real purpose of the assessment is little regarded, great sums are spent in maintaining the idle and profligate; In Scotland, the most cautious and scrupulous inquiry is made by the most competent judges before an applicant is received on the roll. In Scotland, the distinction between *regular* and *occasional* poor is generally recognized, even in assessed districts; In England, there is too much truth in the averment that has been made and acted on —*once* a pauper, *always* a pauper. In England, when an applicant for aid is found to belong to another parish than that where he resides, he must be removed, at great expense and trouble, to his legal parish, though it may be hundreds of miles distant: In Scotland, when a case of the kind occurs, there is no difficulty in managing it: the pauper usually remains in his ordinary place of residence—an agreement is made between the parishes for his rate of maintenance—the money advanced by the one parish is pointedly paid by the other—and thus a friendly co-operation between them is kept up. When differences arise, as they sometimes must, they are speedily settled, either by law or by arbitration. Indeed, the difference both in principle and practice between the English and Scottish systems is so great, that two most competent judges, and one of them at least, not very friendly to assessments in general, have not hesitated to declare their sentiments as favourable to the Scottish system. "I declare resolutely," says Lord Kaimes, "against a perpetual tax for the poor. But if there must be such a tax, I know of none less subversive of industry and morals, than that established in Scotland, obliging the landholders in every parish to meet at stated times, in order to provide a fund for the poor;

* Lord Lyttleton's speech on the Poor laws, 1775.

† Comment. Vol. I. p. 361.

but leaving the objects of their charity, and the measure, to their own humanity and discretion. In this plan there is no encroachment on the natural duty of charity, but only that the minority must submit to the opinion of the majority."* "The unpopularity of the poor laws in England," says Mr. Hutcheson, "need not surprise us; but we may reasonably complain, that the natural fruits of so faulty a plan should ever be mistaken for necessary consequences of all compulsory provisions for the poor, or involve the Scottish system likewise in one indiscriminate blame and obloquy."†

Indeed "it is the leading principle of the Scottish poor laws to avoid any fixed or permanent tax, which might increase the number of the poor by affording an encouragement to idleness, improvidence, and dissipation. No assessment is to be imposed till on due inquiry it appears necessary to meet the exigency of the moment. The law does not direct any *particular* sum to be annually levied. But only *meetings from time to time* to be held in order to take inquisition of all aged, poor, impotent, and decayed persons according to their number, to consider what their needful sustentation may extend to."‡ The law only provides for an assessment in case other funds shall be found inadequate; and it is careful to avoid the evil of a *permanent* and *compulsory* tax. When it so happens that the ordinary funds from collections, mortifications, &c. are found deficient, still the amount necessary to supply the deficiency is fixed by the heritors and elders, and remains under their control. We may farther remark, that although the law requires heritors to take part in the business of superintending the poor, *in fact*, they are commonly so sensible of the ability and faithful zeal of the eldership as to leave the practical management of their concerns in a great measure to them. In some cases they have provoked the elders to relinquish the trust; but in these few instances, the heritors are generally foremost in soliciting them to resume it.

After all that has been said regarding the difference between the English and Scottish systems of poor laws, both with respect

* Sketches, Vol. III. p. 53.

† Hutcheson's Justice of Peace. Vol. II. p 21, edition 1815. Dr. Charter's Panegyric on the Scottish System, in his Sermon on alms, is too highly coloured.

‡ Hutcheson's Justice of Peace, Vol. II. edition 1815. p. 26.

to principle and practice, it must be allowed that the grand *practical* difference is to be found in the character and circumstances of the people of both countries. Originally it would appear that the state of England and of Scotland was nearly the same; and the leading principle in the poor law systems of both is also the same. But while our brethren in the south were left exposed to all the injurious effects which the principle and its misapplication might be expected to produce; Scotland was happily guarded from sharing a similar fate, by a variety of wise and benevolent expedients. A system of religious truth firmly rooted in the affections of the people—a form of ecclesiastical administration peculiarly well adapted for diffusing religious knowledge—a well instructed and pious clergy residing on the field of their operations, and alive to all the feelings, wants, and wishes of their flocks—an order of spiritual superintendents chosen from among themselves, and exercising a constant and vigilant, but mild and salutary inspection of every family—an admirably organized system of parochial education, in which the forms of religion at least have always held a prominent place—the frequently enjoined, and, till of late, universally adopted practice of clerical visitation and conference—the harmonious union of all orders of christian professors, in holding all that is considered as essential in their common Christianity—these, and similar causes, have been found to operate with a salutary energy in stamping on the comparatively poor inhabitants of our native country a character of dignified intelligence and manly independence. Had these causes not been in operation, the probability is, that Scotland would have been at this present moment in a much worse situation than England. Were we to confine our views to the mere enactments of our Parliaments on the subject of the poor, we should form rather a low idea of the poor law system of Scotland. We must take in connexion with that system the *moral history* of the country, and the causes which have been in operation to purify and exalt its inhabitants. Whether, and in what degree, the system of poor laws even as administered in Scotland, tends to counteract the salutary influence of these causes, are questions on which we shall not attempt at present, positively to determine.

## SECTION III.

*Practical Suggestions.*

HAVING thus compared and contrasted the poor law systems of England and Scotland both as to principle and practice, we shall finish this Dissertation by suggesting a few practical expedients, which our friends in the South may find it their interest to borrow from the practice of their northern brethren. I have no very sanguine hope that England will ever be completely freed of her system of poor rates. This opinion rests, however, not so much on the fact insisted on by the Committee of the House of Lords that the system has been, from time immemorial, part of the established law of the land, and has become so completely incorporated with the habits of the people as to be inseparable from them; for whatever there may be in this, we have instances innumerable of changes as great, and transitions as rapid, as those implied in the abolition of the poor laws. When public opinion has become decidedly unfavourable to a practice, however long tolerated, there is nothing unreasonable in the expectation that such practice will gradually go into desuetude. But, our reason for suspecting that England will not in all probability get quit of her poor law system *entirely* is grounded on this plain matter of fact—that the *extra* funds for the maintenance of the poor are altogether inadequate. *Voluntary charity* is by far too capricious and unsteady a source of permanent reliance against an evil which is both *certain* and *permanent;* and the funds arising from parochial collections, proclamation of banns, mortifications, and otherwise, are, we fear, too scanty to afford an adequate substitute for the poor rates. While, however, the system cannot be eradicated, it is certainly capable of being considerably ameliorated; and the evil, instead of being allowed to go on as it has been doing for generations past, may be gradually counteracted and reduced within narrower limits. The following suggestions, derived chiefly from a review of the Scottish system, may not be considered by impartial observers unworthy of notice.

1. Let there be in England a court established in every parish similar to that in the parishes of Scotland, composed partly of the heritors personally, or by proxy, as representing them-

selves and their tenants; and partly of the minister and office-bearers of his congregation, as representing the whole body of inhabitants, and particularly as *guardians* of the poor; and let this court be intrusted with the sole and exclusive management of all matters affecting the state, and character, and relief of the poor. Let it have stated public meetings for the dispatch of business—for inspecting the state of the poor—apportioning the sum necessary for relief—and prescribing the mode of its application. Without such a court as this, armed with due powers, and sanctioned by the legislature, no effectual means can be used for checking abuses or promoting reform in the management of the poor; for as things are at present, there is no proper check on the conduct of overseers.

2. Besides this general body, let there be a regularly constituted *standing committee* chosen *by* and *from* the general body —responsible to them—and possessed of ample authority delegated from them. To this committee ought to be intrusted the business of collecting and appropriating the assessment—scrutinizing and settling the poors' rolls—judging of and deciding in every case of application for relief—and devising such measures as shall appear most advisable for the better accommodation of the poor. This committee may meet once every fortnight or every month according to circumstances; and its transactions; *regularly minuted and docqueted by the Chairman*, may come under the review of the general body, annually or oftener as circumstances require. The number of this committee must be proportioned to the extent of the parish and its degree of population. To such a committee as this ought to be entrusted, *in the first instance*, the exclusive right of fixing the precise sum of allowance in every case, subject, however, to the review of their constituents. Much evil seems to result from the practice in England, of magistrates who have no local interest and little local knowledge, being vested with the power of fixing the rate of allowance. "I think," says one of the witnesses before the committee of the House of Commons, "I think the thing that does our poor most harm, is the illiterate poor going to complain to the magistrates, and getting relief when they ought not to have it. The other labourers in the parish in the same situation will not go and ask for it; the saucy fellows get relief and make the others dissatisfied."

3. Let each parish or township be subdivided into *proportions* or *quarters*—over each of which one or two of the members of the standing committee may be appointed to preside—

whose office it shall be to attend to the general concerns of the poor within the district—to inquire into the particulars of every application that may be made for relief—and to act as the medium of intercourse between the indigent applicant and the committee who are to decide. It may be questioned, whether each individual inspector should be vested with the power of granting relief according to his own discretion. The most advisable plan is probably this: Let the distinction between *regular* and *occasional* pensioners be strictly adhered to. The one class, having been considered and enrolled by the committee at a regular meeting, may either be paid by the overseer of the district, or by a collector and distributor appointed for the whole. The second class may, on a first application, be relieved partially by the presiding overseer of the district;—their case is afterwards stated by him to the committee, and carefully considered;—it is left to him to give, from time to time, according to discretion;—and his outlays are refunded, from time to time, at the meetings of committee. The security for proper application of the money is in this case as complete as circumstances can allow. The cases are, from time to time, *reviewed* by the committee; and if it should appear upon inquiry that the district overseer has not exercised due discrimination and economy *his bills are dishonoured* by the committee, and he bears the burden himself. We may also remark under this head in the words of one of the witnesses before the Parliamentary committee, that "it would be desirable, instead of giving the poor families," in all cases, "money, to give them food, and clothing if they wanted it."

4. There ought to be published at least annually a docqueted statement of all the parochial transactions regarding the poor —their number—payment to each—amount of assessment—monies paid—state and balance of accounts, &c. &c. By this means, all interested in the business would be satisfied of the application of the funds, and a deeper interest would be felt by all in the concerns of the indigent population. It might be a good plan also, to publish now and then the *names* and *rates* of the paupers; that the sense of shame, if it exists, may have an opportunity of shewing itself. This plan has lately been adopted with the best effects in the towns of Manchester and Preston.*

* Wardlaw's Essay on Benevolent Associations, p. 30. There is, as Mr. W. justly observes, a danger of pushing this plan to too great a length, as the *most de-*

5. There is no material objection to the rule and practice of England, that church-wardens, *as such*, shall act as overseers of the poor; and that others shall be chosen to act with co-ordinate powers along with them in all matters belonging to the poor. But the following alterations will be found necessary in order to render the arrangement efficient. Instead of *two* church-wardens as required by law to each parish, let the number be enlarged according to the size of the parish—let them be chosen from among the most respectable householders—let their office be held *ad vitam aut culpam*—and let their labours be diminished. By law, a church-warden has *now* to discharge all the laborious offices formerly held by the three distinct classes of quest-men, sides-men, or *synods-men*, and wardens. To him are committed the moral inspection of the people, the care of the temporalities of the church, the management of the poor, and the prosecution of offenders in a great variety of instances.* The duties ought to be divided, and committed to the charge of a greater number of individuals. With regard to *overseers*, instead of being chosen by two Justices, let them be chosen at the annual meeting of *heritors and vestry*—let their *number* be proportioned to the extent of the parish—let them be chosen without regard to religious denomination—let them have *equal* power with church-wardens in all matters affecting the poor—and let the standing committee be composed partly of the one class, and partly of the other. With regard to *both* classes, let it be an *invariable rule* that *not one farthing* of the poors' money shall be appropriated either to *entertainments*, or to any thing else in the shape of a donation for discharging the office. The labour must be a "labour of love," and thus there will be no improper motive so likely to operate in inducing unfit persons to undertake it. It need scarcely be noticed as a measure at once of justice and necessity, that the cruel practice of *farming* the poor, by *hiring* them to a contractor at a certain rate for the whole, ought to be instantly abolished and prohibited under severe penalties.

6. The whole law regarding *settlements*, with its endless additions and limitations by statute and decisions must be new-

*serving* will be *least* fond of being thus proclaimed. But as things are at present in England, it may be adopted, as it has been, with good effect.

* Burn's Ecclesiastical Law, vol. I. art. Church-wardens. Clergyman's Vade Mecum, vol. I. p. 156.

modelled. It was said by a celebrated senator of the College of Justice, that the Scotch law regarding *marriage* is that part of the statute-book which ought *to be manufactured, de novo, out of a piece of new cloth.* So may we say respecting the English law of residence. Let it be modelled according to the Scotch statutes, and few inconveniences will be felt. One great advantage to both countries will be—that the law of settlement being the same in both, the administrators of the law in both, will be enabled to do more ample justice both to the poor who are the objects, and to the people who are to pay for their support. "In this way also, labour would be set free and left to find its own level, which is not the case at present; and the workman who could not procure employment in his own parish, would be at liberty to remove to any other without any dread of the consequences." * We may also remark, that it would be of great benefit to have the smaller parishes thrown into one district, and placed under one management for all purposes connected with the poor.

7. Let the assessment be raised—not exclusively from the actual occupants of the land, as is at present the practice—but partly from them and partly from the proprietors, in equal proportions, as in Scotland; and let the mode of rating in burghs be regulated according to the plan which seems most equitable and most productive. Thus, the proprietor of the land will feel himself more deeply interested in the business of the poor than he is at present, and may be more easily prevailed on to take some active share in the administration of the funds. Thus also the magistrates of towns, with the whole inhabitants, will feel it their duty, as well as interest, to attend to the management of the parochial poor. † We are told by Lord Kaimes, ‡ that in the parish of St. George's, Hanover Square, London, a-

* Paper on the Poor Laws in Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine for April, 1818, p. 10.

† I am aware that the inhabitants of Birmingham vehemently opposed the proposal to tax the proprietors of houses rather than the tenants—on the plea that of 18000 houses in that town, about 14000 did not bring £12 of yearly rent. But it is obvious that if this is an evil, it must like many others cure itself; for if the tenants were exempted from one-half of the rate, they would cheerfully give a higher rent. If there is to be any loss sustained, there is no reason it should be the *tenant alone* that should sustain it. Indeed, the people of Birmingham do not seem to have opposed the proposal on general grounds; but merely because it was partial in its application to them.

‡ Sketches, Vol. iii. p. 39.

bout forty years ago, the wealthy, and respectable inhabitants, suspecting gross abuse of the funds, resolved to act as church-wardens and overseers themselves. They did so; and reduced the poor rates, formerly enormous, to a trifle. I am afraid they have long ago tired of the business; for I find by the Commons' Report that the rate for this very same parish, containing a population of 42000, amounted in 18 6, to £30,000.

It seems also very desirable that means should be used to rate personal property and stock in trade, as well as heritable possessions. There are certainly great difficulties in the way of this; but it must appear to every man a hardship that while such a heavy burden is laid on the occupants of lands and houses, individuals whose personal property is very great should be almost entirely exempted from paying to the support of the poor. Whatever may be the apparent inconvenience of it *in theory*, we find *in fact* that the practice adopted in Glasgow and Paisley is, on the whole, most equitable and productive We may farther notice the advantage that would result from keeping the poor-tax distinct from all others, instead of including it, as is the present practice, under one general denomination; the effect of which is, that the applicants come to consider it as in all substantial respects a political and civil burden, and as possessing in no degree the character of a voluntary donation.

8. " The amount of rates being, in numerous cases, greatly augmented by giving aid to working people whose wages are supposed unequal to the maintenance of their families, let it be enacted, that no person shall be considered as a pauper who is capable of working; under which enactment, assistance would be restricted to those, who from age, sickness and bodily infirmities, are incapable of supporting themselves. By such an enactment, the amount of poor rates would be" greatly " reduced; whilst, after all, the care of every person who really stood in need of public aid, might be attended to as well as formerly. No doubt the rate of wages would be affected by the proposed regulation; but this is just what should be, it being no more than fair and reasonable, that the whole expenses of labour should fall on the person for whose benefit it is performed, without subjecting the public to pay a part of it, as is the case under existing circumstances." *

9. As there are in England a variety of funds which have

* Blackwood's Magazine, April 1818, p. 11.

been appropriated, from time to time, to the use of the poor, by the pious charity of the men of other days, it ought to be made a subject of Parliamentary inquiry, to ascertain the specific purposes to which these funds were appropriated, and the manner in which they are administered. Mr. Brougham has done, and we hope will do, most essential service to the moral and civil interests of the community by bringing to light the abuses which have so long prevailed in the administration of charitable funds for the education of the poor. If the inquiry is extended, there is reason to suspect that similar abuses will be found to have crept into the management of charitable bequests and legacies for the general behoof of the poor. Although it may be questionable whether the appropriation of such bequests in the first instance to the poor, be a measure of wisdom so much as of charity; there can be no question that such bequests known or suspected to exist, ought by all means to be managed with the most rigid economy, and conscientiously applied to their definitive end. Were this matter properly investigated, it is probable that there might be collected sums of charitable revenue so ample as to diminish the annual assessment to a very considerable extent.

10. Legislative enactments, however wise, will be crippled in their application, and exceedingly limited in their results, until the *moral* and *religious interests* of the English people are more carefully and systematically attended to. The legislature and the church must prescribe a more liberal and suitable course of preparation to candidates for the sacred office. The whole system of *pluralities* and *non-residence*, so fertile in evils to the church and to the country, must be abolished, or so regulated as to become comparatively harmless in its operation. Where parishes and benefices are small they must be attached to such as are larger; a practice which is perfectly familiar to the Court of Session in Scotland;—and larger parishes must be subdivided.—Every clergyman should be bound to do his duty in person, and every man who does so, ought to be entitled to an adequate remuneration.—More care must be exercised in the selection of candidates to fill the vacant benefices, so as to secure the actual performance of the duties for which remuneration is made.—A more vigilant system of ecclesiastical inspection must be introduced; and the farce of an *Episcopal visitation*, as at present practised, must no longer be allowed to insult the common-sense of Englishmen.—In every parish there ought to be an established School for the ordinary

branches of education;—not a free School, for this will never remedy the evil complained of;—but a School on the plan of the parochial Schools of Scotland, where a moderate salary and dwelling house are secured to the teacher out of the property of the parish, and the rest of the living is left to be made up by the small wages of the scholars. Thus, diligence on the part of the teacher is secured; and the spirit of independence is cherished among the people.—Sabbath Schools ought to be encouraged; and the labours of zealous, and prudent, and pious men, to whatever denomination they belong, must not be contumeliously despised.

Never let it be forgotten that Christianity is essential to the well-being of a state;—that the spirit of religion is favourable to the spirit of manly independence—and that the increase of a nation's glory runs parallel with its growth in intellectual freedom and spiritual illumination.

Since writing the above, I was happy to find my views of the character and operation of the English system of poor laws confirmed in a series of observations, published along with an abstract of the Parliamentary Reports on the Poor laws in 1775.* They are as follows:

" The reasons for the increase of the poor seem to arise partly," and it may be said *principally*, " from the following causes:

1. From the poor no longer looking on it as their business to seek out employment to themselves, but unless it is offered to them, think that the parish is bound to find it for them, or to maintain them: so that they are become idle, unthankful, and insolent to their superiors.

2. From the labouring people having lost the desire of laying up any frugal provision for themselves, as they know that the public is bound to provide for them; and that knowledge has made them no longer reckon it a duty to assist even their nearest connexions and relations; for they consider all to be lawful gain that they can squeeze from the parish.

3. From the parish assistance being often too liberal; being

* Pamphlets on the Poor, p. 153.

sometimes as much, if not more, than could be got by actual labour.

4. From the office of church-wardens and overseers being only annual; which must ever prevent any regular plan of administration being adopted and regularly pursued.

5. From the overseers making the rates, with allowance of the justices, instead of the assessment being laid on by the parishioners, which has occasioned an inattention in individuals to this business, in which their interest is so materially concerned.

6. From the ease of applying to a justice of peace, in case of a refusal of relief from the overseer or vestry, who may perhaps sometimes order relief, without sufficiently investigating the overseer or vestry's reasons for refusal, or inquiring whether the distress of the pauper does not proceed from his own idleness or debauchery.

7. From the opulent or better informed part of the parishioners declining this important part of their duty, attention to the poor, and leaving it to inferior people, who are ignorant or inexperienced, and as unwilling as their betters to give themselves trouble, or disoblige their neighbours.

8. From the funds being established without limitation; which will ever create more or less poor according to the diligence and sagacity of those who administer the relief.

9. From the high wages given in some trades and manufactures. "It is remarkable that those who are reduced to the greatest poverty, are not such who have had the lowest, but commonly such as have worked for the highest wages;* who, thinking that they can afford more than others, get into a habit of drinking, to the ruin of themselves and families.

10. From the great number of ale-houses; which give to the common people so many temptations, and opportunities of spending their time, dissipating their substance, and destroying their morals.

11. From the want of proper schools, and enforcing the parents to bring up their children in habits of industry.

12. From the want of convenient and proper prisons near the several parishes, in order to confine common beggars and

* Dr. M'Farlane on the Poor, p. 30.

vagrants, and to punish the idle, dissolute, and refractory. Dr. Burn has published a history of the poor laws, with many sensible observations. He there says, that till "the nuisance of common begging is prevented, all other regulations of the wisest legislature will be fruitless." The severity of the laws against vagrancy have defeated themselves. They, therefore, should be altered, in hopes that milder punishments may have better effects."

# DISSERTATION III.

## HISTORICAL SKETCH OF STATUTES AND DECISIONS RESPECTING THE POOR IN ENGLAND; WITH REMARKS.

ALTHOUGH the greater part of the statutes passed since the 43. of Queen Elizabeth have a reference to the qualifications of the objects of relief, rather than to the mode in which relief shall be applied, they are not all of that description. And, therefore, in order to form a full and accurate idea of the English system of poor laws, it is necessary that we take a retrospective view of the principal additions which have been made to it since the era of its first establishment. The single object contemplated in the preceding Dissertation was, to point out the discriminating features of the systems as established in the two great departments of the empire. For the sake of conciseness and simplicity, we left out almost entirely the later enactments with regard to the one, and the more recent decisions with regard to the other. It is now proposed, in this and the following Dissertations to supply this deficiency; and it is requested that the reader will keep this in mind in their perusal.

## SECTION I.

*Statutes and Decisions regarding the Poor.*

IT would be an endless task to attempt a complete enumeration

of *all* the statutes that have passed since the days of Elizabeth on the subject of the poor. Many of them are minute—local—temporary and trifling. We shall make a selection of such as appear most worthy of notice, and accompany the review with such remarks as the nature of the statutes may suggest. The plan of arrangement has been dictated by the several subjects affected by the statutes.* We shall also advert occasionally to the decisions of the several courts on the statutes enumerated.

I. Parliamentary statutes and decisions relating to overseers of the poor.

1. The Church wardens of every parish, and four, three, or two substantial householders shall be nominated by two or more Justices as overseers of the poor of that parish; and if the parish is too large it shall be divided into townships and villages, 43. Eliz. 13 & 14 Car. II. chap. 2. sect. 21. And it has been found by frequent decisions that the appointment is null and void unless the express terms of the enactments are adhered to in the minutes of the Justices.

2. Although substantial householders in general are liable to serve as overseers, there are special exemptions in favour of attornies and barristers at law—aldermen and magistrates—all revenue officers—clergymen, though without cure of souls—persons only resident occasionally in the parish—soldiers and sailors, though on half-pay—physicians and surgeons, constables and legal officers, &c. It would appear that in particular cases of necessity, *women* may be appointed to the office, East. 28. Geo. III. Blackstone.

3. The overseers cannot be appointed by the Quarter Sessions, but only by two or more acting Justices of the parish or township; and if there be only *one* Justice in the whole county, he may make the appointment.

4. Persons aggrieved by the tax imposed on them by the overseers, or by any particular acts of the overseers, may appeal to the next Quarter Sessions of the Justices of the county, on due notice being given to the overseers; and if the appeal is found good, costs are awarded against the overseers, 17. Geo. II. chap. 38.

* The books which have been consulted on these topics are chiefly, Ruffhead's Collection of Statutes, from Magna Charta downwards; and Const's Laws and decisions respecting the Poor, 3 vols. 8vo.

Parishioners may also appeal against the appointment of overseers on the ground of their being improper persons to be chosen or illegally chosen. Parl. 23. Geo. III. It would appear that, unless the sentence of the Court expressly order otherwise, overseers are entitled to have their part of the expense of appeals defrayed out of the poors' fund.

5. By various statutes, overseers are required to hold monthly meetings on the general business of the poor; and all who can shew an interest may attend.

II. Statutes and decisions relating to the Poors' Rate.

1. A convenient stock shall be appointed to set the poor on work, and to relieve the impotent; and this at the sight of the Justices and overseers.

2. To prevent abuses, overseers cannot raise a poors' rate unless public notice in the parish church shall be given of their intention, and unless the amount shall have been sanctioned by two Justices, 17. Geo. II. chap. 3.

3. The rates may be inspected by any inhabitant of the parish and copies taken of them; and overseers are liable to a penalty if they refuse to allow this, 17. Geo. II. chap. 3. And farther,

A fair copy of every rate is to be entered in a book, and kept for future benefit, 17. Geo. II. chap. 3.

4. The concurrence of the parishioners is not necessary to the making of a poors' rate, provided the consent of two Justices has been obtained, and this, it has been ascertained, is merely a *ministerial* act or matter of form, and cannot be refused, however unfair the rate may be, Const, p. 77. vol. i.

5. It would appear that the rate may be made either for a month, or a quarter, or six months; but not more. But it is the general practice to appoint it at once for the whole year.

6. All kinds of *heritable* property are liable to rate; and in certain cases determined by the Court, *personal* property may be attached, Const, vol. i. p. 89. It would appear that *personal* property is within the statute of Elizabeth; but not *stock in trade.*

7. By 13 & 14 Car. II. chap. 12. and 12 Ann, chap. 18. Constables, head boroughs, and such other officers who may be employed in removals or otherwise, are allowed their expenses out of the poors' rate; as are the Church-wardens and overseers for all costs incurred during their continuance in of-

fice; but they must give in their amount at the end of the year, 18. Geo. III. chap. 19.

8. A rate may be made by succeeding overseers for the purpose of reimbursing their predecessors, 41. Geo. III. chap. 23. But no rate can be made for repayment of money borrowed to build a work-house as this purpose is not within the act 43 of Elizabeth.

9. The *subjects* to be rated and the mode or scheme of making the rate seem to be left in a great measure at the discretion of the overseers, 17. Geo. II. chap. 38. though there is a right of appeal to the competent courts. It has been repeatedly found, that in particular cases *all kinds* of property, real or personal, and even stock in trade may be rated for the poor. The decisions are too numerous to be noticed; and they are all grounded on *specialties* in the individual cases.

10. The overseers' accounts are ordered to be regularly inspected by the Justices at the end of the year, and judged of before the business is handed over to their successors in office, 17. Geo. II. and a schedule of the state of the poor shall be annually made out, ibid.

11. Overseers prevailing in a cause affecting their official conduct are entitled to *double costs*, 7. Jac. I. chap. 5. providing it is certified by the judge that they were acting in the execution of their office.

III. Statutes and decisions relating to the maintenance of relations.

1. The 43. of Elizabeth expressly orders, that poor persons shall be relieved by their parents or children when able; and that the Justices shall determine whether they are to be held as able, and to what extent.

2. By 11 and 12 William III. chap. 4. it is particularly enjoined, that popish parents who may refuse to maintain their children, unless they become papists like themselves, shall be compelled by an order of the Chancellor or other Judges to do so. A similar statute (1 Ann st. 1. chap. 230.) enacts the same in regard to *Jews*.

3. By various statutes and decisions it is ordered, that the Justices of the district where the party dwells, *alone* have right to compel him to maintain his relations—that they fix the rate of maintenance—that they cannot remove the pauper from his proper place of settlement to that where his richer relation lives

—that the person to be provided for must be adjudged *poor* or likely to become so—that the party shall pay for maintenance till the court shall order it otherwise—that a *father-in-law*, if of sufficient ability, shall maintain his *son* or *daughter-in-law*—that the poor person thus supported shall be declared unable to work—that a *grandmother or grandfather*, if able, shall be bound to maintain a grand-son or grand-daughter, &c. &c.

4. By 17. Geo. II. chap. 5. as well as 7. Jac. I. chap. 4. persons who desert their families shall be deemed incorrigible rogues, and those who threaten to run away, vagabonds; and punished accordingly, by imprisonment, sending on board the fleet, or banishment.

IV. Statutes and decisions relating to the relief and ordering of the poor.

1. By different statutes, the overseers and church-wardens are ordered to meet once a month to consult respecting the relief and ordering of the poor—they may, upon agreement with the lord of the manor, erect habitations for the reception of the poor, and establish trades for their employment.

2. By 3. William and Mary, chap. 11. sec. 11. it is enacted, that as a check on overseers, there shall be kept in every parish (at the charge of the same) a book or books wherein the name of all such persons who do or may receive of the rates, shall be registered, with the day and year when they were first admitted, and the occasion of it: and by the same act, it is ordered, that the parishioners, yearly, shall make a list of their poor; and none shall receive who are not on the list, except by an order of the Justices.

3. By 8. William and Mary, chap. 3. it is ordered, that all the paupers of parishes shall wear badges marked with the large Roman letter P, with the first letter of the name of the place to which they belong.

4. By 9. Geo. I. chap. 7. it is enacted, that no Justice shall grant relief to any poor applicant until *oath* be made, stating a reasonable ground for the application, and that it had been made to the parish officers and refused.

5. By the same act, overseers are empowered to erect work-houses for the poor, and to adopt such regulations respecting them as they shall see cause; while the Justices when they please, may visit such work-houses occasionally, and report them to the Quarter sessions.

6. By 22. Geo. III. chap. 83. *Farming of the poor*, except in the case of work-houses, is prohibited—the union of parishes for erection of work-houses is permitted—*guardians* of the poor, and *governors* and *visitors* of work-houses are ordered to be chosen—and the aged, sick and impotent only are allowed to be sent to the work-house, while the idle and disorderly are to be punished.

7. By several statutes and many decisions, an order of maintenance, whether made by the Sessions or by a single Justice, is peremptory.

8. By 40. Geo. III. overseers are bound to take care of casual poor; and if a parishioner, not a parish officer, takes care of a person coming under that description, he is to be reimbursed from the parish.

V. Statutes respecting settlements.

To enumerate all the statutes and decisions on this complex subject would require a volume at least. On a general review of the whole, the following appear to be the alterations and improvements that are particularly worthy of notice. The leading features of the law, as noticed in the preceding Dissertation, remain the same, while it is enacted—

1. By 35. Geo. III. chap. 101. that no poor person shall be removed by virtue of any order of removal from the parish where such poor person shall be inhabiting to the place of his or her last legal settlement, until such person shall have become *actually chargeable* to the parish.

2. By the same act it is ordained, that no poor person coming into any parish, township, or place, shall be enabled to gain any settlement therein by delivery and publication of any notice in writing; and that no person or persons whatever, who shall come into any parish shall gain a settlement in it, by the payment of public taxes or levies for any tenement or tenements which are not of the yearly value of ten pounds; or in other words, that a settlement by paying taxes cannot be gained until the tenement for which such taxes are paid shall *first* be proved to be of £10 value.

3. By various statutes it is now clearly ascertained, that hired servants in a family, and apprentices, though not occupying houses of their own, are entitled to the benefit of settlement on accomplishing the legal term of residence.

4. By different decisions it is found, that those persons only are chargeable as paupers who *ask relief;* and that the reception of relief privately during illness does not constitute a pauper.

5. Parish officers may grant *certificates* on removal to other parishes, to such persons as they acknowledge to be legally chargeable on them; but this is entirely *voluntary*, and hence the difficulty of obtaining such certificates. Besides, they are not binding unless signed by a majority of the parish officers and Justices.

6. Removals of paupers from one parish to another are made by authority of two or more Justices of the district—by the overseers—and at the expence of the parish, 17. Geo. II. chap. 5. 33. Geo. II. chap. 54.

VI. Statutes respecting the regulation of Parish vestries.

During the last Session of the late Parliament, the committee on the poor laws brought into the House of Commons three separate bills, on the subject of the poor rates; but it appears, that owing to the lateness of the Session and other circumstances, only one of these has been passed into a law. This one, (dated May, 1818,) relates to the regulation of parish vestries, and enacts,—

1. That three days' notice is to be given of every meeting of the parish vestry, by publication in church, and affixing notice on the church doors.

2. That the rector or curate when present shall be, *ex officio*, chairman of the vestry; and failing him, any one present whom the majority shall appoint; and he shall have the casting vote, in addition to his own as an individual member.

3. That minutes of all such meetings shall be regularly kept and signed by the chairman.

4. That every person paying rates shall be entitled to be present and vote at such meetings; and every one paying above £50 of annual rate shall have *two* votes, and so on in proportion; but none shall have more than *six* votes.

5. That all books and papers relating to the parish poor shall be kept safe by a person chosen by the vestry; and that the person so chosen shall be bound to keep them in good order under a severe penalty for non-performance.

VII. Statute regarding the education of the poor.

In June, 1818, in consequence of a bill brought forward by Mr. Brougham, a Board of Commissioners was appointed to inquire into the state and application of all charitable funds destined for the education of the poor, with power to call for persons and papers—and to examine witnesses on oath. But their power does not extend to universities—or public schools—or collegiate churches—nor to charitable foundations which have *special visitors* appointed by the deed of the founders—nor to charities destined particularly for behoof of Jews, Quakers, or Roman Catholics.

## SECTION II.

*Observations on the above Statutes and Decisions.*

On an impartial review of the English statutes regarding the poor, the following observations must strike the mind with peculiar force.

I. The first thing that arrests attention, on this as on some other departments of the national code, is *the excess of legislation* that has been spent on it. Those who have merely perused an abstract of the law, as given in the preceding pages, can form no idea whatever of the vast number and variety of statutes respecting the poor—many of them explanatory of others that are more obscure—in not a few instances inconsistent with each other—and in all, leaving by far too little to be determined by the peculiar circumstances of cases as they occur. On comparing the Statute book of Scotland and England on this subject, a striking contrast is presented. The statutes of Scotland with respect to the poor are few in number; not very consistent; and in some instances, rather inhumane. But the general principle which pervades them is sound, and the practice of the country for several generations, under the moral *regime* which the wisdom of our forefathers provided, has moulded them gradually into a proper shape, and superseded so completely the need of additional legislation, that no new enactment, on the subject of the poor, has been passed since the time of the

Union. The statutes of England, on the other hand, originally complex, have been rendered more so by the multiplicity of new regulations on every new case that presented itself; and thus has been incalculably increased, the difficulty of laying down the law explicitly or applying it with definite precision. The record of decisions with regard to the English poor, exhibits a very singular medley. In perusing it we find ourselves immured, as it were, in the entanglements of a deep forest, where the variety of paths distract, and the numberless openings and labyrinths must land the traveller in inextricable difficulties. Through the excess of legislation, the ablest Judges on the bench are frequently at a loss to ascertain what the law is on particular points, or to apply it when duly ascertained. This is an evil which must be felt in every department of judicial procedure; but its injurious influence must be peculiarly felt in the case of the poor, whose circumstances and claims must be modified by an infinity of minute incidents, for which it is ridiculous to attempt making legislative provision. Common sense and sound discretion are superior to all law, and surely much more should have been left to their guidance and decision.

II. It is an act of justice towards the English system to acknowledge that in many instances *the law* is much better than *the practice*. It must be obvious to every impartial judge, that had the provisions of the system been rigidly adopted, and perseveringly acted on, the sum of evil resulting from the poor rates would have been greatly lessened. Were the parishioners of every parish to discharge the duties assigned to them by law in superintending and controlling the conduct of parish officers—were the meetings of vestries more regularly and fully attended —were the accounts of overseers regularly inspected and audited—were the wealthy friends of poor persons rigidly prosecuted for their support—were work-houses statedly and occasionally visited and examined—and were more sturdy opposition made to the exactions of overseers;—were these and similar orders and statutes regularly put in practice, the mischief resulting from the system would be considerably contracted. But the evil seems to be, that the more respectable parishioners systematically desert their duty, and thus devolve it on such as are least competent to its due discharge. The funds of parishes have gradually become *chartered foundations*, and the managers have been allowed to revel on them without control. From the minutes of the Commons' committee, it appears that in those in-

stances where proper attention was paid by the parties interested, the rates have been reduced nearly one half, and the poor better provided for. In Scotland good management by the elders and others has conquered the original defects of the statutes: In England, bad management has aggravated the evils of the statutes, and neutralised whatever there was in them that was liberal, enlightened, or judicious.

III. A striking defect in all the statutes is, that no place is assigned to the important department of *clerical superintendence.* In Scotland, law and practice have devolved the care of the poor principally on the minister of the district, who being always resident in the manse, or parsonage-house, and perpetually in contact with all orders of parishioners, naturally becomes the depository of their feelings and wishes; and who, through the medium of his elders, can maintain a communication with every family in his parish. * To the parochial judicatory thus constituted, the wisdom of our landholders generally leaves the active management of the poor, and they have seldom had occasion to repent having done so. With England the case has been far otherwise. The law has *failed to enforce*, under strong penalties, the duty of residence on the *principal* clergyman; and hence the duties of the parish are devolved on a poor half starved curate who has no personal interest in the concerns of the people, and who, far from being fitted to take an active part in the management of the poor, is frequently himself not much removed from their ranks. *This* I hold to be one of the most crying evils in the law and practice of England; and till *the church* shall be new modelled in this and other particulars, the concerns of pauperism can never be properly conducted. In illustration of this view of the case, we make a pleasing appeal to those instances in which respectable clergymen, such as Mr. Vivian and others as noticed in the Parliamentary report, have taken a tender and deep concern in the interests of their poor parishioners, and an active part in their management. With all the evils inherent in the system, they have changed the very aspect of their parishes—they have raised the tone of feeling among the poor —and done much to bring back the distribution of parochial alms to its natural and proper character of an exercise of charitable feeling, and of christian sympathy.

* It is obvious that we do not refer here to the state of things in our great towns, where use and wont have in so many instances superseded the wholesome provisions of the law.

IV. In the law and practice of England respecting the poor, too much power has been given to *Justices*, and too little entrusted to the parties most nearly interested. By the parties most nearly interested, we mean the heritors or proprietors—the actual occupants of property—and the general body of the people. On looking into the law, it would appear that Justices are to *do every thing*;—they are to order the rate—they are to order paupers upon it—they are to superintend work-houses, and such like establishments—they are to docquet overseers' accounts—they are to judge *in every case* of appeal. With all due respect both to the law, and to the respectable bench of British Justices, it is submitted that there is a want of prospective wisdom in all this. In Scotland, a power somewhat similar was originally committed to the same hands; but later enactments changed the original appointment; and for upwards of a century the power of active management in all matters affecting the poor has been lodged in the hands of the heritors and kirk sessions for behoof of the people. *There* it has been *safely* lodged; and the man who would propose to take it out of their hands would not be listened to for a single moment. It is fair and reasonable that from the decisions even of this court all persons aggrieved should have a right of appeal; but it is *at this stage* that the powers of Justices, *as such*, should first be called in. So conscious is the local magistracy of Scotland of the wisdom and kindness of the appointment, as thus stated, that there is nothing in which they are in general more averse to interfere, and in which they exercise more delicate caution than in those matters which come before them by appeal from the judgments of the parochial courts They scruple to interpose their authority, and never do they exercise it except when plain necessity and the purposes of justice imperiously compel. I am sorry to say, that in the border districts where the pestilential exhalations from England have been felt in their withering influence, this cautious delicacy is gradually disappearing, and Justices too readily give a decision on matters of which they cannot reasonably be esteemed as competent to judge.

V. In surveying the law and the practice of England in regard to the poor, it is but fair to state, that there are some particulars of importance which superficial observers are extremely apt to overlook. For example: it is common to dwell on the prodigious increase of the poor rates of late years, while the change on the value of money, of labour, and of provisions, is practically overlooked. Again, the sum total of monies raised in

name of rates is taken at a general average, while it is forgotten that a very large portion of the money so raised is not expended on the poor at all, but is absurdly and perniciously expended under the name of wages; or is appropriated to the general uses of the district. An instance lately occurred, in which the most flagrant abuses were found to exist under this misapplication of the principle of the system; and there is not a doubt, that if inquiry were duly made, similar abuses would be found to prevail in all parts of the country.* But farther: it is practically forgotten, that while the number of paupers has increased, the population of the country has increased also, though probably not in the same degree; for there seems no fact more clear than this, that of late, pauperism has increased throughout all parts of the country in a very alarming degree. I mention these things as matters which ought to be kept in view by a candid judge of the nature and effects of the English system; and as so many presumptive proofs that much of the evil which attends on the poor rates in England may be found to arise from the abuse and misapplication of principles originally unexceptionable.

VI. A radical defect in all the legislative enactments respecting the poor, is, that they make no provision whatever for their intellectual and moral education. About a century and a half ago, when the noble establishment of Parochial schools was not completely organized, it appears from the writings of Fletcher of Saltoun, and Defoe, and others, that the situation of the poor of Scotland was degrading in the extreme. Had no provision been made for the moral improvement of the people, there is reason to fear that the evil would have perpetuated itself. But, by the respectable establishment of the National Presbyterian Church, engrafted, as it was, in the affections of the people; and by the appointment of central seminaries in every district in close connexion with that establishment, and under its immediate inspection, the fears of the wiser part of the nation were dispelled, and the evils of pauperism and mendicity effectually counteracted. Had a similar arrangement been made in England, the effects might have been similar. *Nor is it now too late.* Let the

* Bolton *v.* the overseers of the parish of Hollesley, tried and decided against the overseers by the Woodbridge Sessions, Nov. 1818. I am happy to see that the local magistracy of the counties of Stafford and Bedford, have, within these few weeks, resolved to exert their authority to prevent such abuses. *It is here that the reformation of the English system must begin;* and magistrates have, in this instance, much in their power.

Scottish system be even now introduced, and good effects will follow. The *National* and *British* systems are doing good; but most of their schools are *free* This is the *ruin* of the business; for a national system of *free* Schools will make a nation of beggars.

I shall conclude this review with the following excellent remarks on the tendency of education to prevent the growth of pauperism They are extracted from the last Report of the Cork Sunday School Society, and are inserted in the Appendix to the Eighth Report of that most valuable Institution, "The Sunday School Society for Ireland."

"To every reflecting mind it must be evident, that all the plans which enlightened benevolence has devised for increasing the comfort of the poor, are likely to be impeded by the stubbornness of the soil on which they are employed, and will have little permanent effect till their general character is improved. Relief is wasted unless the moral habits of the relieved co-operate to render it productive. Universal education appears to be the only engine of sufficient power to elevate the tone of moral feeling; not mere mechanical education, the simple faculty of reading and writing; or the wintry principles of natural religion: but instruction grounded on the warm, enlightening, and comforting peculiarities of the Christian dispensation. For when new powers are bestowed upon intelligent beings, correspondent objects must be presented to them. We should give a correct turn to the faculty of reading—inculcate with it and by it, Christian truths, and principles, and motives; and it will then become a blessing to the community, by introducing order, and submission and content, and whatever else is "lovely, and of good report."

# DISSERTATION IV.

## HISTORICAL REVIEW OF DECISIONS IN THE SUPREME COURT OF SCOTLAND RESPECTING THE POOR; WITH REMARKS.

THE procedure in Scotland with regard to the poor, in so far as law is concerned, has been regulated principally by the judgments pronounced in the Supreme Courts. Since the period of the Union, no act has passed the British Parliament which can be considered as affecting, in the slightest degree, the management of the poor in this part of the empire. However numerous may have been the legislative enactments on the general subject of the poor, they are all purely *English*, and are designed solely for the southern part of Britain. *Our* procedure, therefore, has been conducted on Statutes of the *Scottish* Parliament exclusively; and on decisions illustrative of the spirit and design of these statutes. Happily for Scotland, the Statutes themselves were originally few; and instead of adopting the English plan of heaping one act upon another so as to produce one heterogeneous mass, we have retained our Statutes precisely in the form which they originally assumed, and trusted to their practical application by experience. Circumstances have, from time to time, occurred to modify and explain the law; so that now we may safely affirm, that the municipal regulations of Scotland respecting the poor, in so far as general principles are concerned, are as remarkable for their simplicity, as the same department in the Statute book of England is for its complexness and intricacy.

## SECTION I.

*Register of Decisions in the Court of Session respecting the Poor.*

For the sake of such as may not have it in their power to refer to the original records, we shall here take a review of the leading decisions of the Supreme Court respecting the poor; arranging them in the order of time, and classing them according to the general principles which they are supposed to illustrate and confirm.

1. By a decision of the Court of Session so early as 1711, in the case of Sir Andrew Ramsay of Abbots-hall and the Kirk Treasurer of Edinburgh, it has been found, that all monies lost or won at gaming, horse-racing, and other sports, if they exceed one hundred merks Scots, are forfeited to the use of the poor. The decision is grounded on the 14th act of the Scottish Parliament, 1621; which appears to have been passed with the view of discouraging gambling in every form. In the instance on record, two heritable bonds of the value of 28,000 merks were forfeited to the use of the poor—Fountainhall, vol. ii. p. 635. A similar decision was given in the case of Dumfries *v.* Kirkcudbright, June 1775.

2. The parish in which persons indigent, or becoming indigent, have resided, during the immediate three years preceding their application for charity, is bound to subsist and aliment such indigent poor persons—Parish of Dunse *v.* parish of Edrom, June 5, 1745. Crailing *v.* Roxburgh, March 1760. The law holds good even although the pauper may have been in many parishes since his last residence of three years, provided he had never resided in *any one of them* for that period—Case of Coldstream, Dec. 1770. It is clearly ascertained that persons living in the capacity of *servants* or *apprentices* do acquire a settlement in the same way as if they had houses of their own. Coldingham *v.* Cockburnspath, June 1809.

3. A pauper on the poors' roll is found not to be liable in expences in any cause, though he should be very litigious. Crinzean *v.* Gibb, June 1749.

4. The heritors of a parish have a joint right and power with the Kirk Session in the administration of all the funds belonging to the poor, as well collections as sums mortified, and have right

to be present and join with the Session in their administration, distribution, and employment of such sums; without prejudice to the Kirk Session to proceed in their acts of administration, though the heritors be not present—Case of Humbie, Feb. 1751. Any one heritor may call the Session to account for the management of the funds—Case of Cambuslang, Nov. 1752. In this case of the heritors against the Session of Cambuslang, it was found, that the expence of providing communion forms and cloths, and payment of Presbytery and Synod clerks, ought not to come on the Poors' funds; but this decision has been generally allowed to be erroneous, and uniform practice is against it. Indeed the Act, 1693, as ratified by proclamation, 1695, expressly ordains, that *one half* of the collections only shall be paid over to the heritors for the poor; thus obviously implying that the *other half* shall remain in the hands of the Session to defray all necessary expences, along with occasional charity; and it is well known that no other fund exists from which such expences can be paid.* At the same time it is certain that the heritors are entitled to inquire into the mode in which the said funds are applied. In regard to *collections*, it was found in one case, (St. Ninians, 1739, June,) that the money collected at the doors of Dissenting meeting houses makes no part of the parochial fund.

5. Where the place of a *beggar's* birth is known, his maintenance or that of his family falls to be a burden on that parish, notwithstanding his having resided for three years in another parish—Parish of Inveresk, *v.* P. of Tranent, March, 1757.

6. In the first instance, the power of decerning the *quantum* of allowance to a pauper belongs exclusively to the heritors and Session; and the sheriff or justices have no right to interfere. Paton *v.* Adamson, Nov. 1772. Parish of Coldinghame *v.* Dunse, July, 1779.

7. Heritors by deed of the majority, may assess for the poor, by the *real* rent, where that is expedient; although the practice may have been to levy by the valued rent—Case of Westkirk, Jan. 1773. But they cannot adopt any other mode of assessment than according to means and substance in terms of the statute 1663—Case of Cargill, 1816, Feb. In this case it was also found, that the minister, *as such*, is not liable to pay rates.

8. The place of the parents' residence is that of the children, until they have grown up and acquired a residence by supporting themselves for three years in succession—Parish of Cold-

* Hutcheson, *in loco.*

inghame *v.* Dunse, July, 1779. Arbroath case, Jan. 1800. But if the place of the parents' settlement cannot be ascertained, children belong to the parish in which they were born.

9. Residence for three years preceding poverty, though many years prior to the application for charity, makes a parish liable to the maintenance of a pauper notwithstanding that his poverty did not commence till a year after his leaving the parish—Runciman *v.* parish of Mordington, Jan. 1784. In a particular case (Parish of Dalmellington *v.* parish of Irvine, 1800) a pauper who had taught dancing in a burgh during fourteen successive years, for four or five months in winter, was found to have acquired a residence there, although he never had a house there, and followed his profession in other places during the remainder of the year.—It was also found in the case of Brown *v.* parish of Mordington, (March, 1806) that the residence of a pauper for three years in England, which does not by the English law entitle to a settlement, does not liberate a parish in Scotland, where a settlement had been previously acquired, from the aliment of the pauper. In the case of Pennycuick *v.* Duddingstone, &c. 1813, it was found, that a Scotch woman, whose husband, an Englishman, is alive, but deserted her, cannot demand a permanent aliment for her children out of the funds of a Scotch parish, although she may have obtained a settlement there.

10. Proprietors of mills, and of coal, and of salt-works, are liable to be assessed for the maintenance of the poor—Inveresk *v.* Musselburgh, May, 1794. By the same decision it is found that towns and other corporate bodies having property are equally liable with individuals.

11. It is competent for the Magistrates of burghs to levy the poor rates upon the inhabitants, according to the supposed extent of their heritable property within the burgh, and of their personal property wherever situated—Case of Robert Dreghorn, Esq. Dec. 1797. It was also found, that the partner of a mercantile house whose family does not reside within the burgh, but who has a place of temporary accommodation for his own occasional residence, is liable to assessment like ordinary inhabitants —Case of Buchanan of Ardenconnel, 1798.

12. Illegitimate children fall to be maintained by the parish where the mother has been domiciled three years previous to their birth—Rescobie *v.* Dunnichen and Forfar, Nov. 1801. Gladsmuir *v.* Preston and Stitchell, June 1806. Kirk Session of Edinburgh *v.* Brown, June, 1806. In this last case, the

parish of the mother was found liable, *although that of the father* was ascertained.

13. Those persons are entitled to relief under the system of poor laws, who, though in ordinary seasons able to gain their livelihood, are reduced, during a scarcity of provisions, to have recourse to charity; and an extraordinary assessment may be raised for that purpose, Pollock *v.* Darling, Jan. 1804. But in cases of *extraordinary* distress, it is expressly ordered that the assessment for the special purpose of relief shall be kept entirely distinct from that for ordinary purposes; and *two* separate lists of poor shall be retained; the one for ordinary paupers on the roll; the other for such poor householders as by reason of dearth are unable to support themselves, *ib.* In this case, however, the lords were not unanimous; some of them being of opinion that the existing system of poor laws makes no provision whatever for cases of *extraordinary* distress.

14. The Kirk Session of a parish has the sole right of keeping mortcloths, and letting them out for hire within the Parish —Session of Kippen *v.* M'Laws, Aug. 1756. In the case of the incorporation of Square-men of Dumfries (Feb. 1783) their right of keeping and hiring a mortcloth was sustained on the *special ground of immemorial usage.* Indeed it would appear that the right of Kirk Sessions to exclusive hiring of mortcloths, as well as to exaction of fees at marriages and baptisms, is grounded, not on express statute, but simply on *immemorial usage*—Beveridge *v.* Bayne, &c. July, 1765.

15. The Heritors and Kirk Session of a Parish, in respect to a charitable fund under their administration, and in respect also to all parochial funds for the poor, are entitled to sue and defend in all the courts of law, as a corporate body; and of course, all matters are decided by a majority of the court, the members voting *per capita*—Dalry Session and Heritors *v.* John Newal and others, Nov. 17, 1791, and Feb. 22. 1810. Also, case of the Parish of Cardross 1789, not reported.

16. Although lands of one parish have been annexed to another parish *quoad sacra tantum*, this makes no change with regard to the maintenance of the poor belonging to the lands annexed. The rights and obligations of the respective parishes relative to the poor remain the same—Thomson and others *v.* the Rev. John Pollock, Minister of Govan, Nov. 17, 1808.*

* In arranging the above decisions of the Court of Session, I have had recourse principally to the Dictionary of Decisions, published by W. Maxwell Morrison, Esq. with the Appendixes, Synopsis, &c. The last in order noticed is of date Feb.

## SECTION II.

*Observations suggested by the preceding Review.*

1. It is a general principle recognized by the court in all its decisions, that the support of the poor devolves in the first instance on the charities of the Christian people—on the weekly collections—and on the other funds at the charge of the Sessions; and it is only when these *fail* to be sufficient for the purpose that recourse is allowed to assessment. In this principle we see the peculiar feature which distinguishes the management of the poor in Scotland from the system as recognized in England. On this principle parishes uniformly act, for, as Dr. Charters asks, "When had a parish recourse to assessment unless when necessitated to the measure?" We have thus the testimony both of law and of practice to the primitive mode of supporting the poor by means of voluntary contribution.

2. It is a curious circumstance, not perhaps noticed as it ought, that while all the acts of the Scottish Parliament passed during the time of the civil establishment of Presbytery, vest the management of the poor in the joint co-operation of heritors and Kirk Sessions, and give a peculiar influence to the latter;—all those statutes which were passed during the ascendancy of Episcopacy are generally modelled on the *English* plan, and vest in justices or heritors *exclusively* the authority which now belongs to the secular and spiritual interests conjointly. In illustration of this, we have simply to contrast the statutes of 1579, 1661, 1663, with those enacted under Presbyterian influence in 1659, 1690, 1693. I have no hesitation in affirming, that the superiority which Scotland possesses over England in the management of the poor, as well as in other particulars, is to be traced in *no slight degree* to the establishment, in this country, of the Presbyterian form of government.

3. It seems a wise regulation, as sanctioned by the decisions of the court, that one half of the weekly collections shall be allowed to remain in the hands of the Kirk Sessions for defraying necessary expenses, and for the purposes of occasional charity. In every parish, beside the regularly inlisted poor, there must

1816. There may have been some decisions since that time that are not reported; but I am not aware of any which involve a *new* principle in the system, not previously established.

be frequent calls for occasional aid. A poor workman may be laid aside by sickness, and yet may be very averse te become a pauper. A decent family may require some aid from the poors' box, who would not choose to be put on the poors' roll. Persons who have supported themselves decently, may at their death be so poor as to render a little assistance necessary, both to defray funeral expenses, and to help the bereaved family. In all our decisions, the vitally important distinction between regularly enrolled, and occasional poor, is clearly and systematically recognized.

4. There can be no doubt of the wisdom of that law, and of those decisions, which give to heritors a joint voice with the Session in all matters affecting the management of the poors' funds. No body of men are so pure as to be superior to the necessity of a wholesome check on their proceedings; and as the burden of the poor must in all assessed parishes come chiefly on the heritors, it seems reasonable that they should have a joint control over the management of all funds destined to their relief. At the same time it is a fact well worthy of notice, that in very few instances indeed do the records of the court exhibit any mismanagement on the part of the Kirk Sessions, even when left without any control.

5. As it was the purpose of all laws relative to the poor, merely to enforce the duty of private charity, it has been the object of the legislature to follow out, as nearly as possible, the ideas which would naturally arise on the subject. Every one in the distribution of private charity, is naturally prompted to relieve those objects of distress who are near him, and who are consequently best known to him. *Residence*, accordingly, came to be the chief circumstance which entitled a person to the charity of a parish; and as to the accidental circumstance of a person's being born in a certain parish, it plainly created no connexion and gave no natural claim to charity, either legal or voluntary. While this appears reasonable, it is also fair, that in those cases where a person has acquired no legal residence, or whose place of residence, cannot be found, recourse should be had on the parish where he was born.

6. In all the decisions of our courts on the subject of the poor, the *principles of equity* and *common sense* have been followed rather than express statute. We see this very clearly in all those cases which respect the mode of laying on the assessment. In this respect, we perceive the very striking difference between the procedure of our courts and those of England; in

which *statute* and the *ipsissima verba* of the acts seem to be every thing.

7. Our civil courts have always been jealous of interference with the ordinary parochial jurisdiction regarding the poor. As an illustration of this we may observe, that in the case of the West Kirk assessment, tried by appeal, 1773, the Court of Session declined to interfere, when petitioned by the appellant merely to fix the times of parish meetings; and in the terms of the deliverance, it is said, that they had waved such interference in several other instances.

8. I have not been able to discover a single instance of appeal from the Court of Session to the supreme Court of review, the House of Peers; and moreover, there are multitudes of instances on record in which the decisions of the very first Courts of review (those of the local magistracy) have been readily acquiesced in by all parties. Indeed, disputes are frequently settled by simple voluntary arbitration. All this is owing to the *extreme reluctance* with which the administrators of public charity in Scotland appropriate any part of the funds to any other purposes than those of parochial distribution to the objects of beneficence.

## SECTION III.

*Leading Principles in the mode of managing the Poor in Scotland.*

In this section we propose to exhibit a plain statement of the most prominent and commanding features in the mode of managing the poor in Scotland. No doubt there are various specialties in this as in other departments; and the great object contemplated in a collection of facts and in a copious induction of particulars, is, to mark the varieties of the case, and to apply them to practical use according to circumstances. But amid the varieties which may distinguish the management of the interests of the poor in Scotland, there present themselves to the careful observer certain great principles common to every mode, and exercising a commanding influence over every department of the scene. It is to these prominent principles we would solicit the reader's attention in the simple statement which follows:—

I. It would appear that neither in the *law* nor in the *procedure* of Scotland with regard to the poor, was the idea of *a full and liberal maintenance* ever contemplated. In the case of *lunatics* indeed, who may have no rich relations—of orphan and deserted children who have no legal resources—of blind, and deaf and dumb, and lame—and of the inmates of hospitals;—in the case of such classes, a full maintenance is supposed to be given: But with regard to the general class of dependents, a mere pittance only, by way of help, is provided; and this secures *two* great objects. First,—It prevents the relatives from supposing that they are entirely relieved from the duty of aiding their poor friends so soon as they are devolved on the charity of the public. Second—It gives as little encouragement as possible to the idea of *abject dependence* on the public funds; and thus interferes to a much less extent with the regular march of industry.

II. Another great principle in the Scottish management of the poor is this:—that no man is deemed *a pauper, so long as he is able to work.* He may be out of work, but he is not on that account precipitated into the degrading ranks of pauperism. He may require aid from the charity of the humane, and in times of general distress he may be a recipient from an extraordinary fund raised by subscription for occasional purposes. But in all this, there is nothing like his *enrolment on the pension list of the poors' box.* The idea of parochial relief is studiously kept out of view; and when circumstances become more favourable, he immediately regains his place in society, and shares in the honours of a creditable independence.

III. Another distinguishing feature in the Scottish management of the poor, and a feature to which we shall have frequent occasion to advert is, the distinction between *regular* or *stated* pensioners on the list of paupers—and those industrious householders, labourers, or others who on particular emergencies require and receive a little help from the fund; while in general they are competent to earn a subsistence for themselves. These last are *not paupers*—they may be *poor* in one sense, but they are not *so* poor as to be transformed into that class usually designated by the name of *pauper;* while, by the occasional aid received, they are frequently prevented from degenerating into that class.

IV. It is a principle universally acted on in Scotland, that the fund provided, whether by assessment or otherways, shall always be regulated in its extent according to circumstances. From time to time meetings are held for the express purpose of taking an impartial review of the past year, or of the period which has elapsed since a former meeting—comparing the state of things then with what it is now—balancing the actual expenditure with the probable demand which may now be made—and providing accordingly. On this plan, a vigilant watch is perpetually kept over the progress of the assessment; and those whose interest it is, to counteract its insidious march, have it always in their power to do so.

V. Lastly, There is one other principle of general application in Scotland and of incalculable importance to its interests, and it is this;—that the guardians of the poor do never consider themselves as having discharged the whole of their trust so long as they confine themselves entirely to the supply *of the bodily wants* of the poor. *The education of poor children; the encouragement of industry;* and the inspection of the *moral conduct* and *state* of the recipients in general, are matters of such interest and value, as never to be left out of view; and thus, while the best interests of the poor are studied, the most effectual means are applied for counteracting the growth of pauperism.

There are other general principles at work in the management of the Scottish poor; but the above seem to be the most prominent, and from their operation the most salutary results may be rationally expected.

# DISSERTATION V.

## ON THE MORAL TENDENCY AND EFFECTS OF COMPULSORY ASSESSMENTS.

From a review of the preceding pages, some may be ready to conclude that I am favourable to the universal adoption of the system of compulsory Assessment for behoof of the poor. The conclusion would be precipitate. An impartial inquiry into the state of Scotland for the last hundred years, and an accurate comparison of her state with that of the sister kingdom, must convince us that the mode by which the poor have generally been supported, and by which their interests have been managed, is by far the best that could have been devised. We must, therefore, consider the era of the introduction of assessments, as on the whole unfavourable to the moral interests of the people, as well as the concerns of the poor. At the same time, impartial justice requires that we discriminate between the different kinds of assessments, and the diversified modes of their application. It is weak and foolish to condemn in the gross every species of legalized provision for the poor, and it is unfair to magnify the evils of a system beyond the line which experience and fact prescribe. The comparative view which has been given of the *law* and the *practice*, both in England and Scotland, may serve to shew that two systems whose general principles are nearly the same, may, by reason of particular modifications, be found to differ very widely in their tendencies and effects. We shall now proceed to consider more fully the gen-

eral question respecting assessments; or in other words, compulsory provision, for behoof of the poor.

## SECTION I.

*Observations on the general principle of Assessment for the Poor.*

In regard to the general principle on which the system rests, I am not prepared to say that the legislature of a country, ought on no occasion to interfere in the matter of charity as well as in other departments. If the legislature may lawfully make, as it has actually made, provision for the education, and for the religious instruction of the community, there seems no sufficient reason to condemn totally and in the abstract, its interference in behalf of the children of poverty. As pauperism is a great moral and physical evil, which has infested, and which we are certain *will* infest, the body politic, are we warranted to maintain that it is *wrong* to employ a legalized system of means in order to counteract and remove it? The concerns of the poor form a most important branch of the science of political economy; and it is by no means unbecoming the wisdom of the legislature to take it under their immediate inspection. The state of Ireland, where there is no legislative provision for the poor; and the moral aspect of those Catholic countries on the continent, where the concerns of the poor devolve on the alms of the charitable, and the distributions of monasteries and hospitals, afford a very slender recommendation to the system of private voluntary benevolence. In Ireland, the land is covered with shoals of beggars proverbial for wretchedness, and the state of the poorer classes in Dublin and other large communities, is the very extreme of degradation.* In Italy, while there is no assessment, there are about 70,000 *mendicant* friars;—the hospitals freely receive, without any inquiry or discrimination, all applicants;—parents who *will not* maintain their children as well as those who *cannot*, may send them to the foundling hospitals into which they are admitted by the mere ringing of a bell;—and street begging is universal † In the city of Milan, con-

* Wakefield's account of Ireland, 1812. Tighe's Survey of Kilkenny, p. 473. Account of Dublin by the Rev. James Whitelaw.

† See Baretti's impartial "Account of Manners and Customs of Italy," vol. II. p. 100. &c

taining 116,000 inhabitants, the accumulated fund of *voluntary* charity amounts to nearly £90,000 a year.* "In traversing the streets of Seville," says Mr. Townshend, "I was struck with the multitude of beggars clothed in rags, and was at first inclined to attribute this to the decay of trade; but upon examination, I found a more abiding cause in the distribution of alms at the Archbishop's palace, and at the gates of 20 convents, daily, and without distinction, to all who make application for relief."† The following extract from a book of authority, may also shew us that a similar fact obtains in parts of the world far remote from the sphere of our ordinary observation. "I unexpectedly discovered," says Mr. Turner in his embassy to Tibet, 'where I had constantly seen the round of life moving in a tranquil regular routine, a mass of indolence and idleness of which I had no idea. But yet it by no means suprised me, when I considered that wherever indiscriminate charity exists, it will never want objects on which to exercise its bounty, but will always attract expectants more numerous than it has the means to gratify. No human being can suffer want at Teshoo Loomboo. It is on this humane disposition that a multitude even of musselmen, of a frame probably the largest and most robust in the world, place their reliance for the mere maintenance of a feeble life; and besides these, I am informed that no less than three hundred Hindoos, Goseins, and Sunniasses, are daily fed at this place by the Lama's bounty."‡ I notice these instances out of multitudes, to shew that the mere absence of a legislative provision for the poor, is in itself no absolute security against the evils of degrading pauperism.

It does not appear that the evils of assessment arise so much from the circumstance of its making a fixed and legal provision for the necessities of poverty and age, as from the manner in which this provision is made, and in which it is too commonly applied. The fact is, that in Scotland, ever since the Reformation, such legal provision has been made, altogether independent of a poors' rate. The Kirk Session, as having the guardianship of the interests of the poor, is a legally constituted body; and the funds at its administration are of the nature of a public trust for behoof of the indigent. Courts of law have

* Young's Travels in France, 4to. p. 645.

† Townshend's Journey through Spain.

‡ Embassy, part II. chap. IX. p. 330.

repeatedly found that even in those parishes where there is no assessment, the Session is bound to take notice of the poor who legally belong to them by birth or residence, and to attend to their pressing wants. Indeed it seems desirable that the indigent population shall have some kind of security against the extremity of want; for if left exclusively to capricious and casual charity, the distribution would become extremely unequal. Such a security has at all times been afforded by the Kirk Sessions; while on such a security there is little or no fear of an undue reliance, as the manner in which the funds are provided, and the slender pittance which is granted from them, afford in the reason of the thing a very strong defence against their prevalent abuse. It is obvious that those who would do away with assessments on the broad and sweeping principle that public provision for the poor, of whatever kind, and to whatever extent, is positively wrong and mischievous, must, to be consistent, abolish the jurisdiction of the Kirk Session as a publicly constituted court; and appropriate to other purposes than those of charity, the funds which have ever been at its disposal. If this were done, the evils of a public fund would no doubt be avoided; but it is very questionable whether their removal would not be the prelude to the introduction of evils of a still more portentous magnitude.

It is an obvious argument in favour of assessment, that it *equalises* the burden of supporting the poor. When the concerns of charity are devolved entirely on the voluntary contributions of such as attend regularly the house of God, it is plain that all those who do not attend, or who attend irregularly, or who do not reside on their property, or who are penuriously inclined, must evade in a great measure the obligation. In those large towns and districts also, where the wealthier classes belong to the Episcopalian persuasion, and where a large proportion of the respectable middling classes are incorporated with the various orders of Dissenters, it must necessarily happen that a disproportionate share of the public burden must fall on the members of the Established Church. The introduction of an assessment does away all such distinctions, and proportions the load according to the principles of rectitude.

After all, however, that can be said in favour of assessments in general, and those of Scotland in particular, it must be confessed that their best defence rests on the plea of necessity and general expediency. In large towns where the crowded popu-

lation are left without the adequate provision for attendance on public worship, and where the objects of charity increase exactly as the means of their support are diminished, it is obvious that the ordinary charitable donations and collections must be altogether inadequate. Again, in large landward parishes, where the parish church is altogether unfit for accommodating the parishioners; where the richer part of the inhabitants absent themselves, for the greater part of the year, from their patrimonial possessions; or where the nobility and gentry, even while resident, systematically desert the house of God, and thus neglect the opportunity of contributing to the relief of the poor; —in such cases as these, which are of frequent recurrence in these degenerate days, there appears an absolute necessity for a legislative enactment in favour of the poor. If the rich will not voluntarily aid in the maintenance of the poor, they must be compelled to do it. If they systematically desert their estates for months together, they must not expect to be exempted from bearing the public burdens in common with their brethren. If they refuse to give, or give scantily, at the times of weekly collection, it seems expedient that the strong arm of law should interfere to bend those who will not yield to the suggestions of conscience and the dictates of moral obligation. "If," says a sagacious observer,* "if the love of many wax cold, if the rich withdraw from religious worship, and forget good works; if absent proprietors do nothing for the poor on their estates; if the humane be burdened above what they are able to bear; if the poor be tempted, by their increasing number and pressing wants and the failure of other sources, to put forth their hands and steal; a legal provision seems then to be expedient; it seems then to be equal and right that the landholders who will not give to the poor, be compelled to give." "When the gospel shall have made its promised progress, no law will be needed to enforce compassion; but the period is yet future, and the apostle's words on another occasion may be applied to this: "The law is a schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ."

* Dr. Charter's Sermons, Vol II. p. 165.

## SECTION II.

*Effects of Assessment particularly as exhibited in England.*

Truth and justice compel us to say thus much in favour of legislative enactments for behoof of the poor. But with every allowance that can be made in their favour, we apprehend that assessments carry along with them principles radically bad, and that the introduction of them universally into Scotland would be one of the greatest evils which has ever befallen the land of our nativity. We may notice the following as illustrations of the pernicious tendency of legal assessments—a tendency which must in every case shew itself unless cautiously guarded against by a wise and judicious counterpoise.

In the *first* place, legal assessments tend to cherish, in the lower classes, a spirit of *degraded* and *servile dependence*. So long as a kind of stigma is attached to a state of poverty and dependence, the lower orders in the community will feel an unconquerable aversion to the acceptance of alms; and such an aversion has, we doubt not, contributed not a little, to the manly and independent character of the Scottish peasantry. On the other hand, when you remove the stigma which attaches to the reception of charitable donations, and convert it into something like a "claim of rights," you take away one of the strongest barriers to the increase of pauperism—you convert it into something that is reputable in its character—you encircle it with the delusive glare of a factitious respectability. We have heard of some instances lately in which a procedure something like the following took place. When the minister of a country parish has presented his industrious, but impoverished parishioners, with an occasional donation out of the parochial funds, the question has not unfrequently been asked, Does the money arise out of the provision made by the heritors according to law? or does it come from the *charity-box* of the parish? * In the former case it has been found, that the pittance was readily, though perhaps ungratefully, accepted; while in the latter, it has been manfully and steadily refused. The reason is clear: In the one case,

* A venerable minister in the vicinity of Stirling will recognise this anecdote as illustrative of his own experience.

the money was taken, not with the feeling of gratitude as from a generous benefactor, but as a right, which the rich dare not refuse, however desirous they may be to do so. In the other case, the feeling of manly independence was cherished, and the degradation which pauperism carries along with it could not be put away from the heart. Hence we find, that in England, where millions are annually raised for behoof of the poor, the boon conferred, while it is given with angry reluctance, is received with proud and disdainful ingratitude. To quote the words of a great statesman;—the poor laws of England as actually and from time immemorial administered, "have at once increased the burdens of the poor, and taken from the collective resources of the state to supply wants which their operation had occasioned, and to alleviate a poverty which they tended to perpetuate." * It is the just remark of an able writer on political economy, that the poor laws "have contributed powerfully to generate that carelessness and want of frugality observable among the poor, so contrary to the disposition generally to be remarked among petty tradesmen and small farmers. The labouring poor, to use a vulgar expression, seem always to live from hand to mouth. Their present wants employ their whole attention, and they seldom think of the future. Even when they have an opportunity of saving, they seldom exercise it, but all that they earn beyond their present necessities goes, generally speaking, to the ale-house. The poor laws may therefore be said to diminish both the power and the will to save among the common people, and thus to weaken one of the strongest incentives to sobriety and industry, and consequently to happiness." † It is the opinion of one of our most enlightened inquirers into the state of the poor in England, that "the sum of good to be expected from a compulsory maintenance of the poor will be far overbalanced by the sum of evil which it will inevitably create." ‡

We are aware that the same effects cannot possibly result to the same extent at least, from the system of poor laws as established in Scotland; but we are perfectly confident that whatever tends to change the character of parochial charity, and to remove from the minds of the people those impressions of degradation and baseness with which pauperism has hitherto been

* Mr. Pitt's Speech on Mr. Whitbread's bill respecting the English poor laws.

† Malthus on Population, vol. II. p. 174.

‡ Sir F. M. Eden's Inquiries respecting the Poor, vol. I. p. 467.

associated, tends in precisely the same degree to lessen the spirit of manly independence, and to create on the soil of freedom, an abject, and servile, and degraded population. That assessments, as commonly managed, tend to such a consummation as this, we think undeniable; and whether the tendency be more or less remote, the most distant approach to such a result, ought to be dreaded and guarded against with all the jealousy of the keenest suspicion. Indeed one of the worst features of compulsory assessments is, the tendency they seem to have to weaken the force of that principle by which men are naturally prompted to relieve their indigent and unfortunate relatives. In Scotland, the degradation and the stigma above referred to, do not attach themselves so much to the mere circumstance of poverty, as to the *causes* which are supposed most powerfully to lead to it; and to the conduct of those penurious individuals who will not relieve their poor friends from becoming a burden on the public. In England, it would appear that this stigma has been removed, or that at least it is not felt as it ought. In Scotland, we are thankful that it is still felt in a very high degree, and we are jealous of every measure which would even remotely tend to diminish or remove it.

But in the *second* place, a system of *compulsory beneficence* such as an assessment is, tends to change and pervert our notions of the real character and claims of charity. It is a curious fact, that the system of poor laws, as administered in Scotland, has avoided the worst evils of the English system precisely in the degree in which it has deviated from the character of a compulsory enactment. So much has been fortunately left by law to the discretionary authority of individuals, the most competent to judge, that the native tendency of the compulsory enactments has been to a considerable degree neutralised. While the law has enjoined the *general duty*, it has committed the discharge of its particular departments to the conscience and the charity of the most competent individuals. It is by this mixed character of things, and this introduction of the principle of voluntary and discretionary benevolence into the general system, that the evils of a compulsory assessment have been to a considerable extent avoided. In England, however, where no such counteracting principle is in operation, and where a compulsory system, in its worst features, is found to extend its stern and despotic sovereignty; all the evils of the plan have been observed to germinate and to flourish in the rankness of

luxuriant vegetation. The poors' tax is neither more nor less than one of the general public burdens imposed by the municipal police of the country. It is exacted with all the sternness of an imperious mandate; and it is paid with all the indignant feelings which attach to the exactions of a conscriptional levy. In a corresponding light, is it viewed by the degraded objects whom it professes to relieve. The idea of charitable benevolence is eradicated from the minds of the one class, and the feeling of gratitude cannot enter the breasts of the other. The rich and the poor, instead of "meeting together" in all the kindness and in all the affectionate tenderness of brotherhood and consanguinity, are removed at an awful distance from each other; and the gulph which separates them is filled with the hideous forms of mutual rancour and resentment. And is not this an evil of portentous magnitude? Let it not be thought, that because an assessment, when properly guarded, may not all at once produce an effect any thing like this, that therefore there is no cause of alarm. We are jealous of whatever has the remotest tendency to produce the effect in question. Whatever tends, though remotely, to change the character of charity—to alter our ideas of its very nature—and to associate it with the feelings of reluctancy and hatred, must be in so far prejudicial to the best interests of morals and of society. More than this;—whatever tends to make the rich look on the poor with any other emotions than those of kindness and benignant compassion, and the poor to look on the rich with any other impressions than those of gratitude and respect, must on that account be dreaded as an evil, and energetically guarded against as a public calamity.

In the *third* place, assessments, particularly as conducted in England, tend to *discourage exertion, and to induce a habit of reliance on the provisions of charity.* We may consider it indeed as an evil to which benevolent provision, *as such*, is liable, that the idle, the profligate, and the dastardly will ever be inclined to abuse it to the gratification of their idle and profligate habits. The inclination will be greater or less according to the habits of the people, and the means of improvement which they enjoy. If these means are enjoyed in abundance, the tendency to a mean and debasing reliance on charity will be counteracted, and the spirit of industry and independence will be cherished. But with every allowance that can be made, there seems to be inherent in human nature a disposition to indolent

and dastardly reliance on the resources of others. And this disposition will shew itself in a greater or less degree according to the nature and extent of the provisions that may be made for charitable relief. It may be fairly affirmed on the evidence of observation and experience, that the tendency will shew itself most powerfully in the case of legally established and permanent funds for behoof of the poor. All large bequests for the general purposes of charity—all rich endowments for the poor—all wealthy hospitals and alms-houses—all those establishments of benevolence, which by the liberality of their founders are placed beyond the need of dependence on public opinion and public liberality, do, in one form or other, give encouragement to the dastardly and degrading tendencies of men. We do not refer to such as are *specific* and *guarded* in their object and constitution, such as those for orphans, and the children of decayed citizens; but to such as are general and indiscriminating in their character. There has been lately left the sum of £70,000 sterling to the poor of the small parish of Dollar, near Stirling; to be appropriated to the erection of an alms-house or hospital. At present the poor of the parish are few in number, and sufficiently provided for by the charity of the humane; but who can doubt, that if such a fund as £70,000 is to be appropriated exclusively to the support of the parish poor, their number will rapidly increase, so as ere long to bear some proportion to the provision thus unexpectedly made for them?* What can be more natural than that those who need should eagerly grasp at the boon that is presented to them? and that those who are idle, and indolent, and vicious, should prefer the funds which are already accumulated to the dear bought rewards of superfluous industry? There is no place in Scotland that is better provided with charitable foundations than the town of Stirling; and when a stranger hears of its richly endowed hospitals, he will naturally conclude that pauperism will be a disease happily unknown; and yet, this is a place where beggary and wretchedness revel in all their forms. †

Assessments as conducted in England, have been found to

* Some additional information regarding the Dollar bequest will be found among the "facts and documents."

† This is the statement given by Dr. Sommerville, the intelligent writer of the statistical account of Stirling; and the case is not materially changed since 1792.

produce effects substantially the same with charitable endowments. Whatever the design of the original enactments may have been, or whatever opinion we hold as to the *tendency* of such enactments in themselves: certain it is that the poors' rate is looked to as an infallible resource, and counted on as a noble substitute for habits of industry and foresight. The witnesses examined before the Parliamentary Committee on the Poor laws, with hardly a single exception, bear strong and unequivocal testimony to this fact. The wealth of the great is considered, as in a certain sense, the property of the indigent; and why need men labour for their bread, when the parish is bound to maintain them?

The law and practice regarding assessments in Scotland give as little encouragement as, in the nature of things, can be given, to this dependent tendency of men. The provision is so slender as to furnish no very strong temptation even to the most indolent and vicious; and the power of discrimination both as to character and circumstances has been happily vested in those who are most worthy of the trust. And yet it is a painful fact that in those districts of Scotland which lie contiguous to the English border, and where, as might have been expected, assessments have been most extensively and for the longest periods in operation, the tendency to trust to the established fund for supply has too unequivocally shewn itself. Indeed, in many places, the spirit of independence so characteristic of Scotland, and so honourable to its inhabitants, has been almost entirely obliterated. Facts of this kind are calculated to excite fear and apprehension. The contagion which has spread itself over places contiguous to England may continue to spread till the whole land is infected. The following remarks by the Edinburgh Committee, for relief of the industrious poor, are well entitled to serious consideration. "It is always a very delicate matter for the public to interfere with the ordinary channels of human industry; thus giving the poor the habit of relying on the support of the wealthy classes of the community, and inducing them to expect that it will be on all occasions extended to them. The necessity of the interference should be obvious and irremediable by the ordinary foresight and efforts of the labouring classes, before so unnatural a remedy as this is to be applied; otherwise, instead of really conducing to the permanent good of those whom you may thus relieve from a temporary pressure of distress, you will create in them a disposition of mind averse from the strenuous exertions of honest industry, and break down

that honourable independence of mind which forms so distinguishing a characteristic of the people of this country."

"We are enjoined "to do good and to distribute:" and, therefore, we must endeavour to distribute so that we may really do good: for nothing can be more true, than that indiscriminate aid, injudiciously afforded on every apparent pressure of calamity upon the working classes of the community, has the necessary effect of diminishing their own exertions; relaxing their industry; increasing their dependence upon others; producing all those hurtful consequences which arise from a want of foresight, economy, sobriety, and industry, among the labouring classes."

In the *fourth* and last place, assessments render it extremely difficult to exercise the necessary *discrimination of character* among the objects of charity. Enlightened benevolence will exercise care and caution in choosing its objects and its modes of distribution. In particular, it will discriminate, in the selection of its objects, between those whose poverty has been the result of circumstances over which they could have no control; and those whose indigence has been the effect of their own idleness and profligacy. The former class may retain their character for virtuous industry and sobriety of manners, even when the vicissitudes of Providence have reduced them to a state of the most abject dependence. The other have been the authors of their own misfortunes, and on that account are the objects not of benevolent sympathy, so much as of pity, contempt, and blame. A wise and considerate charity will draw the proper line of demarcation between the two classes; and although it will not leave even the most depraved and wretched of the children of men to perish for absolute want, it will still proportion the kind and the measure of its benefactions to the character and deserts of their objects. In the one case, the charity bestowed ought to be designed by the donor, and felt by the receiver, as an expression of complacence and an encouragement to well-doing. In the other case, while something is done to relieve from absolute want, the charitable deed ought to carry along with it an intelligible expression of our disapproval of the character, and the conduct, which have been attended with such evil consequences. In all kinds of voluntary charity, whether individual or social, opportunities of such accurate discrimination are liberally furnished. The case of compulsory charity is altogether different. Here, the only subject of investigation respects the

actual state of the applicant; and the only questions asked are, Has he, or has he not, the means of personal subsistence? And has he, or has he not, a legal right to the parochial provision? If the individual is pronounced to be *indigent*, his indigence constitutes the plea, and the only plea, that is necessary to entitle him to the enjoyment of what is viewed by him and by others as a civil or political right. The effect is, that virtuous poverty and vicious wretchedness stand entirely on the same level, and share alike in the degrading pittance. We accordingly find that in England, and wherever a compulsory system of poor rates has gained a firm footing, the good and the bad, the virtuous and the abandoned, meet on the same level and form together one heterogeneous mass.* It is on this principle, we hesitate not to give it as our deliberate opinion, that work-houses, alm-houses, hospitals for the reception of the poor, as they are commonly managed, ought to be denounced as highly injurious both to the interest of individuals, and to the good of society. They collect together masses of people distinguished by the greatest variety of character. The process of moral corruption begins, and accelerates as it proceeds; and the contagion spreads in every direction. I am aware, that in certain situations, particularly in very populous towns, they may be absolutely necessary; but even then they must be considered as necessary evils. It is perhaps a fortunate circumstance, that in Scotland, where they have been introduced to a very small extent compared with England, these institutions are, by general consent, branded as so many receptacles of vice and misery. The effect of this impression is, that the good and virtuous part of the poor are in general determined to struggle to the last extremity against all the hardships of a dependent state before they will condescend to ask, or to accept admittance.† In England the moral char-

* From the reports of the clergy, in the southern districts of Scotland, to the Assembly Committee, it appears that appeals to the justices by paupers are frequent, and that moral character is not attended to in the decisions that may be given.

† In some of the large towns of Scotland, such as Glasgow and Paisley, the assessment which obvious circumstances have rendered necessary, goes exclusively to the support of the Hospitals or Poor houses. The Sessions retain in their own hand, and distribute at their own discretion, the funds which belong peculiarly to them; although occasionally a part of the money raised by assessment may be devoted to the relief of the Session poor. In this way the concerns of the Sessions, and of the Hospital, are kept perfectly distinct; and the good effects of the arrangement are seen in this circumstance, that so long as a stigma attaches to an Hospital, and so long as the assessment goes *exclusively* to its support, the bad effects which might otherwise result from a poors' tax are to a considerable degree avoided.

acter of these places is probably far worse than with us, but unfortunately the impression of its badness is not so general or so deep; the consequence of which is, that the stigma which attaches to the work-house is not so keenly felt, and the reluctance to have recourse to it is proportionally diminished. That is a short-sighted policy which would recommend, as a *general* measure, that the poor of all characters and descriptions, shall be collected together in large establishments subject to a police formed and executed by the inmates themselves. If poverty propagates itself, so does vice in a much more rapid ratio; and the probable effect of such a combination of poverty and vice would be, a total disruption of the ties which bind man with man in the varied endearments of the social compact.

## SECTION III.

### *Tendencies of Assessment as exhibited in Scotland.*

In the preceding view of the tendencies of assessment, we have adverted principally to those results which have displayed themselves to the greatest extent in England, where the system of compulsory charity has been for ages in operation. Impartial justice requires us to state that in addition to these *general* tendencies, there are certain results of a special nature, which have, to a greater or less degree, proceeded from the system as established in Scotland, guarded as it is by a variety of wise regulations, and counteracted by the spirit of our moral institutions.

1. It is undeniable, that wherever assessments have been introduced, they have had one uniform effect in *diminishing* or *destroying the weekly collections.* Within a very few miles of this place, there is a large landward parish in which the practice of weekly collection at the parish church on the Lord's day has been for a long period discontinued, except at the two communion Sabbaths, when a sum comparatively trifling is raised. In the parishes toward the borders, the collections are uniformly small; and this is undoubtedly owing to the almost universal prevalence of poor rates. That this effect of the system is to be deeply regretted, no one will question who recognizes the Divine institution of "*weekly offerings*," and who considers the moral influence of

the practice. "The practice of weekly contributions at the church tends to bless both those who give and those who receive the charity. It cherishes habits of humanity and benevolence in one class, while it imparts relief to another; and while it is the discharge of a Christian duty, it confers the most valuable good upon society, by binding its different ranks together through reciprocal feelings of kindness and good will. It adorns the church, and adds strength, and virtue, and happiness to the state."*

2. Another pernicious effect of assessments as introduced into Scotland, is, the tendency they exhibit, to do away or to lessen the distinction between regular and occasional relief. The distinction indeed is generally acknowledged even in assessed parishes; but practically, it is too often overlooked. In the city of Glasgow, there are only *three* out of *eight* parishes, in which the distinction is particularly marked.† In the parishes of the South, the number of regular ordinary paupers on the parish roll is generally greater than that of occasional recipients; whereas, in parishes not assessed, the fact is directly the reverse. Indeed, the distinction between *ordinary* and *occasional* poor is so strongly marked in the procedure of the Kirk Sessions of Scotland, that to class *both* under the general name of *paupers* would be injudicious and unwise. Many who occasionally receive a few shillings to assist in paying their rents, to purchase fuel, clothes, &c. are in all respects decent and industrious persons, who would spurn the idea of being thrown into the same scale with professed and avowed paupers. To such occasional objects of Christian sympathy, it is customary to devote the collections which are made at the celebration of the ordinance of the Supper which takes place always once, and frequently twice in the year. On these occasions, the contributions raised on the days of preparation and thanksgiving, as well as on Sabbath, are thrown into one fund, and distribution is made by the elders to such poor, but respectable, householders as require this occasional aid in addition to their own humble exertions. Of those who thus receive a little temporary help, the greater part are enabled to struggle by their independent efforts through the remainder of the year; and the gift which they thus obtain from the generosity of their brethren they view in the light of a *Christian donative*, incorporated, as it were, with the solemn services in which rich and poor have alike been engaged. That the intro-

* Assembly Report, p. 28. † Glasgow Report, pp. 26, 27.

duction of legalized assessments has operated a change in this practice, and has in other respects diminished the distance between a regular and an occasional recipient, is a fact that can hardly be questioned; and it may be explained on rational principles. On the plan of Sessional management, there are many intermediate stages which must be gone through—many intervening barriers which must be overcome, before the man of independent and industrious habits is converted into a humble pensioner on the parochial roll. On the plan of assessment, the transition is much more easy and rapid, from independent support, to the acceptance of what is considered as *due* from the rich and wealthy landholders of the parish.

3. A third effect of assessments as practised in Scotland, appears to be, that they *have weakened the influence and lowered the character of the eldership of the Church.* I do not speak of this as by any means a *necessary* or generally prevalent result; but there have been certainly not a few instances in which attempts have been made by heritors and others, to *annihilate* the eldership as the organ of benevolent distribution. A better policy indeed is now beginning to shew itself; and by general consent, Kirk Sessions are allowed to constitute the most efficient as well as the most acceptable distributors of the parochial bounty. Still we must observe, that wherever assessments are introduced, there is a danger lest the eldership should be thrown into the back ground, and their independent authority and influence enfeebled and destroyed. Great care and caution are necessary in order to guard against this evil; and ministers cannot do a more valuable service to their parishes than by exalting the character, and strengthening the hands of their respective office-bearers. But on this subject, I have already stated my sentiments at length.

## SECTION IV.

### *General Conclusions.*

We shall now sum up in a few sentences, the general conclusions to which we have been led by the preceding induction of particulars.

I have no doubt that the primitive mode of providing for the poor in Scotland, by means of voluntary collections and other resources at the charge of the members of the Kirk Sessions, is by far the best, and ought in all cases to be adopted where necessity does not imperiously dictate a different plan. At the same time, it does not appear that there is any thing irrational or immoral in a legal establishment for the poor, *considered simply in itself.* It obtained under that constitution of political government, which to distinguish it from all others, has received the appropriate name of a *theocracy.* Under that system of statutes, a legalised provision was set apart for the use of the poor; for they had a right to the corners of the fields, or, according to Rabbinical interpretation, to a 60th part of each inclosure—to the gleanings in harvest—to the third crop in the year of jubilee—and to the tax imposed and collected from the rich for behoof of the indigent. In certain states of society, such legal provision is absolutely necessary; as, for example, at the period which followed the reformation, when the poor were left in a state of absolute destitution. But as the circumstances which render such legislative interference necessary seem to be only *occasional,* it does not appear that the ordinary state of human society is such as imperiously to demand a permanent legislative provision. At all events, if the laws in the case must remain for ever on the statute-book of a country, it would be expedient that they *be not acted on.* They may remain there as a *bond of provision* in case of need, and as a wholesome check on the avarice and niggardlines of the rich. In a state something like this, the poor laws of Scotland may be considered as existing.* In certain instances where necess-

* There is a great deal of truth in the following observations. "To those laws which provide for the poor who are really unable to support themselves, I am far from objecting; and indeed it seems a necessary security to them against the indolence and selfishness of the rich; and had the poor no such right of maintenance, I am persuaded that the separation between the ranks of society would become daily more complete, and would infallibly lead to that mutual hatred which ends in revolution as we have seen in France, where the callousness of one class naturally excited the cupidity of the other. The feudal system was no longer in force; the dependence of vassalage done away; and the poor were in fact left wholly to the mercy of the rich. These laws are therefore wise, but while (by a kind of anomaly) they are not acted on, because while the rich know the poor have this claim upon them, it becomes the interest of the richer classes to keep the former in that state which shall not require their exercise; and could the poor themselves look forward to distant consequences, they would understand, that it is equally their interest to be independent of legal support. The moment those laws come to be acted on, self-interest is in direct opposition to duty and independence, and until we regain

ity seemed to dictate their application, recourse has been had to them, but with dubious effect. There cannot be a doubt that *on the whole* reluctance to apply for parochial relief, has diminished, and is diminishing, among the industrious population of the country; and whatever other causes may be assigned to this, we are confident that the establishment of poor rates has been one of no common magnitude. In those happier days when the Minister and Session of every parish had the undisturbed charge of the parochial charity—when the bond which united pastor and people was in almost every case strong and endearing—when the great landed proprietors resided on their estates, and watched over the interests of their industrious tenants—when the nobles and gentry of the land did not think it beneath them to give their attendance and alms at the house of God, and even condescended occasionally to become almoners and distributors of the parochial bounty—when matters proceeded in this agreeable train, the really indigent were relieved, and the spirit of manly independence was universally cherished. Now, the aspect of things is changed—we will not say universally, nor even generally, but we do say that a change has to a certain extent appeared. Pauperism has been gaining ground, while the difficulty of meeting its demands has been every day becoming more apparent. The subject is too vast and complicated for our present discussion. We shall only say, that England at this moment holds out a salutary lesson to us to take heed of the evils of poor rates; and the miseries that result from extended and permanent legislative enactments in favour of pauperism. It is a curious fact in national history, that while England is looking with an anxious eye to Scotland for a method of relief from her grievances, Scotland is thoughtlessly running into the same evil from which her sister kingdom longs to be delivered. The fact is not without a parallel. The author of a book called *the Police of France*, published in 1753, mentions that at that time the French dissatisfied with their mode of relieving the poor by hospitals which had the effect of covering the land with shoals of mendicants, presented several

that point where duty and interest go together, any attempts towards improving the poor are altogether vain and impossible. We see that self-interest itself has not been powerful enough to induce the rich to give that personal attention and trouble, which, I am persuaded, are the only preventives and cures for the evil complained of: Is it not therefore more than probable what the consequences would have been, had the poor possessed no security whatever for the protection and assistance of the rich?" Edinburgh Christian Instructor, Vol. XIII. p. 293.

memorials to the ministry, proposing to adopt the English parochial assessments as greatly preferable; while at the very same time, the people of London no less dissatisfied with those assessments, were publishing pamphlets in favour of the French Hospitals.

It is rather singular that Mr. Malthus, (Essay on Population, vol. I. p. 495, 3d edition), should not have known that Scotland has a system of poor laws as well as England, though the differences between them are very strongly marked. The right of a pauper to support from his parish after an independent residence for three years together, is clearly recognised by law and by practice; while the manner and mode of that support are left to discretion. Mr. Malthus is right when he says that *in fact* the poor laws in Scotland have not hitherto been acted on generally; and that the opinion of the clergy of Scotland, as appears from the statistical account of the different parishes, with a few exceptions, is decidedly unfavourable to assessments. His remark on these excepted instances is very just. "Without having fully seen the evils of poor laws in practice, nothing seems on a first view of the subject more natural than the proposal of an assessment, to which the uncharitable as well as the charitable, should be made to contribute, according to their abilities, and which might be increased and diminished according to the wants of the moment." Mr. M. thinks that the statement given in the statistical account of the town of Paisley of the comparative condition of the poor in England with other countries is too strong (p. 497.); and yet he must know well that English writers and Senators are of all others the most clamorous and impatient in their complaints of the evils of pauperism, and its increase under the system of poor rates. The observation of a Scottish Clergyman in the statistical account is just, that "in the country parishes of Scotland in general, small occasional voluntary collections are sufficient; that the legislature has no occasion to interfere to augment the stream which is already copious enough; that the establishment of a poors' rate would be not only unnecessary, but hurtful, as it would tend to oppress the landholder, without bringing relief to the poor." Vol. VI. p. 21.

Indeed it has been found from experience to hold true, that the number of the poor increases in exact proportion to the legalised provision which is made for them. On this principle

we question very much the policy which dictated the erection of alm-houses and hospitals for the reception of the different classes of paupers. Unless placed under very strict regulations they generally increase the evil which they are designed to remove. "When at Lyons" says Mr. Townsend. "they opened an hospital with forty beds for the reception of the poor, they could fill only half of that number; but now eight hundred beds are not sufficient; and when they built the hospital of Saltpetriere near Paris, it had few inhabitants, but now they lodge 12,000; and yet to their astonishment they find, that instead of having banished distress and poverty, they have increased the number of the poor. The effect has filled them with amazement; but they do not seem to have as yet discovered, that they have been attempting to stop a rapid river in its progress, and to push back the waters of the ocean." Dissertation on the Poor Laws by the late Rev. Joseph Townsend, p. 93. Mr. Townsend wrote in 1786. Of course the evil of which he complains has at least doubled itself since that period.

The evils of the present system of English poor laws have been strongly stated in a late work, entitled, "Considerations on the impolicy and pernicious tendency of the poor laws," &c. by the Rev. Charles Jerram, A. M. Vicar of Chobham, and one of his Majesty's Justices of the Peace for the County of Surrey. He condescends on the following instances of real evil, of which the system as practised has been found to be productive. "It creates the very evil of which it professes to be the remedy; and holds out a premium to idleness, improvidence, and profligacy, by securing all the advantages which would be derived from sobriety, prudence, and industry. It dissolves a connexion on which the best interests of the poor depend, by breaking the link which unites them with their natural and most efficient patrons and friends; and it cuts asunder the very bonds of parental affection, by transferring to the public the charge of maintaining and providing for the children of the poor. It stands directly opposed to the order of nature, and the government of God himself—by destroying the connexion between vice and its appropriate punishment. It strikes at the root of the benevolent feelings, and inflicts the deepest wound on charity. It neutralises all attempts to better the condition of the poor, and counteracts the efficacy of the best institutions. It proceeds on the principle of injustice, and in its operations, is the most cruel and oppressive; and to crown the whole, it tends to universal pauper-

ism and national ruin."* I shall close this review by a quotation from the select report of the Committee of the House of Commons, in which they state their deliberate convictions as resulting from the examination of evidence as minute as it is impartial.

"This new and important principle of compulsory provision for the impotent, and for setting to work the able, originated, without doubt, in motives of the purest humanity, and was directed to the equitable purpose of preventing this burden falling exclusively upon the charitable. But such a compulsory contribution for the indigent, from the funds originally accumulated from the labour and industry of others, could not fail, in process of time, with the increase of population which it was calculated to foster, to produce the unfortunate effect of abating those exertions on the part of the labouring classes, on which, according to the nature of things, the happiness and welfare of mankind has been made to rest. By diminishing the natural impulse by which men are instigated to industry and good conduct, by superseding the necessity of providing in the season of health and vigour for the wants of sickness and old age, and by making poverty and misery the conditions on which relief is to be obtained, your Committee cannot but fear, from a reference to the increased numbers of the poor, and increased and increasing amount of the sums raised for their relief, that this system is perpetually encouraging and increasing the amount of misery it was designed to alleviate, creating at the same time an unlimited demand on funds which it cannot augment; and as every system of relief founded on compulsory enactments must be divested of the character of benevolence, so it is without its beneficial effects; as it proceeds from no impulse of charity, it creates no feelings of gratitude, and not unfrequently engenders dispositions and habits, calculated to separate rather than unite the interest of the higher and lower orders of the community; even the obligations of natural affection are no longer left to their own impulse, but the mutual support of the nearest relations has been actually enjoined by a positive law, which the authority of magistrates is continually required to enforce. The progress of

* I am aware that Mr. Jerram's statement has been considered by competent judges as too strong, and yet the case must be a bad one which could lead a candid and judicious man to publish such a statement. See Eclectic Review of Mr Jerram's work.

these evils, which are inherent in the system itself, appears to have been favoured by the circumstances of modern times, by an extension of the law in practice, and by some deviations from its most important provisions. How much of the complaints which have been referred to your committee may be attributable to one cause or the other, it is perhaps not easy to ascertain. The result, however, appears to have been highly prejudicial to the moral habits, and consequent happiness, of a great body of the people, who have been reduced to the degradation of a dependence upon parochial support; while the rest of the community, including the most industrious class, has been oppressed by a weight of contribution taken from those very means which would otherwise have been applied more beneficially to the supply of employment. And, as the funds which each person can expend in labour are limited, in proportion as the poor rate diminishes those funds, in the same proportion will the wages of labour be reduced, to the immediate and direct prejudice of the labouring classes; the system thus producing the very necessity which it is created to relieve."

# DISSERTATION VI.

## ON THE CAUSES WHICH PREVENTED THE INTRODUCTION OF POOR RATES INTO SCOTLAND.

PREVIOUS to the commencement of the eighteenth century, assessments were hardly known in Scotland. This is a fact which well deserves consideration, as exhibiting a phenomenon at once remarkable and gratifying. From the historical review which has been taken of the rise and progress of poor laws in this country, it appears that legal enactments on the subject of the poor existed so early as the very dawn of the reformation; that from 1579 to the end of the following century they were greatly multiplied and rendered more explicit; and that the latest of those enactments was passed during the reign of William and Mary at a period nearly coeval with the union of the kingdoms. In connexion and in contrast with these statements, we have now to notice the fact that during the whole of the long period which elapsed from the time when the poor law system exhibited its simplest elements, to the time when it received its latest addition, the whole series of statutes was permitted to lie as a dead letter on the Parliamentary records of the kingdom. With one or two exceptions of no great magnitude, recourse was never had to the provisions of law. The good sense and the wisdom of our ancestors seemed to determine that the poor possessed a much safer retreat in the moral feelings and benevolent habits of the Christian people, than in all the statutes to which policy might give rise.

To a modern inquirer is seems very surprising, that a variety

of Parliamentary acts should have been passed *apparently without any occasion for them*. No doubt, were we to judge from the simple fact alone, and from the history of Scotland since the period when such laws were passed, we would be authorised in drawing the conclusion that there was no great necessity for their establishment. But we ought to recollect that our circumstances are widely different from those of our forefathers; and that we possess not the same means of judging correctly on the subject. At the era of the reformation, the usual resources of the poor were directed into a new channel, and in order to restrain or to counteract the immoral effects of universal mendicity as well as to provide for the indigent who had thus been deprived of their usual aliment, statutes, at once benevolent and severe, became absolutely necessary. There was danger lest those who held by seizure, the patrimony of the church, should contract a spirit of hard-heartedness and parsimony; and to protect from this evil, the legislature ordained, that the care of the poor shall devolve on their wealthier brethren, to the extent at least, of their being preserved from beggary and absolute want. During the age which succeeded the establishment of the reformation down to the period of the revolution in 1688, Scotland remained in a distracted and unsettled state. The political aspect of the kingdom was perpetually changing. Ecclesiastical administration passed alternately from Presbyterians to Episcopalians; and it is well known to all who have the slightest acquaintance with our national history, that whatever changes were introduced into the Church, operated similar changes in the political state of the kingdom. The admirable establishment of Parochial schools had not as yet obtained the place to which it was entitled in the statutes and constitutions of the empire; and the engine of clerical superintendence was, by the fluctuations of things, cramped and deranged in its movements. Civil wars rent the kingdom with factions; and dissolved the tenderest ties of consanguinity and brotherhood. In this unsettled state of things, it was no matter of surprise that pauperism should increase, while its resources were diminished. The legislature was apprehensive that amidst the contests of party and the divisions of the times, the children of indigence might be overlooked. To prevent this evil, new acts were passed; and the obligation of relieving the poor, from time to time, pressed on the landholders of the country.

Presuming on the operation of such causes in the establish-

ment of the poor laws, it may appear a more difficult matter to explain the reason why the laws were never acted on, but were allowed in most cases to fall into desuetude. From an impartial review of the history of the country and of the times, the following causes appear to have been principally in operation.

In the *first* place,—It is not to be supposed that the proprietors and landholders of Scotland would be very ready in pushing the laws into practice, since it is obvious that this would have been literally to bring a burden on themselves—and a burden which in the course of things might have become intolerable. Neither is it to be wondered that the clergy should have been equally averse to the introduction of the system, since it was a principle uniformly held by them from the very dawn of the reformation, that the care of the poor devolved by express Divine appointment, on the office-bearers of the Church, and on the voluntary sympathies of the Christian people; and by no means, on the provisions of law.*

In the *second* place,—While this reluctance to the establishment of the system influenced the two great bodies who had the execution of the law chiefly in their hands, it might have been expected, as it in fact turned out, that they would strain every nerve in order to supply the want of legislative provision, and thus prevent the necessity of having recourse to it. Accordingly we find that the clergy by enforcing on all, the great duty of charity; and the proprietors, by occasional voluntary contributions, in aid of liberal weekly collections, contrived very successfully to provide a refuge for the poor in the affections and kindnesses of the people. *Weekly* and extraordinary collections at the doors of the parish churches were in use from the establishment of the Protestant church of Scotland; and the Clergy and Elders of the church made it a point of conscience to watch over this department of charity, and to give it every encouragement. Thus, there was at all times, in every parish, a fund for the supply of pressing necessities; while no encouragement was given to depend on such a fund, and thus no relaxation of industry was felt. The fund was supplied by the *pence* of the poor, as well as by the *shillings* of the rich;

* It is perhaps worthy of remark, that the jealousy and rivalship between the two kingdoms would operate, with other causes, in disinclining the people of Scotland to copy the example or the institutions of England.

and thus the habit of *giving* operated as a check on the disposition to *receive*. The heritors of parishes finding the good effects which resulted from the management of the Session, strengthened their hands, by aiding their funds, and augmenting their influence over the minds of the people.

In the *third* place,—Although it was long before parochial schools obtained a full establishment and suitable encouragement in the country, certain it is, that from the very beginning, the idea of a *parish school* for all the departments of ordinary education, and particularly for religious instruction, was familiar to the reformed clergy. It was associated in their minds with the establishment of the protestant church itself. It was considered as a constituent part of that establishment, and *absolutely essential* to its prosperity and glory. Hence we find, that the subject of schools holds a prominent place in the transactions of the General Assembly from year to year. Even in those assemblies which were held amid the tumult and bustle of civil contention, and at a time when the continuance of the protestant church was somewhat problematical, the subject of education and of schools was never lost sight of;* and hence it followed, that long before the establishment of the plan, parochial schools were generally prevalent in the low country of Scotland; supported by the wages of the scholars, and patronized by the influence of the church. Thus were the means of education pretty generally diffused, and its usual effects, in cherishing independent and virtuous habits, were widely experienced.

In the *fourth* place,—The *circulation of the Scriptures* in Scotland was coeval with the dawn of the reformation. The Bible was early published in the language of the country, and copies of it were rapidly and widely disseminated. The reformed pastors in all their addresses to the people made a constant appeal to the inspired record, and to this as one great cause may be ascribed the triumphs of reformed truth. When the reformation was established, and a new host of enemies appeared in the semi-popish party, who aimed to overthrow at once the civil liberties and the ecclesiastical establishment of the kingdom, the Word of God was invariably appealed to by the Presbyterian clergy as the standard and the test of truth,

* See, for example, the transactions of the Assemblies, 1638 and 1642.

The people, even in the lower ranks of life, acquired a familiarity with the letter and the doctrine of Scripture, and felt a degree of mental satisfaction in confounding their antagonists by apt reference and quotation. Even the theological controversies to which the state of the times gave rise, however unfavourable they might be to the milder feelings of the heart, tended in no ordinary measure to sharpen the faculties, and to improve the intellectual capacities of men. By the habit of perusing and applying the Word of God, Scotchmen became well acquainted with its contents. The lessons of Christianity were thus brought into contact with their minds, and the obligation to be "diligent in business," and to "provide for our own," was powerfully cherished. Besides, the impression of the goodness of their cause, and the firm belief that God was on their side, tended in a high degree to cherish in the great body of the people, that spirit of energetic and manly independence which spurned at once the domination of arbitrary power, and the abject degradation of pauperism. The spirit was strengthened by the weight and importance which the people felt themselves to possess: and in proportion as they wished to preserve and to agument that weight, would they struggle against the difficulties of their situation, and shun by an instinctive emotion the dreary abodes of indigence. A true Scottish presbyterian considered every member of the true church as his brother, and in times of difficulty would feel the strong sympathy of mutual affection, and would stretch forth a helping hand to aid and to relieve him. In all these respects, the spirit which predominated among the great majority of the Scottish nation from the beginning to the close of the seventeenth century, was favourable in a high degree to the liberties of the kingdom and the independence of the people.

In the *fifth* place,—It is necessary to recollect, that during the period in question, the *causes which lead to the farther growth of pauperism* had a very limited range of operation. Commerce and manufactures were in their infancy. *Large cities*, those nests of poverty and wretchedness, were scarcely known. It was seldom that men exhibited the extremes of immense wealth, and abject destitution. The distance was less remote between the different ranks of society; and although the feudal system of vassalage prevailed extensively in the kingdom, still that very system, however unfavourable in other respects, tend-

ed, by an obvious process, to prevent the evils of poverty and dependence.

*Finally*,—In assigning the reasons why poors' rates were prevented from obtaining any extensive prevalence in Scotland till a comparatively recent period, it would be unpardonable were we to omit the very powerful influence which the ecclesiastial establishment and its members possessed over the minds of the people. Till the revolution in 1688, indeed, the country was so agitated by contending factions, as to be prevented from experiencing the full extent of that moral influence which the religious institutions to which it was attached, were calculated to exercise. And yet even during the dark and distracted periods of the civil wars, there cannot be a doubt that the independent spirit of Scotland was kept alive in no common degree by the attachment of her inhabitants to their favourite teachers, and to the forms of religion in which they were educated. Their moral and religious institutions were endeared to them by a thousand deeply interesting recollections. They were associated in their feelings with all that was affecting and awful in the early struggles of their fathers in the work of reformation, and in the persecutions of their brethren, who at a later period shed their blood in the cause. In features clear and lively, were pictured to their vivid imaginations, the deeds and the sufferings of other days; while the dangers which surrounded them, and the struggles which they sustained, tended in no common degree to brace their nerves, and to dignify their independence. We make our appeal to the voice of authentic history when we say, that the spirit of the Episcopalian party in the seventeenth century was tame and dastardly—that the bishops and curates were, with a few bright exceptions, the servile slaves of arbitrary power—and that wherever the debasing and demoralising effects of their predominance appeared, there the manlier virtues of Scottish patriotism and independence degenerated into the dwarfish and sickly forms of abjectness and submission. It was not, however, till the contest was closed and the protestant faith established in the hearts and affections of the people, at the revolutionary settlement of 1688, that the genuine influence of the religious establishment was felt in all its native power. The doctrines of Christianity exhibited in their purest forms, imprinted their image on the hearts of the people, and diffused a spirit congenial to their character. The precepts of the Divine law powerfully pressed on their attention reminded them, from time

to time, of the obligation to "be not slothful in business," and "to provide for their own, especially those of their own house." The instrument of clerical superintendence was ever at hand in all its peculiar influence, and tended strongly to raise the tone of moral feeling among the people. Education became general; and the lessons of the pulpit combining with those of the school, stamped on the minds of Scotchmen the features of a bold masculine integrity, associated with the tenderness of paternal sensibility. It is a just observation that *moral* causes are always more powerful in their influence on man than *physical;* and we have no hesitation in ascribing to the considerations suggested, an influence of no slender magnitude in raising the tone of thought and of morals in Scotland, and in keeping her inhabitants from the mean degradation of abject dependence.

In considering the state of Scotland with regard to the poor, at the period before, and immediately after the revolution, some may be ready to think that the universal prevalence of mendicity and its attendant evils, affords a very unsatisfactory illustration of the favourable view we have exhibited. No doubt, Fletcher of Salton, a politician of independent principles and great good sense, gives us rather a forbiding picture of the state of Scotland in 1698; but there are some considerations connected with it which must be taken into view, before we can form a fair and impartial opinion.

In the *first* place,—There is reason to think that Fletcher's description is drawn in colours by far too strong. He was no doubt a native of Scotland and deeply interested in its welfare; but he had been frequently absent from his native country and was imperfectly acquainted with its actual state.* When he tells us that there were in 1698 "two hundred thousand persons begging from door to door,†" we naturally wish to know how this fact was ascertained? For certainly, nothing can be more difficult at all times than to ascertain the exact amount of a wandering population. When we are farther told by the same authority,‡ that the people of Scotland at that time amounted to a "million and a half" we strongly suspect some inaccuracy in the point; since it appears that at the distance of a century af-

* Life, prefixed to his Political Works, 1732.

† Political Works, p. 144. ‡ P. 98.

ter, the number was nearly the same,* and so late as the year 1802,† the difference was not considerable.

In the *second* place, It ought to be recollected that when Fletcher wrote, the country was just recovering from the fearful tumults and ravages of the period of persecution dated from 1662 to 1688; and it need not surprise us that the state of things at such a time should be unpromising. The civil contentions and sanguinary persecutions of that dark period must have had a demoralising effect on the minds of the people. The distracted state of men's minds also prevented the adoption of plans for the employment and improvement of the poor; and hence the necessity which prompted to habits of mendicity.

In the *third* place, In connexion with this statement, and as illustrative of the happy effects of education in preventing the growth of poverty, it is proper to notice the fact, that the act of the Scottish Parliament for the establishment of schools in every parish was formally repealed at the restoration of Charles II. in 1660, and was not revived till the year 1696; and it was precisely during this period that ignorance and poverty and wretchedness most extensively prevailed. The revival of this valuable establishment belongs exclusively to the Presbyterian Church of Scotland; and the rapid improvement of the country was consequent on its revival.

In the *fourth* place, The mendicants to whom Fletcher alludes do not seem to have belonged to the country as its native and aboriginal or settled inhabitants; but were chiefly strangers, such as gypsies, and fortune-tellers, and impostors from Ireland, England, and the continent, by whom the country was invaded and oppressed. The description of them applies exactly to this mass of floating population. "They live" says Fletcher, "without any regard to the laws of the land, or even those of God and nature." "No magistrate could ever discover, or be informed which way one in a hundred of these wretches died, or that ever they were baptized."‡ There is reason to form a more favourable opinion of the fixed or stated inhabitants of the country; although no doubt their character must also have been affected by the troubles of the times, and the intercourse with such unwel-

* Sir J. Sinclair's statistical account. † Parliamentary census.

‡ P. 145.

come visitors. But it would be unfair to confound with the fixed residenters in a place, the strangers who intrude among them, from time to time, without right, and without any other object than to plunder and destroy.

What became of these gypseys immediately after the revolution we cannot positively say; but this is certain, that with the restoration of peace—the establishment of internal tranquillity—the settlement of regular authority and law—and the influence of the ecclesiastical and parochial school establishments, the country gradually returned to a state of moral health, and general improvement. The following testimonies by a co-temporary writer, and one not unimpartial, may serve to illustrate the effects of the change, and to furnish a counterpart to the picture drawn by Fletcher. "The people" says he, "are restrained in the ordinary practice of common immoralities, such as swearing, drunkeness, slander, fornication, and the like. As to theft, murder, and other capital crimes, they come under the cognisance of the civil magistrate as in other countries; but in those things which the Church has power to punish, the people being constantly and impartially prosecuted, they are thereby the more restrained, kept sober, and under government, and you may pass through twenty towns in Scotland, without seeing any broil, or hearing one oath sworn in the streets; whereas, if a blind man was to come from there into England, he shall know the first town he sets his foot in within the English border, by hearing the name of God blasphemed and profanely used, even by the very little children in the street." *

* Memoirs of the Church of Scotland, by Defoe, p. 327. A. D. 1717.

# DISSERTATION VII.

## ON THE CAUSES WHICH HAVE LED TO THE INTRODUCTION OF POOR RATES INTO SCOTLAND.

FROM the commencement of the last century to the year 1740, the number of assessed parishes was very limited. The causes which prevented the introduction of assessments during this period were chiefly the prevalence of education, and the influence of the presbyterian church. During this period also, it deserves to be remarked, that the concerns of the poor were attended to very generally, either by the landed proprietors who resided on their estates, and managed the affairs of their tenantry with their own hands;—or by their representatives commonly known by the name of *Chamberlains*. Among these there appear to have been many men of respectability and piety; and being always resident, their influence combined with that of the parochial minister and school master, was powerfully felt in improving the habits of the people, and strengthening the ties of social sympathy and good neighbourhood. Alive to the concerns of their patrons, they knew and acted on the principle, that the best interests of the rich and wealthy in the state are never more effectually secured than by the exercise of kindness, condescension, and liberality to those who are their dependents and inferiors. From 1740 to the present day, assessments have increased with accelerated rapidity; and it is a subject of inquiry both curious and instructive, what may be the reasons which have led to this unprecedented increase?

I. In the earlier period of the contury, assessments took their rise, in most instances, from the *state of the times*, and *peculiar local circumstances*. The prevalence of famine in 1700, 1740, and intermediate times, imperiously required the introduction

of assessments; and when once introduced, it is not surprising that in some instances they were retained. We are not sufficiently acquainted with the local and other circumstances which affected particular parishes and districts, to know what may have been the specific reasons of recourse to poors' rates. We may rest assured on the most rational principles, that in no instance, during the earlier half of the century, were assessments introduced, without the most clear and imperious necessity. The general sense of the country was decidedly against them; and a strong case must have been made out, before the unfavourable impression was overcome.

"It deserves to be recorded," says Sir H. Moncrieff, "that though the latest of the Scotch poor laws is as old as the time of William and Mary, there was scarcely any regular assessment for the poor which was continued for any length of time in any parish of Scotland previous to 1755. As long as there was no secession of presbyterians from the established church, the weekly collections under the management of the Kirk Session, were in general found sufficient for the maintenance of the poor. In some years of peculiar hardship or scarcity, such as the four last years of the seventeenth century, or the year 1740, voluntary assistance was no doubt given, and in some instances, temporary assessments were resorted to, to enable the Kirk Sessions to meet with unusual emergencies. But on all ordinary occasions, the resources of the Kirk Session were considered as sufficient, and continued to be so at least as late as 1755." *

II. One great cause of the increase of pauperism and the consequent introduction of assessments has been, the *rapid growth of manufactures of all kinds.* Although the progress of manufactures has contributed in no ordinary degree to the prosperity of the country, there can hardly be a doubt that it has proved injurious to the moral and civil interests of the inhabitants. Its influence in the increase of pauperism and the consequent introduction of assessments, may be ascertained by reference to such considerations as the following.

The growth of manufactures and the consequent demand for labourers and operatives furnish powerful inducements to *strangers* to settle among us in the hope of obtaining more lucra-

* Life of Dr. Erskine, p. 468.

tive employment than they were accustomed to in their own country. We feel the benefit to be derived from the incursions of strangers, and it therefore would be impolitic as well as cruel to exclude them by a peremptory law. At the same time it is obvious that evils of no slender magnitude attend such incursions. Many strangers with their families arrive among us who are incompetent to the work they undertake, or are unable to earn a livelihood by its means. The numbers who apply for labour are frequently far beyond the demand. When a stagnation or change of fashion takes place, many are necessarily thrown idle, and thus become a burden on the public. If they are total strangers, and if their period of residence has not been such as to entitle them to the parochial funds, they devolve on the charities of the humane and thus contribute to exhaust that stock of benevolent aid which was not originally designed for them. But it often happens that such strangers continue to reside amongst us for the legal term of three years, and thus they come on our established resources with a claim which cannot be evaded. Indeed, in so far as strangers from *Ireland* are concerned, it becomes a matter of indifference whether they acquire a legal claim or not, because as Ireland has no poor laws, its outcast inhabitants must be attended to wherever their lot happens to be cast; and the only remedy in our power is, to transport them back again to their own country. Besides, in the habits and character of these very intruders, there is *nothing Scottish*—nothing that assimilates them to the natives of the country; and hence it is, that while they prove a heavy burden on our resources, they become a permanent evil, by intermingling with our people, and gradually changing their very character by spreading the contagion of ignorance and vice.

The increase of manufactures has also led to the growth of pauperism and the consequent introduction of poor rates, by its tendency to diffuse unequally the population of the country. In former times, when Scotland consisted chiefly of towns of moderate size, and small country villages, the population was spread over the country in a ratio nearly the same in all parts. Now, the case is different. The formation of large manufacturing establishments has the effect of withdrawing the inhabitants from particular districts and confining them to one or more insulated spots. The parishes where such manufactures are established may have been fully able previously, to support the burden of *their own* poor; but when a large village or manufacturing establishment rises suddenly within its bounds, the ex-

tent of charitable demand is necessarily enlarged, while the ordinary means of satisfying it are proportionally diminished. Hence pauperism germinates, and a poors' rate becomes inevitable.

Again,—It is well known that in Scotland the evils of pauperism and want are in many instances warded off by the kindness of relations and friends. Without this indeed, all that the public funds can distribute would do very little in securing a resource for indigence and age. But it is obvious that this can apply only in the case of the natives of the country who have long resided in a place—who have sustained a creditable character—are known personally to the rest of the neighbourhood—and by good conduct have earned a kind of *imperfect right* to the sympathies of the humane. With regard to such, there is at all times a pleasing resource in the benevolent feelings of friends and acquaintances around them; and thus the parish funds are saved. With respect to strangers, and particularly those from another island, the case must be very different. Scotchmen, no doubt, recognise the great duty of receiving the stranger and relieving the afflicted of every name, and there is perhaps no country where the virtues of enlarged liberality and kindness are more extensively cherished. But still, charity begins at home; and it is not to be expected that strangers who *are not known* or who are not known *to advantage*, should be placed on a level with *our own* brethren, who have long been our acquaintances—who have probably seen better days—and whose lot may, perhaps, at some future day become our own. For these, we wish to reserve the choicest of our sympathies; and we do not wish by ill-judged kindness to encourage the pernicious effects of excessive emigration to our shores.

There is one other consideration which must be taken into view, in noticing the effects of the growth of population and manufactures. In most of our great towns and extensive landward parishes, while there has been a rapid and perpetually advancing growth of population and manufactures, there has been no corresponding increase in the means of moral and religious improvement. In Edinburgh, a regular assessment was not introduced until towards the end of the century, when the population had greatly increased, and the effort to support the poor by voluntary contribution in aid of the weekly collections had completely failed.* In Glasgow, although the

* Dr. Macfarlan's Inquiries, p. 162.

hospital was opened in 1733, the community was not assessed for its maintenance till Nov. 27th, 1770, previous to which time, the poor appear to have been supported by annual contributions of the public bodies, aided by the voluntary subscriptions of individuals.† In the town and abbey parishes of Paisley, regular assessments were not introduced until the growth of manufactures, the increase of population, and the influx of strangers, rendered them absolutely necessary. In these instances, and in multitudes of a similar kind, it is a notorious fact, that while the size and population have increased in a very rapid ratio, no adequate efforts have been made to keep pace with this increase, in providing the means of moral and religious instruction. The consequence inevitably is, that while the voluntary provision for the poor has fallen off, the number and the wants of those to be relieved, have greatly multiplied. In all these instances, therefore, *necessity*, and necessity alone, has demanded the adoption of the rates.

III. There is no doubt that, in England, the evils of pauperism, and of rates, have been prodigiously increased by the very impolitic and injudicious custom of defraying the price of labour, either in whole or in part, from the parochial funds. A young active man, who earns perhaps 7 or 8 shillings per week of wages, is in the habit of receiving an equal sum out of the poors' rates. I cannot imagine any thing that could have been devised by the most inventive ingenuity, better fitted to destroy the spirit of independence, to annihilate the distinction between the *reward of industry* and the *pittance of charity*—to do away the stigma which is wisely attached to a state of absolute dependence, on the part of men fit for labour, and to interfere most perniciously with the regular progress of arts and industry, by contributing to keep down the wages of the industrious labourer. It is in this last sense I wish at present to notice the practice. That it has had, and *must* have the effect of keeping down the price of labour, and preventing it from finding its proper level, is obvious, whether we view it in relation to the *master* who employs, or the labourer who receives the employment. With regard to the first, there is

† Queries and Replies regarding the Poor of Glasgow, p. 4.—It ought at the same time to be noticed that although there was no *regular* levy till 1776, there was an *occasional* call so early as 1699, and the very first minute of the Hospital Directors in 1735 narrates the "tax for maintaining the poor" as a part of the income. See Report of the Town's Hospital of Glasgow, &c.

a strong inducement held out to keep his workmen on small allowance, because he can always send them to the parish, as to *the Bank*, for more. With regard to the second, what motive can there be to the industrious mechanic or labourer to exert his energies to the utmost, when he sees that the lazy and the indolent are placed on the same level with him, in point of practical result? It is no doubt certain that this cause has not operated, and cannot operate to any great extent in Scotland, because the very principle of it is held by Scotchmen in utter abhorrence. But there is reason to suspect that its effects have to a certain extent been perceived and felt in depressing the scale of wages, compared with the rapidly increasing depreciation in the value of money. When the price of industry is so low in the southern districts of the kingdom, it is natural to expect that the greedy and parsimonious will make it their study to bring it down among us to something like the same standard. Accordingly we find, that while the value of money has rapidly diminished, and while the public burdens, enhanced by taxation and otherways, have become very heavy on the working classes, the price of their labour has by no means risen in proportion. According to the researches of the ingenious and benevolent Arthur Young, the price of wages has fallen since 1810, while the duties on the necessaries of life have in many instances been doubled, and the price of the various commodities has been proportionally enhanced. Without giving any very definite opinion on the questions which this matter involves, I may simply hint, that in allocating the public burdens of the country, a wise and benevolent policy will spare as much as possible the necessaries and conveniencies of life, while it will impose its heaviest burdens on the luxuries, which can easily be spared, and which tend to enervate the national constitution.

IV. We may be permitted, on this part of the subject, to notice two legislative enactments, the effect of which we know from experience, has been unfavourable to Scotland, in accelerating the progress of pauperism, and consequently of assessments. What is rather remarkable, while the one of these professes to be a boon, or advantage offered to the people; and the other has proved itself to be a burden; they have both assimilated in their practical effects. The first of these enactments referred to, is the militia act, by which provision was made for the support of the wives and children of those ballotted into the regiments of militia; and this provision administered through

the *medium of the Treasurer of the Kirk Session.* The enactment appeared, at first sight, patriotic and judicious; but, we know from multiplied experience, that by habituating young women, in the very vigour of health, and many of them in circumstances of comparative independence,* to the reception of occasional alms through the ordinary channel of parochial charity, it familiarised their minds to the acceptance of what was not the result of their own labour, and rendered the transition to ordinary charity much more easy, and less repugnant to the feelings of independence. The *other* enactment to which I refer is, the *Cottage Tax*, now wisely modified, so as to become comparatively harmless. By the provisions of this statute, as it lately stood, no one was legally exempted from the payment of the tax, unless his *house rent did not exceed twenty shillings* As *in Scotland*, a rent of less than 20s. was, in large towns particularly, almost wholly unknown, the tax necessarily fell with its greatest severity on that class who were removed one step from pauperism, and who were struggling in a manly spirit to preserve their independence. By a certificate from a minister and elders, no doubt an exemption from payment was granted; but mark the steps through which the poor man was doomed to pass before such exemption was obtained. He had to make a disclosure of his poverty to the Session. He had to petition for relief, on the ground of indigence. He had to disclose his indigence to those, from whom he would naturally wish to conceal it; and he had to stand on a level with absolute paupers His feelings were not unfrequently wounded by the stern severity of public prosecutors. Add to this, that his industry was discouraged, and the seeds of patriotic attachment gradually eradicated from his mind. On these accounts, we cannot but consider the abolition and modification of these statutes as favourable to the best interests of the country, and of the poor. With regard to the militia allowance, we may throw out this additional observation, that the resemblance between a fund raised by a tax on the county, and that raised by assessment on the heritors, was sufficiently near to lessen, if not to remove, the distinction between the reception of *public*, and of *parochial* allowance. For both, there was required a certificate of right, on the ground of dependence; and the difference was not so palpable as to prevent the danger of their being confounded together.

* I have known in a number of instances, that servants in respectable families have contracted marriage with militia men chiefly, if not solely, that they might obtain the county allowance; and of this, I fear, a bad use was often made.

V. The conduct of many among the richer part of the community in absenting themselves from public worship; in giving sparingly to the public collections; in refusing their patronage to the church as established by law; in failing to take part with the eldership in the business of the poor; in weakening the hands of the clergy; and in declining to contribute with due liberality when occasionally called on to do so; has tended inconceivably to introduce poor rates into the country. It is a curious fact, that both in England and in Scotland, the men who complain of the burden of assessments are the very persons who have been principally instrumental in bringing them on. A great proportion of our noblemen and country gentlemen systematically forsake the house of God, or are extremely irregular in their attendance. No inconsiderable number profess to be of a different religion from that established by law, and expect that on this account they shall be freed from all responsibility. Many who do attend public worship, give with a sparing and niggardly hand; and when called on for occasional contributions, fail to be so liberal as their circumstances would warrant. Too many heritors of parishes, from a short-sighted policy, refuse to enlarge, or to improve their parish churches when required, and thus by discouraging or preventing attendance at public worship, necessarily diminish the collections and hasten on assessments. Those who seldom reside on their property, too commonly leave the business of their poor dependants to the mercenary care of hirelings, to whom personal aggrandisement may be supposed to be the most powerfully influential principle. How seldom do we find a country gentleman taking part in the office and duties of the eldership; or strengthening by his example and influence the efforts of conscientious ministers! I am aware, and I rejoice to state it, that there are many, very many bright exceptions; and we hope and trust, that the number of such exceptions will increase. But we appeal to general experience for what we have said; and we would beg just to remind the great proprietors both in town and country, that if they wish to prevent the introduction of assessments, *they have the remedy in their own hands.*

VI. The *abuse of the law of patronage* has unquestionably led, in many instances, to the introduction of assessments. It is very obvious, that to perpetuate and to extend dissent from an ecclesiastical establishment requires the operation of much fewer causes than its original introduction. It is very obvious,

also, as a general principle, that in exact proportion as the causes of dissent are likely to operate, should the efforts of the friends of the establishment be multiplied in order to prevent or to counteract their operation. The policy of the established church of Scotland has, for a long series of years, been directly the reverse of this. Instead of endeavouring to conciliate the minds of the people, the inclination has too frequently been to exasperate and to wound. Interest and political considerations have been allowed an exclusive range of operation in those cases where regard to the interests of religion and the improvement of the people ought to have had the preponderating influence. It has been practically forgotten that the church must stand or fall by *public opinion;* and that its true prosperity depends on its being firmly rooted in the affections of the people. The consequence has been, that in many parishes the established church is nearly deserted; the weekly collections have declined; the influence of the eldership has diminished; and thus necessity, superinduced by misconduct, has demanded the introduction of poors' rates as a last resort. If patrons dread the establishment of rates, let them consult the best interests of the people in the nomination of their pastoral inspectors.

VII. The *conduct of the clergy* has, in not a few instances, necessitated the introduction of assessments. An ignorant, a careless, and a vicious clergyman, must alienate from him the minds of his people; and even in many instances where the conduct of ministers is not openly vicious, their imprudent and irregular conduct may have the effect of injuring the interests of their parishes, and diminishing the resources of the poor. Is there no danger of a minister quarreling with his heritors, and by way of petty revenge, calling for an assessment? Is there no chance of a minister trampling on the rights of his eldership, and forcing the members of his Session to retire in disgust? Is there no fear lest a minister should practically forget the importance of respectable office-bearers, and by devolving the spiritual interests of the parish and the care of the poor on the ignorant and the mean, induce the heritors to take the concerns of the poor out of their hands and become administrators themselves? Is there no reason to suspect, that ministers by their niggardly and penurious habits, sometimes discourage rather than promote the exercise of private and social charity, and thus injure the resources of the poor? In fine, is there no room to think that ministers by their indolence and negligence in the business of

parochial charity, injure the interests of the poor, and bring discredit on the long established mode of managing the poor in Scotland? We advance no direct charges against the clergy; we merely propose these as so many topics of candid and serious investigation.

VIII. Another cause, and one of universal operation, is to be found in the neglect of personal and family religion, and in the very slender influence which religion has on the great body of the people. We have had occasion already to advert to the effect which early education and sound religious instruction had in warding off the evils of assessments. If our view of the matter is correct, it follows by necessary consequence, that an opposite series of causes must issue in opposite results. Now, that there is less attention to the instruction of youth in general, and their religious instruction in particular, than there formerly was, seems undeniable. The increase of our manufactures; the gains of children at the early age of 7 or 8; the influx of uneducated strangers from England, Ireland, and the Highlands; these and kindred elements have been, and are powerfully in operation in preventing the children of labourers and industrious mechanics, from seeking and enjoying the blessings of early education. Besides, in our regular and established elementary schools, religion has not now that place which was formerly assigned to it. The Scriptures and Catechisms have in too many instances given place to semi-paganized systems. The duties of parental instruction, and family worship, have fallen into general neglect, particularly among the higher ranks. The style of preaching is frequently such as to interest, in a very small degree, the *understandings*; and in none, the *affections* of the people. Ministers pay little attention to the instruction of the young; and the duties of pastoral visitation and catechising have in many instances gone into disuse. Thus the bond which unites pastor and flock is enfeebled. Religion loses its hold on the public mind. Industry, frugality, and benevolence, languish. Habits of vice and intemperance are acquired. Pauperism extends its ravages; and a poors' rate is inevitable.*

* On the subject discussed in this Dissertation, I have much pleasure in referring to two able articles in the Edinburgh Christian Instructor,—the one a review of the Christian Observer on the Presbyterian standards, vol. XII. p. 404.—the other, a review of Duncan on Parish Banks, vol. XIV. p. 389.

The view which has been taken of the causes which have led, and which do still lead, to the introduction of assessments, may suggest the most effectual means of counteracting their influence. Of those considerations, which are local and temporary, or which are political in their character, or which are affected by peculiarities in the state of the times, or in the progress of public opinion, we must, for obvious reasons, say nothing. But with regard to such as are moral in their character and tendency, we may be permitted to remark, that much depends on the conduct and exertions of those classes of men, who may be considered as intrusted with the guidance and formation of the national character. Let us advert to a few plain practical illustrations of this. Is it a fact, that the moral improvement, and consequent independence of the people, are influenced, in no slight degree, by the system of national education?—Let the parochial school establishment of Scotland, be suitably patronised and encouraged. Let more care be shewn in the selection of teachers—let the minister of every parish, and the presbytery of every district, be faithful in discharging the duties of visitation and superintendence, as enjoined by the legislature and the church—let the religion of the country become more closely linked, than it has of late years been, with its education,—and let zealous, and intelligent, private teachers be no longer considered as necessarily the *rivals;* but rather, as the auxiliaries of the public establishment. Again, Is it the glory of Scotland, that its civil and ecclesiastical laws have wisely secured an universally resident clerical superintendence over all its families? Let it be recollected that the clergy of the church of Scotland have much in their power, in the way of preventing the growth of pauperism, and improving the moral state of the people at large. By the plain and impressive preaching of the gospel—by diligence and tenderness in private visitation and conference—by assiduous attention to the instruction of the young, and the consolation of the afflicted and advanced in years—by the habitual and zealous discharge of every duty, with a special reference to the improvement of the ignorant and the poor;—by these, and other means of a similar nature, a conscientious minister will at once improve the moral state of his people, and cherish the spirit of manly independence. Farther, Is the state of the poor affected in a high degree by the conduct of the rich and wealthier classes of the community? Let them study condescension and affability to the poor—let

them inquire into their circumstances with interest—let them visit their habitations—let them mingle with them freely at the house of God—let them encourage their industry—and exhibit to their imitation an example of strict morality, and regard to all the ordinances of religion. In fine; It is the duty of all who have it in their power, to encourage the formation and progress among the people of those institutions, such as provident banks and friendly societies, whose tendency is favourable to the culture of moral habits, and the spirit of industry. Let the poor be encouraged to cherish mutual sympathy, and the habit of giving to benevolent and useful objects, and thus they will be elevated in their views, and raised above the servile degradation of independence.

# DISSERTATION VIII.

## REMARKS ON THE REPORTS OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY TO BOTH HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT ON THE MANAGEMENT OF THE POOR IN SCOTLAND.

DURING the sitting of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, in May, 1817, letters were addressed to the Moderator, by the Right Honourable Lord Hardwicke, Chairman of the Committee of the House of Lords, and by the Honourable William Sturges Bourne, Chairman of the Committee of the House of Commons; with the view of obtaining such information as the Assembly might be pleased to furnish, regarding the mode of managing the concerns of the poor in Scotland. A full reply could not be given to these letters during the sitting of the Assembly; but an interim Committee was appointed to draw up such an answer as the shortness of the time allowed, and the circumstances of the case, permitted. Among the members of Committee, there was Thomas Kennedy, Esq. of Dunure, M. P. a gentleman who, from motives of patriotic benevolence, and for his own personal satisfaction, had directed his attention, for some time, to the very business which now came before the Assembly. He was pleased to submit to the examination of the Committee about 200 returns which he had received from different parishes and districts, illustrative of the modes of management severally adopted in them. About one half of these were carefully perused and digested by the Committee; and the results of the investigation were condensed in a short report, which, after having being sanctioned by the Assembly,

was transmitted to the Committees of both Houses, and by them published in the " Report of the Select Committee on the Poor Laws," ordered to be printed, July 4th, 1817. The report is inserted as follows without any comment, as there is hardly a sentiment in it with which I do not cordially agree.

" The Committee report, That with the assistance of the Returns made to Mr. Kennedy's inquiries, they have been able to prepare a statement of the management of the poor in upwards of one hundred parishes in Scotland, which is ready to be laid before the Assembly; that there are still a very considerable number of additional returns, amounting nearly, perhaps, to another hundred parishes, which it has not been possible, within the time allowed them, to arrange; and that the Committee take the liberty of suggesting the following Remarks, which have occurred to them, on the Returns which they have already arranged.—They remark,

1. That the Scotch have uniformly proceeded on the principle, that every individual is bound to provide for himself by his own labour, as long as he is able to do so; and that his parish is only bound to make up that portion of the necessaries of life, which he cannot earn or obtain by other lawful means.

2. That even in cases of extreme poverty, the relations and neighbours of the paupers have a pride in providing for their necessities, either in whole or in part—That this circumstance will account for the small number of paupers in some very populous parishes; and serves at the same time to explain a fact which is obvious in so many of the Returns from the country districts, that the sums given to the paupers appear to be so disproportioned to what their real necessities require. A small sum, given to aid their other resources, affords them the relief which is necessary; and it would be both against the true interest and the moral habits of the people, if a more ample provision were made for them by their parishes.

3. That the distinction made in a great proportion of the Returns between the poor in the regular parish roll, and the industrious poor who receive only occasional supply, is of equal importance to the morals and the best interests of the country. Those of the first class receive a constant supply from the parish funds; those of the second are only assisted when they are laid aside from work by sickness or accidental causes; and especially during that season of the year which chiefly affects

their health or suspends their usual labours. They receive at that time such assistance as their immediate necessities demand, for the limited period when they are in this situation: but when the cause which occasioned their demand ceases to operate, the parish assistance is withdrawn, and they return to their labour, under a conviction, which they never relinquish, that both their subsistence and their comfort must ultimately depend on their personal industry.

4. That it appears from the Returns which have yet been examined, that in a great proportion of the country parishes in which legal assessments have been introduced, they have been afterwards abandoned; either because it has been found by experience that whatever addition the ordinary funds required might be found at much less expense by means of voluntary contributions, when any urgent pressure on the poor should render it necessary; or because a regular assessment in those parishes has very generally been observed to produce an influx of paupers from other parishes, who in three years (by the decisions of the courts of law for the last forty years) can acquire a legal settlement, if during that time they have supported themselves by their own industry; aggravating in this way the parochial burden beyond all reasonable proportion. It is clear, from the Returns examined, and the Remarks contained in them, that this observation applies to no inconsiderable number of parishes, though the experience may be different in other situations which have not yet fallen under the view of the Committee; and that the voluntary contributions which are substituted in place of legal assessments, though in some instances they are unequal and partial, from the inattention or disinclination of individuals, have in general been found to answer the purpose, relieving those parishes of a much greater and more permanent burden, and as effectually providing for the real necessities of the poor.

5. That it appears to the Committee, that in those districts to which the Reports they have considered relate, the weekly collections at the churches, in parishes in which there are few Dissenters, go far to provide for the support of the poor; that collections at the churches have been in use from the earliest periods of the Scottish ecclesiastical establishment, and are recognised in the Acts of Parliament, both as an ancient and legal resourse for the maintenance of the poor.—That every encouragement ought to be given to the continuance of the weekly collections; and that those parishes have not judged wisely, who ap-

pear to have abandoned them to make way for regular assessments.—That though it is true, that where there are legal assessments established, an unequal burden is laid upon the inhabitants who attend the parish church, and give their weekly contributions there, independent of what they pay to the assessment; it is also true, that the apostolic rule of making such collections on the first day of the week, adopted by our church, and sanctioned by the Legislature, should not be hastily departed from; and that the discontinuance of such collections has obviously a most pernicious influence to render poors' rates both oppressive and perpetual.

6. That it is clear to the Committee, that in almost all the country parishes which have hitherto come under their notice, where a regular assessment has been established, the wants of the poor, and the extent of the assessments have gradually and progressively increased from their commencement: and that it does appear to be a matter of very serious interest to the community at large, to prevent as far as possible this practice from being generally adopted; to limit the assessments as much as they can be limited, where the circumstances of particular parishes render them unavoidable; and, whenever it is practicable, to abandon them.

7. That it appears to the Committee from the Returns before them, that the weekly collections at the churches are a very efficient resource for the parochial poor, in every case in which there are few Dissenters, or persons who absent themselves from their parish church; it is equally clear, on the other hand, that in those parishes in which the accommodation provided for the inhabitants in the parish churches bears no proportion to the population, a legal assessment seems to be inevitable, as long as this continues to be the situation of those parishes; that in such of these cases as have fallen under the view of the Committee, it is manifestly the ultimate interest, both of the landholders and the parishioners, to have their respective parishes divided, and a sufficient number of churches provided, equal to the number of inhabitants; and that if this were done to the full extent, it is certain that the poor might be supported without any necessity of having recourse to parochial assessments.—That at present the gradual increase of property in some of those parishes, by adding to the funds from which the assessments are raised, serves to keep down the amount of the charge on the parish at large; and that from this circumstance the amount of the assessments there has increased in a much

less proportion, than the assessments in parishes in which the funds for assessment or the property assessed, has remained in a great measure stationary.

8. That where legal assessments are resorted to in Scotland, the provisions in the law which regulates the manner of imposing them are uniformly and strictly observed; that the law has given the power to assess a parish to a joint meeting, consisting of the minister, the heritors, and the elders of the parish, who are authorized to meet for the purpose, on the first Tuesday of February and the first Tuesday of August in each year, when the assessment is imposed *half yearly;* or on either of those days, when it is fixed for a whole year.—That the practice in general is, to hold this meeting only once in the year, and most frequently on the first Tuesday of August, and at that time to assess for a whole year.—That the heritors in general, who are the persons chiefly interested, are accustomed to attend this meeting, and have the chief influence in determining the amount of the assessment, have it always in their power to keep it within reasonable bounds.—That in former times it was, and in parishes chiefly landward it still is imposed according to the *valued* rent of the lands; but that where a great part of the most valuable property consists in houses, this has been found to be an unequal rule, as it evidently lays on landed estates a very disproportioned part of the burden; that in these situations, therefore, the practice which prevails, and has been sanctioned by the decisions in the courts of law, is to impose the assessments according to the *real* rents of property both in houses and lands.—That the assessments thus imposed are laid on heritors and tenants by equal portions, the heritor paying one half of the assessment and the tenant the other, and both proportions being paid by an heritor who occupies his own property; with this exception, that a deduction is given of one fourth or the half of the assessment laid on the heritor of houses in name of reparations.—That at the annual meeting, at which such assessments are imposed, the heritors are accustomed to attend, and have always the power of determining what is done; so that it rests in a great measure with themselves to prevent the assessment imposed from rising beyond what the fair necessities of the parish require.

9. That the statements on the management of the Poor within the city of Edinburgh and the parish of Saint Cuthbert's, show in what manner the Poor are provided for in the parishes of the largest population; in the first, where there is a

legal assessment, which has been but very lately resorted to, and at the same time a parish workhouse; and in the second, which comprehends the suburbs of Edinburgh, and a larger population still, where there has been a legal assessment for upwards of fifty years, and also a parish workhouse.

10. That in the Schedules taken from the returns of the country parishes, in order to render their statements uniform, the Committee have in general satisfied themselves with inserting an average of ten years, both with regard to the number of paupers, and the funds which are employed in supporting them.

With these Remarks the Committee conclude this Report; humbly submitting it to the Assembly, to be transmitted, if it shall be approved of, to Mr. Stourges Bourne.

*H. Moncrieff Wellwood,*
for the Sub Committee."

The above Report was merely introductory to one more ample and satisfactory, which it was the design of the Assembly to compile from the statistical returns of all the ministers of the church. A new and more enlarged Committee was accordingly appointed, and to it was intrusted the very important work of drawing up a set of Queries, to be transmitted to all the parishes of Scotland; of receiving and arranging the returns to these Queries; and digesting them into one comprehensive Report, which the Assembly might adopt, and transmit to both Houses of Parliament. In pursuance of the appointment, Queries were transmitted to every minister, and by the first of January, 1818, returns had been received from between 6 and 700 parishes. These have been arranged and digested; and the document which was the result, submitted in an abridged form to the General Assembly in May last. It was not to be supposed that the Members of Assembly should submit to the Herculean labour of examining all the individual returns, comparing them with the copies taken, and balancing the general results. The Assembly had full reliance, as it always has, on the zeal, fidelity, and accuracy of its Committee; and therefore without hesitation, approved highly of their Report, and transmitted it under their sanction to the Chairmen of both Houses of Parliament. By the Committees of both Houses, it was submitted to Parliament, and still without examination, ordered to be printed. Copies of the

Report have been transmitted to all the Presbyteries of the church; so that the document, such as it is, has now been fairly and fully brought before the public.

It is not my design to enter into a minute and full examination of the merits and demerits of the Report. My object is rather to show, by an induction of particulars, that the document labours under the following, among other, disabilities;—That the Queries which constitute the ground work of the whole, want that definiteness and precision which are necessary, in order to an accurate and uniform return—that the returns, such as they were, have been mangled and unfairly copied—that the modes of classification adopted with regard to the poor, are various, and all of them defective and erroneous —that the arithmetical calculations are in numberless instances incorrect—and that the work as a whole, is not calculated to throw any satisfactory light on the various *peculiarities* and *specialties*, by which the modes of managing the poor in Scotland are distinguished. Candour and impartiality at the same time, require us to remark, that the general sketch with which the Report begins, comprehends a variety of important facts and observations relative to the practical "results" of the investigation which had been made. On the subjects of assessment as practised in Scotland—the Sessional jurisdiction and management—the weekly and occasional collections—the character of the poor, and the duty of having respect to it—the practice of mendicity, with its moral and political effects—on these and collateral topics, there occur a variety of useful and important observations. But the radical evil in the case is, that the *foundation* of the whole is insecure; the premises in the argument are fallacious, and the conclusions must necessarily be inaccurate. In proof of this, I shall select a few instances out of many—comparing the reports *as published* with the *originals transmitted*, and subjecting both to a rigid analysis. In doing so, I shall not confine myself to the mere exposure of mistakes, (although that is rendered necessary by the circumstances of the case,) but shall introduce into the discussion, some sketches of the practical management of the poor, and some illustrations of certain general principles, which have been too much overlooked in all our inquiries, into the actual state of our indigent population.

## SECTION I.

*State and Management of the Poor in the Town of Paisley.*

| | *Topics.* | *Assembly Report.* | *Report as transmitted.* |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Population.....19,937 | | |
| *Funds of the Poor.* | Contributions by Heritors.....£2,315 19 1 | | |
| | Annual Collections..... ..... 754 15 1 | ..... | £754 15 0 |
| | Amount of General Session Funds 145 19 0 | ..... | 145 16 0 |
| | Amount of Annual Assessment 1,888 9 0 | ..... | 1,344 9 8 |
| | Total amount of Funds ..... 5,105 2 2 | ..... | 2,245 0 8 |
| *No. of Poor.* | Total regularly on the Poor's Roll 156 | ..... | 419 |
| | —— occasionally..... 263 | | |
| | Total No. of Poor..... 419 | | |

When the reader has examined the above comparative Table, his attention is particularly requested to the following observations:—

1. The amount of population, as stated in the Assembly Report, is correctly taken from the Parliamentary Record of 1811; but to show that nothing can be more delusive than the adoption of that record as the standard for ascertaining the pauperism of 1817, it is proper to state, that a *new* census of the inhabitants of the burgh of Paisley has been lately taken with great care, from which it appears that the number now amounts to precisely 24,849; making an increase since 1811 of about 5,000, a fifth part of the whole. It is true, this statement was not communicated to the Committee; so that they could only have recourse to the latest report in their possession.* But it was peculiarly unfortunate, that among the multitude of queries, there was not one which had respect to the population of the country. Although no Parliamentary census has been made since 1811, it is well known that in Glasgow, and in other large towns, lists of the inhabitants are occasionally taken up; and ministers in the country make it a general practice to keep by them a pretty accurate statement of the statistics of their parishes, so that no great difficulty would have been felt in obtaining information on this vital point, sufficiently accurate for all practical purposes. It is also proper to notice, that 24,849 is only the population of that part of the town of Paisley which lies within the royalty, and forms the three parishes of the burgh. When we combine with this,

* The report was trasnmitted about a year before the census was made.

the inhabitants of the New Town, and of the Abbey parish at large, (the report of which is, in the Assembly record, wholly omitted,) we will find the amount to be nothing short of 45,000, thus establishing the rights of the town and community of Paisley to rank *third* in point of population in Scotland; and *eighth* or *ninth* in Great Britain.

2. In attempting to answer the *second* query which respects "the voluntary contributions of resident heritors," we felt ourselves involved in difficulties. The following subordinate queries presented themselves, and seemed to demand solution before the general one could be correctly answered. Does the question refer to contributions *in general*, or to those which may be made specifically under the charge of the kirk-session, and in aid of their peculiar fund? Does the question refer to contributions for relief of the poor who may be regularly or occasionally on the session lists; or for relief of industrious tradesmen and others in times of particular emergency? Does the question require the amount of contributions for the last ten years; or only the average of each year for that time? When the query speaks of "heritors *or others*;" who may be meant by "*others?*" When the Committee transmitted this query to the ministers of *towns* or burghs, in which there is no landward parish, who did they understand by the "resident heritors" of such towns or burghs?—the magistrates? or the proprietors of houses? or the feuars? or all these combined? Enveloped amid these difficulties, we resolved to give such an answer as we imagined would come nearest the original idea which may have been in the minds of the querists. Considering that the Magistrates and Council in burghs occupy the place of "resident heritors;" we gave a short account of those voluntary contributions which had been made *under their patronage* for the last ten years; leaving out, for a particular reason, the amount of subscription for relief of industrious tradesmen in 1816–17. The paragraph inserted in the original report is as follows:—"In the years 1808–10–11, there were considerable sums raised by voluntary contribution, for the support of the poor belonging to the town and suburbs, by a number of the respectable inhabitants, who denominated themselves "the Destitute Poor Society;" and during these years, when the ordinary funds for the maintenance of the poor were found inadequate, they came forward, and after strict inquiry into the circumstances of the poor, distributed to the amount of £1,865 19; but as the above sum was contributed

by the inhabitants both of the burgh, and also of that part of the suburbs which belongs to the Abbey parish, and distributed accordingly, we cannot say as to the sum appropriated to the poor residing in the three town parishes. In the year 1811 was instituted the "Female Benevolent Society," which has distributed to poor distressed females in the town and suburbs, since that period, to the yearly amount of £450. This sum has been expended in bestowing on the objects of the Society's benevolence small sums of money, and in supplying them (particularly during the winter months) with flannels, and other articles of comfortable clothing, with coals, &c. The funds arise from subscriptions, donations, and occasional collections at the church doors of all the religious societies in the town and suburbs." Now, on reading this extract, the following things seem very clear:—first, that the efforts of these Societies had nothing whatever to do with the ordinary concerns of the poor on the session rolls;—second, that they were not under the cognisance of the kirk-session in any shape whatever;—third, that their resources could in no sense be considered as entering into the notion of "funds for the poor," *regularly established*;—and lastly, that their efforts embraced, not the three town parishes only, but the whole extended community of town and Abbey parish. Perhaps we were not called on to furnish such a statement; but it could never enter our minds, that the Committee would treat the statement in the manner they did. What have they done? They have clubbed together, by a wonderful process of arithmetical juxtaposition, the two separate sums noticed in the Report, viz. £1,865 19. the sum total of distribution by the one Society for three distinct periods, 1808, 1810, 1811; and £450, the average annual amount of distributions by the other Society;—they have, in *direct contradiction to our plain statement*, represented the sum thus found, as belonging exclusively to the town;—and finally, they have exhibited the sum total as a prominent item in the *annual* provision for the poor, and as holding the place of "Contributions by Heritors" to the established "Funds of the Poor!"

3. In regard to the "assessment," the following answer was returned. After stating explicitly that the object of it is the support of the Hospital in its various departments, and by no means the regular support of the poor on the kirk-session, we state as follows: "The amount of the assessment for the Hospital for the year ending 31st May, 1817, was £1,344 9 8,

which, with an additional levy of £544 for the support of the industrious poor, as stated in answer to Query 3d, Second Class, made in whole during the year, £1,888 9 8." On turning to that part of the paper here referred to, the reader finds a more full account of the matter to this effect; that to relieve the industrious poor in the distressing period of 1816–17, the magistrates authorised an assessment in addition to the usual assessment for the Hospital; that the amount of it was £544; and that the sum total of fund for relief of the industrious poor, from this source, and from subscriptions, was precisely £1,498. In making the reference, and the statement, which is very comprehensive and full, we thought ourselves free from the most distant chance of being misunderstood; and yet so it is, that in the general report of the Committee prefixed to the tables, the assessment in the town of Paisley is represented as increasing in ten years, from £1,237 3 9 to £1,888 9 8. It is indeed true, that the assessment of 1816 was by far too low; and the consequence has been, the contracting of debt, and the imposition of a larger stent since that period.* But it is obvious, that in forming an estimate of the *progressive rise* of an assessment, absolute precision in the statement of numbers is of the very last importance. From the account of the Committee, a reader would conclude, that our assessment had risen to its present amount by a regular and gradual process. Now, so far is this from being the fact, that in the Report transmitted, it is expressly noted, that while in 1809 the assessment stood £1,628 3 2, in 1811 it was only £1,338 14 7: and while in 1813 it was £1,818 9 9, in 1815 it was just £1,468 6 4. I mention these things, to show that the amount of the assessment is regulated, as it ought always to be, by a regard to the actual wants of the poor, and the existing circumstances of the times.

4. On a review of that division of the Report which is entitled "*Funds of the Poor*," there appears a strange inconsistency; to such an amount indeed, as must of itself vitiate the record, and render it absolutely useless as a depository of facts. The "sum total of funds" stands £5,105 0 2, instead of £2,245 9 8, and it is made up of *three* principal items; the collections and other church funds; the voluntary contributions of heritors; and the assessment. Now, supposing that

* It is proper to state that, about two or three years ago, a large addition was made to the buildings of the Hospital, which cost nearly £600, and the liquidation of this has contributed to raise the assessment for a considerable time past.

in each statement there was perfect accuracy, still the *result* would be unfair: and the reason is plain. With regard to the *first* item, we were required to give the "average annual amount," which was accordingly given. With regard to the *second* item, we are left at an uncertainty whether we are required to state the average or the sum total, for ten years; the latter appeared to us to be the fact. With regard to the *third* item, we are required to give, neither the average nor the sum total, *but the amount for the current year.* Thus we have three sums no doubt; but they are all formed upon different data; and the addition of them, in order to show the "sum total of funds" for the poor, must infallibly land us in grievous errors. One *principle* ought unquestionably to pervade the whole; every item, and every class of items, ought to appeal to one standard, otherwise there is no accuracy in the system.

5. With regard to the "number of the poor," we did our best to follow the Committee in their queries, and to suit our replies to them. We were asked the number of such as were "*wholly supported*" by the funds; and we replied, by giving the number of inmates in the Hospital who "receive a full maintenance, doing any little work of which they are capable, out of the profits of which they are allowed a small sum for their own private use, by way of encouragement." We were asked the number of "industrious poor, who during the last ten years have been on the roll, and who have received *partial* relief;" and we replied, by giving the *average number* of pensioners on the weekly roll for the last ten years, of whom we said, "many of these can do a little work, while a considerable number are unable to do any thing for their support, but receive assistance from their friends and relatives;" the *average* of whom was 190; while the *actual number* was 263. I appeal to common sense, if we did not approximate as nearly as possible to the ideas conveyed by the queries. But what have the Committee done?—without giving any notice of it, they have *changed totally* the principle of classification; and in place of *total* and *partial* dependents, we have now, *ordinary* and *occasional poor.* This is a completely different arrangement of classes; and had *this* been actually exhibited in the Queries, we should have returned a totally different answer. The fact is: of *ordinary poor on the session, not one* depends *entirely* on the pension; while of *occasional* poor, (who may at present be averaged at 300) many receive only once or twice a few shil-

lings to help to pay their rents, &c. while they are in general able, in the Scottish phrase, *to make a fend.**

But even supposing that the classification was correct, and that it had been rigidly adhered to, still the result would have been grossly erroneous: and why? simply because in the one query we are asked to give the *precise number of paupers wholly dependent*, who may chance to be on the roll *at the time of giving the report;* while in the other, we are asked to give either the average of the industrious poor for the last ten years; or the *sum total* who may have been on the roll during all that time: or the number *at present* on the roll, and who have received aid *for ten years past.* This last class seem to be indicated by the Query: but the idea appeared to us so ridiculous, that in our reply we gave, *first*, the *average;* and *then*, the *actual amount at the time;* passing over entirely the *very small* number who *may have been on the roll for the last ten years.* Indeed, there are almost none who come under this description. If we thought ourselves likely to be burdened with a pauper *for ten years*, we should be very slow in enrolling him among the regular poor. But how stands the result? We have just another specimen of a sum total produced by the addition of units composed of *different denominations;* and consequently, the result cannot be fair.

6. At the time when the report was drawn up and transmitted, we were unable to give a distinct answer to the query respecting the *distribution to the poor by dissenting congregations.* In the course of a few weeks, however, I had the honour of transmitting to the Convener of Committee a document on this subject, to which I attached some importance; a report, namely, of the sums distributed, and the number of families relieved, in 1817, by the four principal Presbyterian dissenting congregations of this place; accompanied with a series of remarks on the topics referred to. As the report was furnished me by the pastors of the several churches, its accuracy was undoubted; while it exhibited the gratifying spectacle of 200 families relieved, regularly or occasionally, by their respective churches, at the expense of nearly £500. Of this document, (and others of a similar kind have probably been transmitted) no notice is taken; while a very meagre and uncandid statement is exhibited in the general report, of the aid given by dissenters to their poor. My ingenious friend, Mr. Wilson, in his "Survey of Renfrewshire," states the average distribu-

* *Fend* or *fen*, a shift. Jameson's Dictionary.

tion of the dissenting bodies in Paisley to be annually £1,250. His statement indeed, is far beyond the average;* but even at the lowest calculation, it is a fact, that the different dissenting bodies distribute to their poor, to an annual amount, fully equal to one-half of *general sessional* distribution.†

## SECTION II.

### *State and Management of the Poor in the City of Glasgow.*

| | *Assembly Report.* | *Report as transmitted.* |
|---|---|---|
| *Funds for the Poor.* | Population | 63,635. |
| | Annual Collections, £1,652 6 10 | £1,652 6 10. |
| | Contributions by Heritors, none, | none. none. |
| | Session funds, exclusive of Collections and Contributions, £330, 1s. 2d | 330 1 2. |
| | Expense of management, £170 | 170 0 0. |
| | Amount of Assessment, £10,555 | 10,535 0 0. |
| | Progressive Rise, about £424 ℔ ann. | 1807, 1808, 1809, 1810, 1811, 1812, £4815, 5220, 6000, 5866, 5740, 7589. 1813, 1814, 1815, 1816, £10,273, 10,709, 9,940, 9,063. |
| | Expense of management, £100 | £ 100 |
| *Ordinary Poor.* | In the Hospital, 515 | 516. |
| | Individual Members of Families, 1208 | 1,208. |
| *Rate of Relief.* | Families—about £4 10. ℔ annum | Varies from £2 10 to £7 10. ℔ annum. Average, £4 10. |
| | Inmates in the Hospital, £9 8 3½ do | £9 8 3¼. |
| *Industrious Poor.* | Average for 10 years, 4,215 | 1,215. |
| | Rate, from 1s. 6d. to 4s. 6d. ℔ lunar month, making payments in the year. | From 1s. 6d. to 4s. 6d. ℔ lunar month, making in all, 18 payments in the year. |
| | Occasional Relief, varying of late years from £500 to £1,300 | From £500 to £1,300 per ann. |
| | Total An. allowances, £2,437, 10 | £2,437, 10. |
| *Religious Sects, in all 17,917.* | Poor of, on the Session Roll, not ascertained | Poor on Session Roll not ascertained. —— on Hospital, 210. |
| | Poor Supported by | No. of seats in Dissenting Churches, 17,917. |
| | In 1816, they gave £840 to their own poor | £840. |

* Mr. Wilson's mistake arose from the circumstance of £1,250 being the average of *collections* at the Dissenting Churches;—of which, however, only *one half*, or thereby, is given to the poor.

† For additional information on the above topic, see the "Selection of Facts and Documents," &c.

| | *Assembly Report.* | *Report as transmitted.* |
|---|---|---|
| *Savings Bank.* | Established, June 1815. | |
| | June 26th, 1815, Deposits, 773..... | 773—accounts opened, 157 |
| | Amounting to £1,816, 1. 6..... | £1,608, 16. |
| | July 1816, amount, £7,852 19..... | June 1816, £7,862 19. |
| | Nov. 1816, No. of accounts, 1,410..... | 1,410. |
| *Friendly Societies.* | No. 120. Members 15,480, of whom belonging to the city, 8,000 ..... | No. 129. Members supposed 15,480 Belonging to the city, 8,000. |
| | Mortifications, &c. The amount of these for the relief of the old and indigent, and for clothing and educating the Young, is, per annum, £21,334 13 9. | £21,334 13 9. |

On the above comparative view I have to remark,

1. In all the other instances exhibited in the tables, the *population*, though not the subject of any of the queries, is expressly given according to the Parliamentary Report of 1811. In the case of Glasgow, the population, though not the subject of query, actually *was* given in the original report; and yet, from what cause it is not easy to say, it has been entirely omitted in the Assembly abstract. The same thing is observable in regard to Edinburgh. I notice this particularly, because unless the actual population of these two principal cities is clearly ascertained, it is perfectly impossible to form an accurate idea of their relative state and progress in regard to pauperism.

2. The assessment in support of the hospital, for the year ending 9th August 1807, amounted to £10,535. In the Assembly Report it stands £10,555. As this, however, may be a typographical error, I shall take no farther notice of it. What I wish particularly to observe, is the view given in the Report of the "*progressive rise*" of the assessment. In the Assembly Report it is marked at £424 per annum. The sum has been found, by subtracting £4,815, the assessment for 1807, from £9,063, the assessment for 1816, and then dividing the difference by ten. I have no fault at present to find with the arithmetic of the business; but I object to the calculation, *as it appears on the face of the Report*, on the ground that it is fitted to mislead, by exhibiting an erroneous idea of the progress of the assessment. In the Report, as transmitted, no average whatever is exhibited, but a view of the progressive rise is given in the manner in which it ought always to be given, namely, by a simple arithmetical statement of the amount of each successive year; from a survey of which it will appear,

that although the assessment has been on the increase greatly, still the measure of that increase has varied exceedingly from year to year. In 1809 it stood £6,000, whereas in 1811 it was only £5,740. In 1813 it was £10,273,* whereas, in 1816, it is only £9,063. It is of importance to notice this, because it affords a clear proof that the assessment has risen, not merely from an inherent tendency in the thing itself, but chiefly from the circumstances of the times, and the alternate changes from year to year. In the general report to which the tables are appended, the rise of assessments is computed by a comparison of the amount for 1807 with that for 1816, making no allowance for the very different states of the country at these two periods.

But farther, the principle on which the calculation of the average rise proceeds is palpably erroneous. It is plain to every one who examines the matter, that the real average rise is to be found by the very simple process of subtracting the lowest number in the series from the highest, and dividing the difference by 9—thus:

$$10{,}709 - 4{,}815 \div 9 = 654\tfrac{8}{9}$$

The same result will be found by taking the sum of the differences between the several numbers of the series, when arranged in regular arithmetical progression, and dividing them by 9. In the Assembly Report a very different method is applied. The *first* number in the series is subtracted from the *last*, and the difference is divided by ten. It is obvious that this process gives nothing, because it might so happen that the *first* and the *last* of the series were *equal*, while the intermediate numbers differed egregiously. I shall give two examples to illustrate my meaning. The Glasgow assessment for 1797 was £3,978, while for 1803 it was just £3,940. Here the difference is very small, and it is on the side of decrease, consequently, by the process in question, we would be warranted to infer, that the assessment in Glasgow had been falling during the intermediate space; whereas in fact the rise was in the following ratio:—

$$7{,}955 - 3{,}920 \div 6 = 672\tfrac{5}{6}$$

* The prodigious rise in 1813 above 1812 was owing, I believe, chiefly to the peculiar pressure of the times, particularly on aged females, whose branches of occupation were, at that time, as since, very much curtailed both in extent and value.

Again, the Paisley assessment for 1807 was £1,237, while in 1816 it stood £1,344. By the process in question the rise would appear to be in the following proportion:—

$$1{,}344-1{,}237\div 10=10\tfrac{7}{10}$$

whereas, in reality, the rise stands thus:—

1813 1807

$$£1{,}818-1{,}237\div 9=64\tfrac{5}{9}$$

The importance of the distinction between the two modes of calculation is clear, on general principles; and its weight in the particular scale of the Glasgow assessment is also very considerable, as will be plain, by putting the two results opposite to each other:

| *Calculation of the Committee.* | *Rise.* | *Correct Calculation.* | *Rise.* |
|---|---|---|---|
| 9,063—4,815÷10 | $424\tfrac{8}{10}$ | 10,709—4,815÷9 | $654\tfrac{8}{9}$ |

being a difference of about £230 per annum on the average rise.

3. On the subject of the "*number of the poor*" in Glasgow, a variety of remarks occur. In the first place, the Committee have adopted a new mode of classification. In the "Queries," the division is, into poor, *totally* and *partially* dependent. In the "Tables," it is into "*regular*" and "*occasional*" poor. In the more detailed account of Glasgow, it is into neither the one nor the other; but into "*ordinary*" and "*industrious poor.*" Surely no man who understands the Scottish mode of managing the poor can consider these classes of terms as synonimous. With regard to the *first* mode of division—it ought to have no place in the calculations of Scotchmen, as to the poor in Scotland; because the managers of the poor in our country carefully guard against holding out to any class of men the prospect of a total dependence on the funds; and *in fact*, there is hardly such a thing as "*maintenance*" given, except in the case of the inmates of hospitals, or in the case of lunatics, or blind, or absolutely impotent, from defects corporeal or mental; and this, it has been justly remarked, is one of the prominent excellencies of the system as contradistinguished from that prevalent in England. The great mass of our poor are what may be termed "partially dependent:" and these

again are subdivided into the two classes of "regular" and "occasional," which form the *second* genus in the Assembly's Report. "Regular" poor are those, who, from age, infirmities, and general indigence, require to be put on the "weekly list," or parish roll, at a certain rate, varying from one shilling to three or four per week, according to circumstances. "Occasional" poor are those who, by reason of circumstances occuring at one time and not at another, require a little aid, from time to time, to *keep them going* as it were. This class comprehends a vast diversity of character and condition. There are to be found in it—decent and industrious householders, who may thankfully accept of a small donation without wishing to have it known—strangers or incomers into a parish, who may be reduced to temporary distress—labourers, who, by the loss of a horse or cow, by fire, by disease or death in their families, are sensibly reduced in their circumstances:—worthless and profligate characters, who may actually *need* regular help, but to whom it would be impolitic to hold out the idea of regular supply, and who may not safely be intrusted with money, and to whom, therefore, some articles of provision may, from time to time, be given. All these classes receive "*occasionally*" from the funds; but it is not philosophical to reduce such a multifarious body under the one generic denomination of "*poor*." With regard to the *third* mode of classification; it corresponds with neither of the former. "*Ordinary*" poor may denote those who are "regularly" on the roll; or those who receive aid from the Session, from time to time, according to their circumstances. "*Industrious*" poor are not poor in any sense that the managers of parochial funds understand: they are simply the lower classes of labourers, mechanics, journeymen weavers, and so forth, who in ordinary circumstances can support their families creditably, but who, in times of emergency, require the aid of their wealthier brethren. It was, for instance, in behalf of the "*industrious poor*" that the subscription fund of 1816-17 was raised; and it is in this precise sense that the term is applied in the Queries, 2d Class, Q. 3d. "Can you state the sums raised in 1816-17 for the occasional relief of the *industrious poor?*" These "industrious poor" were not surely understood as synonimous with the "*partially* dependent," or the "occasional poor," on the Session rolls; but as forming a totally distinct class. Why then include them in a list entitled, "Number of the Poor?"—But farther, the distinctive classes of Glasgow are not clearly defined; even

although a new form of classification was adopted expressly for them. Under the head of "ordinary poor" are classed by the Committee *two* distinct species—the inmates of the hospital and individual members of families—in these words: "In the hospital 515, and individual members of families 1,208." I humbly submit, that, to a reader who did not previously know the facts of the case, this mode of expression could convey no idea whatever of the reality of things. Who are meant by "individual members of families?" Are the *families* of paupers received into the hospital? Do these "individual members" comprehend the heads, or are they the *children* only? Are the two classes distinct, or are they one and the same? If distinct, as may be *guessed*, where or how are the "individual members" supported? Are they detached from their parents, who may be inmates of the hospital, or lodged separately? All our difficulties are solved, by a reference to the Report *as transmitted*. *There* we find that the in-door pensioners, or inmates of the hospital, amount to 516; while the "out-door pensioners, deriving the greater part of their support from the hospital, in nursing wages, meal, or money, amounted to 1,208, including all the individual members of the families."—Again: In the Report *as transmitted*, there is a distinction clearly marked between the "regular" and "occasional" recipients of sessional charity; but in the Report, as printed by the Committee, the distinction seems to be wholly overlooked. In the *one*, the average of "regular" pensioners for the last ten years is 1,215, while the number of "occasional" recipients is not known;—in the *other*, the average of both regular and occasional stands 4,215.—Once more: In the Assembly Report, there is a column entitled "total annual allowances," under which is the sum £2,437 10. Of course, a reader will naturally conclude that this sum comprehends the sum total of sessional distribution; but this is not the case. £2,437, 10 is the amount of sessional monies allocated to the several Sessions; while in addition to this there is a sum varying from £500 to £1,300, laid out on occasional charity; and the amount of both classes is at the discretion of the Sessions.

4. With regard to "religious sects," there are the following mistakes: *first*, the Assembly Report says, "Total sectaries in the city are 17,017." What is this? Does the number denote the heads of families, or the individual members? We refer to the Report *as transmitted*, and what does it say? "*Number of sittings in the various Dissenting Churches within*

*the city is* 17,917." And does this shew the precise number of Dissenters in the city? Are these seats occupied *exclusively* by persons resident *within the burgh?* Is each seat to stand for each member of a family? or is it to be held as an incontrovertible fact, that the number of sittings in a church determines the number of persons resident in a parish? But, secondly, the Report goes on to say, that "the number of Dissenting poor on the Session roll is not ascertained." This is true: but what adds the Report *as transmitted?*—"Of this number," 17,918, "210 persons in 1816 were partially supported from the funds of the Town's hospital;" meaning that they belonged to the class of *out-pensioners*, as is more fully stated in a note. On the 20th Aug. 1817, the whole number of out-pensioners was 1,501, of whom no less than 1,211 belonged to the Establishment. These facts should have been stated to shew, that although Dissenters contribute to the assessment equally with the members of the Establishment, they receive a very small return from it. Since the Report was drawn up, the numbers on the Session roll have been ascertained by actual scrutiny, and they stand thus:—Establishment, 967—Dissenters of all kinds, 215—in all 1,182, as actually examined.

5. In the account of the *Savings Bank*, the numbers are all wrong, which seems very unaccountable, when we know that the Report was made up from a *printed* statement. But besides this, the account itself is incomplete, and calculated to convey an erroneous impression. In 1815, it is said that "773 deposits were made;" and that "in November, 1816, 1,410 accounts had been opened." As there are thus two numbers opposed to one another, we are naturally led to suppose that the denominatison are the same, which is not the case. The complete statement as given in the account transmitted, ought to have been:—June, 1815, number of accounts, 157; deposits, 773;—November, 1816, accounts, 1,410; amount of deposits, £7,862 19.

6. The *last* item in the Assembly Report of Glasgow, under the title of *mortifications*, &c. exhibits one of the most singular phenomena that ever appeared in the results of a statistical investigation. It is entitled or rather described thus: "The amount of these for the relief of the old and indigent, and for educating and clothing the young, is £21,333 13 9 per annum." The *amount* as to *number* is perfectly accurate; and is it then *true*, that the city of Glasgow enjoys such a sum as £21,000 annually "for relief of the old and indigent, and

for educating and clothing the young?" And this, in addition to more than £12,000 of other charitable funds raised by assessment and otherways? A stranger may stare at this, and will naturally wish to hear something more of this £21,000 of annual revenue. With the help of the Report *as transmitted*, we can supply the necessary information. Here then are a few of the items comprehended under the general head of funds "for relief of the old and indigent, and for educating and clothing the young." "The various incorporated bodies, £4,817 6 11, Royal Infirmary, Lunatic and Magdalen Asylums, and Lock Hospital, £4,972 17 5, British and Foreign Bible Society, Auxiliary, &c. Association for translating the Scriptures, and Religious Tract Society, £2,272 11 3½, Lancastrian Schools, Gaelic Schools, Deaf and Dumb Society, Sewing School, £860 19 6:—129 Benefit Societies, £1,935, &c. &c. Our surprise ceases, *as to the amount;* but we feel a little strange at the principle of classification which reduces all this multifarious expenditure under the head of funds "for relief of old and indigent, and education and clothing of the young." And yet such is the answer of the query; "Are there any mortifications, or other charitable Institutions or funds, *for the benefit of the parish poor?*" On this, and on every other topic, the Report, *as transmitted*, is perfectly plain and explicit, and, when attentively read, cannot possibly mislead; and yet such has been the result.

So much as to the state of things in the city of Glasgow. Let us now proceed to consider

## SECTION III.

*State and Management of the Poor in the Barony Parish of Glasgow.*

| | *Assembly Report as published.* | *Report as transmitted.* |
|---|---|---|
| Population, | 37,216 | above 45,000 and not quite 46,000. |
| *Funds of the Poor.* Contributions by Heritors, | | none. |
| Annual Collections at the Church Doors, | £318 11 6 | £318 11 6 |
| Amount of General Session Funds, | 1,475 0 0 | 117 15 0 |
| Amount of Annual Assessments, | 3,400 0 0 | 3,000 0 0 |
| Total amount of the Parish Funds, | £5,193 11 6 | £3,436 6 6 |

| | | *Assembly Report as published.* | *Report as transmitted.* |
|---|---|---|---|
| *Number of Poor.* | Total regularly on the Poors' Roll, 72 | ..... | .....928 |
| | —— occasionally, | .....928 | .....150 |
| | Total Number of Poor, | .....1,000 | ..... 1,078 |

Here a new and distinct class of phenomena is presented to us.—1: The Report, *as transmitted* to the Committee, actually gave the information that should have been required regarding the exact state of the population at the time of drawing up the statement—a matter of vital importance in all inquiries regarding the *actual state* of the country at any given time. The population of the extensive parish of the Barony of Glasgow was stated, by those who possessed the most accurate information, at nearly 46,000; and yet the Report, as published, exhibits a population of only 37,216, which is the census of 1811—thus leaving a difference of nearly 9,000. We have thus an additional evidence of the inconclusiveness of all those calculations which proceed on the assumption that the standard of 1811, ought to measure the pauperism of 1817.

2. It appears somewhat unaccountable, that the sum marked as "general Session funds," and amounting to £117 15, should have been magnified into the stately fund of £1,475 per annum; and, when I first examined the matter, I suspected a typographical error. This, however, I find not to be the case. The following is the exact state of the matter:—*Question fourth* requires the "average annual amount during the last ten years of poors' funds, (exclusive of the collections and voluntary contributions,) which have been under the management of the Kirk Session, and of what items are they made up?" Here it is plain that *collections* and *contributions only* are excluded—*assessments are not;* and it would naturally occur to any person reading the Query, that the Committee wished to ascertain the *gross amount* of Session funds, *from whatever source arising*, exclusive only of collections and contributions. In this light was it viewed by the venerable minister who has so long, and so respectably presided over the spiritual interests of the Barony parish of Glasgow. In reply to Query 4th, he gave a statement of the annual amount of funds at the charge of the Session, (exclusive of the collections and contributions,) at an average of the last ten years; the sum total of which was precisely £1,475. But this sum was expressly stated to comprehend the average amount of *assessment* for the ten years preceding 1817. In the Report as printed, the sum is exhibited as *a distinct* source of revenue. But more than this;—the Re-

port, *as transmitted*, gave a statement of the *items* of which the general funds are composed; from which it would obviously appear that the average amount of general funds, exclusive of assessments, collections, and contributions, was just £117 15. It thus appears that Query 4th, (one of the most important of the whole,) is very indefinite. Besides, it is stated expressly by the Committee themselves, in the General Report, (p. 27,) that "in a few instances," (it should have been, in *many* instances,) "the ministers have included the amount of the other General Session funds in the amount of the annual collections." Here, then, is *one* source of uncertainty as to the result;—and I have exhibited *another*, in the fact that, in *one* instance at least, (and if in one, why not in others?) the General Session funds comprehended the average of assessment. It appears somewhat strange that the Committee were not surprised at the prodigious difference between the "general funds" of the city of Glasgow, with a population of 63,000, and those of the Barony, with a population considerably less—the former being only £330.

4. The amount of assessment for 1816-17 was about £3,000. It is stated in the printed Report at £3,400. Whence this number 3,400? It is no casual error; but actually *was* in the Report *as transmitted*. But mark the place which it occupied —The gross amount of *all* the funds at the charge of the Session, which of course comprehended all the parish funds, of whatever description, was stated as "exceeding £3,400"— It ought to be noticed as a feature of consequence in the management of the poor in this parish, that the members of the Kirk Session, or, in other words, the elders, who are at present 50 in number, constitute the sole guardians of the poor and distributors of the parochial funds. There are no managers appointed by the heritors, although the assessment is laid on exactly in terms of law, as applied to landward parishes, without any specialties.

5. The difference in the accounts as to the "*number of the poor*," exhibits a very singular phenomenon. The Report, *as transmitted*, gave a very full view of the subject, as follows:—

Number on the Poors' Roll 928, of whom
Males, .....315 } = 928
Females, .....613 }

Of the whole number of regular pensioners, 72 are insane orphans or blind, who are supported by the Session, and are permanently on the roll.

The number of persons receiving *occasionally* a little relief, to prevent them becoming a permanent burden is 150, making the whole poor on the roll, regular and occasional, 1,078.

In digesting this simple statement, the following errata appear—first, the number 72 is exhibited as *distinct* from 928, whereas it was *expressly stated* as *included* in it. Secondly, 72 is represented as the whole amount of *regular poor*, whereas that number applies to a *distinct class*, or species; the whole number 928 being regularly on the roll, and paid monthly. Thirdly, the number of *occasional* poor, though mentioned, is *wholly omitted*; and the regular poor are made to fill up their place. Lastly, no notice is taken of the important distinctions, adverted to in the Report, between the *three* great classes of dependents on Christian charity—the *totally dependent*, such as lunatics, blind, and orphans; the *partially* but *regularly* dependent, such as those on the weekly and monthly list; and the *occasional recipients*, such as the 150 who receive a trifle, from time to time, to ward off the evils of pauperism.

As my object is, not merely to detect errors, but to state facts illustrating the management of the poor in Scotland, I must be excused for noticing the following as worthy of record in this account of the Barony parish.

1. It is a very striking circumstance, that, previous to 1810, there *was no assessment* whatever in this parish. Occasionally a small sum such as £25 or £50 was obtained voluntarily from the heritors; but there was no regular assessment. The sole funds arose from collections, church dues, subscriptions, legacies, &c. and the whole expense of maintaining the poor seldom exceeded £600 per annum. It does not surprise us to find that, in a population of 46,000, the sum expended on parochial charity should now rather exceed, at an average, £3,000; for this is only about £65 for each thousand of the population; but it is a mystery to me, that the poor of a parish which, at the time, must have had a population of 30,000 and upwards, should have required no larger a sum than £600 per annum. It certainly reflects no small credit on the management of the Session. The fact is; many *now* apply for aid from the assessment, who would never have thought of such a thing under the old system.

2. The collections for this parish, at an average of ten years previous to the 1st Jan. 1817, stand as follows:—

| *Places of Worship established.* | | | | *Number of Sitters in each.* | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Barony Church, | £101 | 16 | 9 | 1,400 | Total 5,004 being *one-ninth* of the population. |
| Shettleston Chapel, | 85 | 18 | 9 | 984 | |
| Calton do. | 117 | 9 | 6 | 1,420 | |
| Anderston do. | 63 | 6 | 6 | 1,250 | |
| Amount, | £318 | 11 | 6 | | |

3. The *other items* at the charge of the Session, exclusive of the collections and assessments, are as follows:

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Annual amount of proclamation-dues for ten years preceding 1818, | £78 | 15 | 8 |
| ——— Interest of mortified money, | 24 | 0 | 0 |
| ——— Presents or donations about | 15 | 0 | 0 |
| | £117 | 15 | 0 |

There are no other funds under the management of the Session, except the assessment.

4. Till 1810, when assessments began, the heritors made up from themselves, by voluntary contribution, any deficiency in the ordinary funds of the Session, without having recourse to any assessment upon the householders. Since that period there have been no voluntary contributions, and the assessment has regularly increased.

5. The parish is divided into 30 proportions or quarters, superintended by 50 elders; some of the quarters having two elders, and some of the larger being subdivided.

6. The average allowance to poor regularly on the list is as follows:

| | |
|---|---|
| To an old man and woman, 4s. | per month; and so on in proportion; the highest allowance per month, being 12s. and the lowest, 2s. |
| To a widow with two children, 6s. | |
| ——— with three children, 7s. | |

7. There is no hospital or work-house in the parish; the poor being relieved at their own houses, and lunatics being boarded in the Lunatic Asylum or other receptacles. Mendicity has prevailed, and, as yet, has not been suppressed. A plan is at present in agitation in the city of Glasgow, but it is not yet ripe for public notice.

8. Dissenters, *as such*, give nothing in aid of the parish funds beyond what they individually pay as assessment; but they give congregationally to their own poor.

9. The number of paupers has been of late greatly increased, by the want of work, and the epidemical fever which has been prevailing.

10. Lastly, Although the number of poor, regular and occasional, stands 1,078, it must be recollected that this does not signify *individuals* merely, many of the recipients having large families. This is mentioned as another illustration of the indefiniteness of all inquiries with regard to the number of the poor, so long as the *number of souls* is not asked. In the Glasgow Report, the number of individuals is given. In Paisley, Barony, &c. &c. it is not given. In Edinburgh, as we shall see immediately, it is not given, but *guessed.*

## SECTION IV.

*State and Management of the Poor in the Parishes of Gorbals and Govan, Glasgow.*

| *Assembly Report of Gorbals.* | | *Report as transmitted.* |
|---|---|---|
| Population—5199..... | | Upwards of 17,000 and increasing at every term. |
| Contributions by Heritors—None..... | | None made annually, but there have been occasionally, from the necessity of the times; of which the amount cannot be given, because merged in those of Glasgow. |
| Annual Collections at Church doors,..... .....£210 | ..... | £210—being the average of ten years previous to the Report. |
| Amount of General Ses. funds, £140..... | | .....£140. |
| Assessment—None..... | | .....None. |
| Total of Parish funds, .....£350..... | | .....£350. |
| Total on Poor's Roll,...50<br>Do. occasional,.....50 | ..100 | .....50<br>.....50 100 |

1. In the above table, the amazing difference in the accounts of the population must strike every reader. The explanation seems to stand thus. In the Report of census in 1811, as stated in Mr. Cleland's annals, copied from the Parliamentary census, the parish of Gorbals appears to have a population of 5,199, while that of Govan stands 8,081—making together a gross amount of 13,280. Now *this* is the exact statement of the population of Gorbals in 1811—that part of Govan of which the census is here given, being annexed to Gorbals *quoad sacra.* The population thus ascertained has swelled since 1811 into upwards of 17,000, as stated by the Rev. Dr. M'Lean in his report, and certainly his account of the matter ought to

have been sustained as the true one. What appears most extraordinary, the population of *Govan*, according to the Report, stands 11,581, while the whole amount of poor, regular and occasional, is only 58. This complication of blunders seems to have been occasioned by taking the Parliamentary Report of 1811 as the standard. In that Report, it appears that the population of the parishes is given rigidly *quoad civilia*; while *in fact* the poor of the annexation *quoad sacra* are served out of the parish funds, without the smallest distinction between them and the parish poor strictly taken—foundlings, orphans, and deserted children only excepted. The reason of this exception is, that the parish of Govan threw obstacles in the way of the annexed lands *quoad sacra*, being annexed to Gorbals *quoad civilia* also, and declined relinquishing their civil connexion with the annexed lands; and therefore it appeared just and equal to the Heritors and Session of Gorbals, that they should have the civil burdens along with the civil privileges. But while there is nothing but collections at church doors to be distributed, equity requires that these should be given to the poor of the parish, in its largest acceptation, which is done accordingly. The whole of this *comedy of errors* would have been saved had the queries transmitted made provision for an exact statement of the present population of the respective parishes.

2. The *second* item in the report presents us with one or two additional illustrations of the indefiniteness of the queries and consequently of the uncertainty which must adhere to the replies. In replying to the questions respecting voluntary contributions by heritors and others, the Glasgow report says—"none have been made,"—the Barony report says—"none have been made since the assessment began;"—the Paisley report says—"voluntary contributions have been made by Benevolent Societies, &c." And what does the Gorbals report say? "No *annual* contributions have been made, but *occasional*; although the amount cannot be ascertained, *being merged with those of Glasgow*;" and yet there have been *no* such contributions at all in Glasgow for ten years past! What are we to make of all this? *Every one of the accounts is rigidly correct*—and the uncertainty of the general result is to be ascribed *exclusively* to the indefiniteness of the queries which led to the application of senses very different to the same combinations of words.

3. The article regarding the "number of poor" is numeri-

cally correct; but it wants the explanation transmitted, viz. "ordinary poor on the roll, average about 50—four-fifths females—most can earn a little—the few who cannot, are aided by children or friends—or beg. Parish badges were once given, but discontinued because liable to abuse—*none* are supported wholly from parish funds.—Besides this ordinary roll, a list is kept of *occasional* poor, who it is supposed, may afterwards be able to support themselves—they too average 50—four-fifths females. The rate of allowance to those on the ordinary roll varies from 2s. to 5s.; and to those on the occasional roll, from 2s. to 7s. 6d. per month. When one remains long on the occasional roll, and there is no prospect of his being able again to support himself, he is transferred to the ordinary roll." The particular fact to which I beg the reader's attention here is; that in the parish of Gorbals *not one* is supported *wholly* by the parish; and this is the plain and intelligible reply to Query 11th, of Class I. Now, let us apply to the case of Gorbals the same principle of classification which is adopted in the case of Paisley, Dunfermline, Barony, and innumerable others, and we would have the singular phenomenon of a parish of 17,000, without *one ordinary* pauper! And why was the same principle not brought into operation here as in the other instances? The fact that it is not, is proof positive that *uniformity of principle* and of *classification* had nothing to do in the business; and that the whole is reduced to a chapter of accidents. And can any reliance be placed on a digest composed of such motley ingredients?

4. The whole poor of the parish of Govan amount to 58—of whom 28 are "regular;" and 30 "occasional." This I presume to be correct; But we have seen that in the arrangements between the parishes, the burden of supporting "foundlings, orphans, and deserted children," belonging to the lands annexed *quoad sacra* to Gorbals, devolves on Govan to which they belong *quoad civilia;* and this has been found in a late decision of court, Thomson *v.* Parish of Govan, 1808. Are these classes of paupers then included in the number 58? We are left in the dark as to this. Indeed, the whole report labours under a defect in this respect. There are *none of the queries* which have reference to such descriptions of paupers, and yet these are the great burdens we have on our funds. In some of the reports the number of such recipients has been stated; but in the great majority they have been overlooked. In the Paisley Report, for instance, no notice was taken of the *children*

*on the nursing list of the Hospital;* and the plain reason was, that neither for them, nor the occasional poor, could we find a suitable place in the classifications of the schedule.

In addition to the information contained in the above, the following facts respecting the management of the poor in Gorbals may be viewed as worthy of record:—

1. The parish, with its annexations, is divided into *sixteen* quarters, with *twenty-two* Elders. Great importance is deservedly attached to having at least *one* elder in every quarter, *resident.* The number both of quarters and Elders must soon be augmented, unless some new erection takes place.

2. Besides the funds at the charge of the Session, there are one or two extra resources for the poor. About 12 years ago, a sum was raised by subscription, and vested in houses yielding about £50 annually, which is distributed to decayed inhabitants, not receiving from the parish funds: and there is a mortification yielding £5 per annum given in the same manner.

3. With regard to Dissenters; the rule invariably observed in this parish is this. When any of them apply for aid, they are refused until it is ascertained what they have from their own society. If that be more than the poor of the established Session enjoy, nothing is given: If less, the difference is made up.

4. It is difficult to obtain certain information about the *Friendly societies* of this parish; the Directors being shy, and sometimes actually refusing to give it. The societies are understood to be about 12 in number; and distribute about £190 annually among 120 persons.

5. There seems to be nothing peculiar in the management of the poor of this parish; only, the grand secret seems to be *economy* combined with *vigilant and frequent inspection.* The principle on which the Session proceeds is this fundamental one in the management of the poor in Scotland, as contra-distinguished from that of England; namely, that the parish funds are not designed to supply *total maintenance;* but simply to aid individual exertion and voluntary Christian benevolence.

## SECTION V.

*State and Management of the Poor in the Town and Parish of Ayr.*

| | *Assembly Report.* | *Report as transmitted.* |
|---|---|---|
| Population,..... | 6,291 | |
| Contributions by Heritors,..... | | None. |
| Annual Collections,..... | | £230 14 7½ |
| Amount of General Session funds,..... | | 366 14 9 |
| Amount of Annual Assessments,..... | | 375 0 0 |
| Total amount of Parish funds,..... | | £972 9 4½ |
| Total regularly on the Roll,..... | Inmates of Poor house, Males,.. 8, Females, 13 | 21 |
| | Out-pensioners, all of whom are able to do a little work,..... | 172 |
| | Total number of the Poor,..... | 193 |

The number of *occasional* poor is not reported.

1. The *particulars* regarding annual collections at the two parish churches of Ayr, are as under:—

| | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1807..... | £169 | 13 | 8 | 1812..... | £221 | 19 | 2½ |
| 1808..... | 194 | 19 | 1 | 1813..... | 241 | 12 | 6 |
| 1809..... | 204 | 7 | 8½ | 1814..... | 238 | 15 | 9 |
| 1810..... | 226 | 16 | 6½ | 1815..... | 291 | 5 | 2½ |
| 1811 ..... .. | 239 | 13 | 5½ | 1816..... | 278 | 3 | 2½ |

Average of the whole, as above, £230 14 7½.

There have, besides, and not included in this Statement, been collections made for the Bible Society; for Prisoners of war in France; for the Sufferers at Waterloo, &c. &c. to the amount, during the last ten years, of £156 14.

2. The *items* of which the "General Session funds" are made up, are as follows;—

| | *Per annum.* |
|---|---|
| Rents of lands in the parish, bequeathed for behoof of the poor,... | £124 17 9 |
| Fines or penalties paid by delinquents,..... | 12 17 0 |
| Donations or bequests to the Poor, for the last ten years, amount to £745, of which a tenth part is ..... | 74 10 0 |
| Stock in money, under the charge of the Directors of the Poor's house, is £2,070 Str. of which the annual interest, at 5 ℔ cent, is | 103 10 0 |
| Rent of lands purchased by a bequest of £100 Sterling, by Alderman Smith of Londonderry, 1692, and now feued at..... | 51 0 0 |
| | £366 14 9 |

Alderman Smith's Charity is, by the deed of Mortification, placed under the management of the Magistrates and kirk session; and the annual amount is divided, as a separate charity, among poor house-keepers in the town and Parish of Ayr.—The fees for proclamation of marriages are allowed to the Precentor or Clerk, for officiating.

3. In managing the funds under the charge of the kirk session, no expense whatever has been incurred during the last ten years.

4. With regard to the "assessment," the following facts occur:—

(1.) It is levied on the inhabitants of the town and Parish, according to their respective circumstances, and *personal* as well as *heritable* property is taken into the account.

(2.) The amount is fixed at an annual meeting of the Magistrates, Heritors, and kirk session; and the levying is enforced by the authority of the Magistrates of the Burgh, who annually appoint eight stent-masters, who, upon oath, proportion on the inhabitants, the sum required.

(3.) Its progress has been as follows:—

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| In 1756, | when it began, and when the Poor's house was built,..... | £ 15 |
| 1807, | ..... | 180 |
| 1808, | ..... | 250 |
| 1816, | ..... | 275 |
| 1817, | ..... | 375. |

The great rise in 1817 was caused chiefly by some incidental expenses incurred in repairing the poors' house.

(4.) The expense of managing the assessment is £ 5 per cent. on the sum collected; and £ 50 per annum for taking charge of the poor's house, and paying out-pensioners.

5. Formerly the kirk session and poor's house had separate lists of poor; but about two years ago, they were united, and the state of the poor is considered, and weekly allowances granted, quarterly, by the Directors of the poor's house, in which number (not a part as formerly, but) *all* the members of session are included: and the *whole funds* are thrown into one sum.

6. By a calculation which was made two or three years ago, the annual average expense of the *inmates* in the poor's house, taking children and adults together, was about £ 8 each. The highest allowance to *out-pensioners* is 3*s.* 3*d.* and the lowest 6*d.* weekly. In some cases, an *additional, temporary* allowance is given by an order on the Treasurer from the Ministers, or Elders of the respective districts of the Town; and small sums are frequently allowed to assist the poor to pay their rents.

7. Besides the above, which respects the distribution to the *regular* pensioners, *occasional* relief is given to individuals or families when in sickness, or in circumstances which render that relief necessary: It varies from 1*s.* 6*d.* to 5*s.* at a time; and sometimes more.

8. In admitting on the poor's roll, the character of the applicant is generally considered in the allowances granted; but in some instances, the vicious cannot be altogether excluded, though considerable reluctance is shewn in giving relief to such persons.

9. The reluctance to apply for parochial aid seems to be lessening. It is not easy to say what would have been the case had there been no assessment; but such reluctance has diminished very considerably; in particular, during the last year, or eighteen months; in consequence of the want of employment among the labouring and manufacturing classes.

10. A few instances of removal have occurred in the course of the last ten years; but there has been no litigation with other parishes; and no attempt has ever been made by paupers to enforce a larger allowance than the Session chose to give.

11. All the poor are granted allowances without regard to their religious persuasion, and the Dissenters are assessed in the same way as the other inhabitants. Some of the Dissenting bodies are in the practice of giving occasional relief to their own poor; but the amount cannot be ascertained, and it is believed to be trifling; as it generally is wherever assessments have been introduced. This by the way, suggests one of the incidental evils of assessment in Scotland; that it prevents the Dissenting bodies from giving to the poor with the liberality to which they were accustomed under the old management.

12. Lastly, although care is taken to prevent both strangers and parish poor from begging, yet it has hitherto been found impossible to suppress it altogether. Measures, however, are in contemplation by which it is hoped, this will be remedied. No badges are given. It is proper to add, that since the Ayr Report was drawn up, begging has been suppressed throughout the county of Ayr, and the most active measures have been taken by the local magistracy, to prevent the incursions from Ireland, and to punish the idle, and the vicious. *

* It is a very singular fact that while the Assembly Report omits entirely the valuable information *actually in* the paper, as transmitted, it gives the amount of the population which was *not in it*.

## SECTION VI.

*State and Management of the Poor in the Parish of Kirriemuir, Angus.*

| | *Report as published.* | *Report as sent.* |
|---|---|---|
| Population, | 4,791 | 4,969 |
| Contributions by Heritors, | £650 | £ 30 |
| Annual Collections, | £120 | £120 |
| General Session funds, | £ 30 | £ 30 |
| Assessments. | | |
| Total amount of funds, | £780 | £180 |
| Total number of Poor, | None. | 68. |

1. The population of this parish was taken in 1811, and amounted to 4,969. Since that period, there is reason to believe that in consequence of the return of sailors and soldiers, the amount may be stated at 5,000. The parish consists partly of a populous manufacturing town, and an extensive landward district.

2. The "contributions by Heritors," are stated at £30, which is the average of the last ten years. These contributions are regulated by the circumstances of the times; and of course larger donations are received in some years than in others. These contributions, however, are totally distinct from the voluntary collections which have been, from time to time, made among the *inhabitants in general, including heritors*, for behoof of the industrious poor. These have been as follows:—

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| In the winter of 1811-12..... | £100 | or thereby, | distributed to | 400 | individuals. |
| 1812-13..... | 100 | — | — | 400 | — |
| 1816-17..... | 400 | — | — | 800 | — |

The contributions by Heritors are for the ordinary purposes of the Session:—*these last* are for behoof of such industrious families as do not receive from the Session funds, but who are in straits from temporary circumstances. This affords an additional illustration of the indefiniteness of the query as to "contributions by Heritors."

3. The chief dependence for the maintenance of the poor is on the *collections in the church*; the great apostolic mode of providing for their wants; and it is but justice to this parish to say, that although *not an heritor attends the church*, and though the people in general are poor, the collections are, at least, as

respectable as any in the county, being, on an average, £2 6, each Sabbath.

4. The number of the poor, as stated above, is not the average for the last ten years, as this did not appear to be required. It is the amount in October 1817, the time when the report was sent. The fact is, the numbers on the list are ever varying; and it may be safely said, that in no two months are they exactly alike.

5. With regard to the "classification of the poor"—there are in this parish—1. Several who can do nothing for their own support, such as lunatics, idiots, and orphans. 2. Many who can do a little for themselves, but who require assistance; chiefly aged and infirm persons, and widows who have been left with infant children. 3. There are *occasionally*, in consequence of the high price of provisions, or the low state of manufactures, many householders who are unable to maintain themselves and their families, in any degree of comfort, and who require occasional aid. 4. There are common beggars.—To club all these together under the name of *paupers* is absurd. The *third* class, which must always be numerous, rather receive a little temporary aid to *prevent them from becoming* paupers; and they do not surely forfeit their independence by accepting a little occasional assistance with this view.

6. While a stated allowance is made to the "*regular poor*" of the *second class*, as well as to those of the *first*, that allowance fluctuates according to circumstances. The peculiarities of every one's case are considered every month by the Minister and Elders, and a higher or a lower rate is awarded them according to the relative situation of each. *

This parish may be taken as an example of the ordinary class of country parishes where there is no assessment, and in which the primitive mode of management obtains.

I shall now direct the attention of my readers to

* The above facts are compiled from a letter by the Rev. Mr. Easton, minister of the parish, published in the Christian Instructor for February last.—I may notice, once for all, that all the statements given in these different sketches, of the state and management of the poor, have been sanctioned by the authority of the ministers of the parishes, and others most competent to judge; to whom I am greatly indebted for their attention to my inquiries.

## SECTION VII.

### *On the State and Management of the Poor in the city of Edinburgh.*

*Abstract of the Assembly Report.*

Annual Collections—£1,914 6.

Contributions by Heritors. { Casual Revenue, being Donations, Collections from Chapels, Benefit Plays, &c. amounting to £510.

Session Funds. { Regular Revenue from the Funds of the City, Mortifications, &c. amounting to £1,157.
Expense of Management.—For the Charity Workhouse, and the out-pensioners, £574.

Assessment. { Amount, £4,809.
Rate, 5 per cent. on the real rent of houses and shops.
Period of commencement—Unknown.
Rose from 2 per cent. in 1740, to 5 per cent in 1813.
Expense, £173 6 5.

Ordinary Poor. { In the Charity Workhouse, 710.
Full cost of *maintenance* of each in the house, per annum, £7 15.

Industrious Poor. { Number—families 815; and, computing 3 persons to each family, 2,445 individuals.
Rate of Relief, from £2 to £5.
Occasional Relief, £69 2 2.

Total Annual allowances.—The Session distribute no poor funds.
Extra Collection.—None.
Blind, and Deaf, and Dumb.—Cannot be ascertained.
Friendly Societies.
Sunday Schools, &c. Parochial Institutions, and Gratis Sabbath Schools.
Mortifications, &c.—Of all kinds, and very extensive; but impossible to ascertain their amount.

On comparing this Report with some authentic documents before me, the following remarks occur, which I shall state without any very lengthened comment:

1. The "casual revenue," according to the treasurer's accounts for the year ending July 1817, (the very year from which the Committee must have taken the computation,) amounted only to £49 15 9¼. By the Assembly Report it stood £510. The difference here is so considerable as to require explanation.* I should wish also to know precisely the principle on which

* I suspect that £510 is the *whole amount* for the *last ten years*.

"collections from chapels and *benefit plays*" are classed together, under the general denomination of "contributions by heritors."

2. The sum of £200 annually given to the support of the Charity Workhouse might have been with propriety placed under the head of "Contributions by Heritors." In the Report, however, it is represented as part of the "session funds." I do not see why it should be considered as part of the session funds any more than the assessment; both being designed exclusively for support of the Charity Workhouse. In the treasurer's account for 1817, the amount of "mortifications" is precisely £215 1 4; making, along with the city donation, £415 1 4. In the above Report it stands £1157. If we include the sums got for boarders in the Workhouse and Bedlam, the whole will be £968 17 3; but these last do not surely come under the idea of "session funds." Perhaps the monies got at *proclamations of banns* may be included in the amount; as these must, in such a city as Edinburgh, be no doubt very considerable.

3. Under the title "Expense of Management" of session funds, it is written: "For the Charity Workhouse, and the out-pensioners, £574." A stranger is at some loss to understand the meaning of this. Does not the whole of the session fund go into the treasury of the Charity Workhouse, seeing it is expressly said in the Report, that "the session distribute no poor funds?" Are the "out-pensioners" here noticed different from those in the Charity Workhouse? If they are, by whom is the distribution made to them? If they are the same, how comes it that the expense of these out-pensioners amounted in 1817, according to the treasurer's account, to £1,770 6, while by this Report it did not amount to a *third* of that sum?

4. Under the head of "Rule, or rate of assessment," it should have been particularly noticed, that by an old statute, the houses possessed by the members of the College of Justice, clergy, and professors, are specially exempted from poor's tax. This is a feature peculiar to the system of the metropolis, and is worthy of notice. Whatever may have been the reasons for the statute, at the time it was passed, they cannot exist *now*; and the statute ought on this account to be abolished.

5. I am rather surprised that the period of the commencement of the assessment should be "*unknown*;" when it is recollected that the proposal of a poor tax was keenly, and for a long time resisted by the people—that the Charity Work-

house was long supported by collections and contributions alone—that so late as 1782, there was *no poor tax* in Edinburgh* —that about the same period, Mr. Brown, one of the ministers, published his plan for the support of the Charity Workhouse; and that Dr. M'Farlan of Canongate, also gave his matured sentiments to the public about the same period; soon after which the stent was introduced. Surely the first regular assessment must be recorded either in the Session or Council books.

6. The tax is said to have "been 2 per cent. in 1740." I am not sure whether or not the Charity Workhouse was opened at that early time; and *this is certain*, if Dr. M'Farlan is correct, and he certainly must have known, that there was *no tax whatever for its support before* 1782.

6. With regard to the cost of each inmate in the house, it ought to be recollected that, while in Glasgow, the mode of striking the average is weekly, at the end of every week those who are admitted or excluded being added or deducted;—in Edinburgh, the total number of persons admitted for whatever time is summed up, and the expense divided, to shew the average cost per annum. This accounts for the *apparent fact*, that in Glasgow the cost of each inmate is about £.2 higher than in Edinburgh. In *reality*, it is nearly the same.

8. The number of "industrious poor," or, in other words, "out-pensioners," is 815; and as this means "families," the number *in toto* is averaged 2,445. I have great doubts of the accuracy of this. At least it is certain, that in an authentic account of the Edinburgh Workhouse, lately published,† we read as follows: "This year" 1817, "914 families *and individuals* have been regularly supplied." Indeed, it was an unfortunate circumstance that, in the queries as to the "*numbers*" of the poor, the clergy were not required to specify the exact number of *individuals;* or rather, that there was no intimation given by which to ascertain whether the Committee wished to know the number of *families* or of *individuals:* and hence it is that the returns of the clergy on this point are various.

* "In the city of Edinburgh, and its east suburbs, no tax has been yet agreed to, though in both places there are poor houses, and the expense of their poor has greatly exceeded the church collections and common funds. They have hitherto been able to avoid a measure of which they feared the consequences. The deficiency has been made up by extraordinary collections, contributions, donations, benefit plays," &c &c. *Inquiries concerning the Poor*, by John M'Farlan, D. D. one of the ministers of Canongate, 1782, p. 162.

† Glasgow Report, p. 188.

9. The number of "deaf and dumb, and blind," in Edinburgh, "could not be ascertained." Neither could it be ascertained in Glasgow, nor in Paisley, nor in Greenock, nor in the Barony, nor in the Gorbals, nor in a multitude of other places: and yet in the General Report p. 36, a calculation is made as to the number of these classes in the whole of Scotland.

10. Under the head "Friendly Societies," is an account of the "Edinburgh Savings Bank;" with a *blank* as to "Friendly Societies." Are there no Friendly Societies in Edinburgh? or are they so insignificant as to be unworthy of notice?

11. The "Parochial Institutions," and the "Gratis Sabbath Schools," are very properly noticed; but what has become of the "Society for promoting Religious knowledge among the Poor?" Has it ceased to exist? or has it no schools?

12. The "amount of mortifications," &c. it was found "*impossible* to ascertain."—I have at this moment before me *two* accounts of all the "charitable foundations in Edinburgh" —the one published in 1782, amounting to £13,734 per annum*—*the other*, published at Bath, 1815, in a "Collection of Documents relative to the Relief of the Poor," p. 139, which makes the annual amount about £40,000; including religious institutions as well as charitable societies. This last account I do not consider as very correct. But, must we look to *Bath* for an account of the charities of the *Metropolis of Scotland?* Is there no person in the *city itself* competent to the task?

The analysis of the parish of Edinburgh, and of other parishes, might be continued much farther; but I trust it will now appear to all impartial and candid judges, that the Assembly Report, as it stands, is totally destitute of value as a historical and statistical document—that the original queries are not properly digested, and want that precision and point which are necessary to prevent their misconception—that the Reports actually transmitted have not been fairly copied—that conclusions of the most erroneous kind have been deduced from premises equally erroneous—that the whole document throws little or no light on the *specialties* which characterize the Scottish mode of managing the poor—and that the inform-

* M'Farlan's Inquiries, p. 141.

ation contained in the "*General Report*," however valuable it may, on several accounts be, is of no use as the subject of reference, seeing it is not borne out by the evidence on which it professes to be grounded, and of which it undertakes to exhibit the result. On these points I make an appeal to the judgment of the General Assembly, and of both Houses of Parliament.

It has been my object in the above review, to shew, not merely that the Assembly Report is glaringly incorrect in itself; but principally, that it is *incapable of being rectified;* or, in other words, that the whole business requires to be resumed *ab initio*. I doubt not that a very important and interesting document might be produced out of the reports already returned by the clergy; but I strongly suspect that such document, however important and interesting in itself, would labour under such a load of uncertainty, as to prevent it utterly from occupying, among the public records of the nation and the church, that place to which it ought to be entitled as the subject of public reference and appeal. In order to accomplish the business effectually, two primary measures appear to be necessary. In the *first* place, let Parliament be petitioned to order a new *census* of the population of Scotland;—In the *second* place, let a new series of questions be drawn up—well digested—accommodated to the standard of the new census—and fitted to elicit information on the great and prominent features of the Scottish management of the poor. Let these queries be transmitted to the moderator of each kirk session—and let the several replies be subjected to the review of all the church courts in regular gradation. For all this, let *time* and other facilities be given; and it may be reasonably expected, that a document will be produced, honourable to Scotland and to the church, and calculated in a high degree to promote the moral improvement of the people.

# DISSERTATION IX.

## ON VOLUNTARY PRIVATE CHARITY.

By voluntary private charity, I mean that which is felt and exercised by individuals in private life, according to their own judgment and discretion, and uninfluenced either by public compulsory enactment, or by voluntary social agreement.

That private charity, or alms-giving, is an important moral duty is obvious from a variety of considerations. It is enjoined by the original feelings of the human mind—by the constitution of civil society—and by the express dictates of revelation.

Private charity is recommended and enforced by the *original feelings of the human mind.* In the heart of every man, by nature, there is implanted a principle of sympathy which leads him to feel for another's woe, and to stretch forth a helping hand. To attempt an analysis of this principle, or to trace it to its supposed source, would be wide of our mark. Whatever sentiments may be held respecting the origin of moral distinctions; the foundation of virtue; or the spring of our affections and feelings; all must acknowledge, that a principle of sympathy holds a place among the primary attributes of man. A striking evidence of this is its *universality;* for wherever society exists even in a low state of civilization, there we find that man is united to man by the ties of reciprocal attachment and feeling. That state of society in which

man is found to be the enemy of man, far from being, as some have thought, the state of nature, is the most *unnatural* that can be conceived. Wherever we find the species existing in such a state, we may rest assured, that moral depravity has changed the native character of man, and has blunted or destroyed his finest sensibilities. Degraded as the moral world is by nature, we have abundant reason to think, that there are certain principles in man which have survived the ruins of the fall, and indicate what the species has lost. Among these original principles or feelings, we have no hesitation in ranking the affection of sympathy. That affection God has been pleased to implant in our constitution, and the exercise of it must therefore be agreeable to his holy will. But if the exercise of it be agreeable to his will, then, certainly, private charity, benevolence, alms-giving, or by whatever name you call it, becomes an original and commanded duty. The Author of our being hath declared it to be so; and he must be considered as the enemy of his species who would eradicate the feeling, or universally restrain its expression.

But further, private charity is recommended and inforced by the *constitution of civil society.* Did man not exist in a social state; or were every individual absolutely insulated from his neighbour, the feeling of sympathy might be considered as useless, and the expression of it, in deeds of beneficence, unnecessary. But "man is born in society, and there he remains."* A principle of union binds together the whole family of man. While philanthropy, or universal benevolence, associates together in one great society all who bear the same distinctive characters of rationality and moral feeling, the smaller societies of men are held together by modifications of the same general principle, differing in strength according to relative circumstances. So long as one man possesses greater endowments than another; and so long as human life is subject to endless casualties, so long must one part of society be dependent on another; and so long must the feeling of sympathy exhibit its practical applications. Indeed, if any conclusion as to the will of God can be drawn from the present circumstances of man and of human society, we are certainly warranted to infer, from what we observe around us, that man is the guardian of man—that it is right and honourable to feel for another's woes—and that an

* Montesquieu.

obligation is laid on us to do what we can, in our several stations, to alleviate the sorrows of life, and to add to the sum of human enjoyment. Every human being has, in this respect, something in his power. If he has not money to expend in alms, he has at least a heart to condole with, and to soothe an afflicted friend; and he has a tear to shed in the habitation of sorrow. If he cannot afford substantial relief out of his own store, he can interest a more wealthy neighbour, in behalf of a suitable object, and he can thus become the useful almoner of another's bounty. If he may not attract notice by the splendor of his gifts at the altar of beneficence, he may, nevertheless, do good in the private walks of life, and benefit society by the less obtrusive, but not less acceptable offices of tenderness and compassion.

But private charity derives its principal bond of obligation from the express and *positive injunctions of the Word of God.* You have only to open the page of inspiration, and precepts on this head will present themselves in abundance. "Blessed is the man that considereth the poor." "Let every one of you assist his neighbour in whatsoever business he hath need of you." "Give alms of such things as ye have, and behold, all things shall be clean unto you." "He hath dispersed; he hath given to the poor; his righteousness abideth for ever." "Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye did it unto me." "Pure religion, and undefiled before God even the Father, is this;—To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction." Proceeding, as we do, on the assumption that the Bible is the Word of God, and consequently an authoritative record of truth and of duty, we must bow to the sceptre of its commands, and yield to them absolute and unconditional obedience. Were there no written standard of action, or were revelation silent regarding the great lines of human duty, recourse might, with propriety, be had to the speculations of moral and metaphysical science. But since we have an authoritative standard of right and wrong, and since by that standard the great features of duty are explicitly set before us, we are bound to abide by the decision which it announces to us, and to comply with the unalienable obligation. In a case like this, considerations of moral or political expediency must be wholly set aside; and whatever be the private sentiments of men "who walk in the sparks of their own kindling," a Christian, as such, must hail

the authority of God as supreme, and hasten to bow to it with cordiality and pleasure.

We have endeavoured to establish the claims of *Private Charity* as a great moral duty. In this light we are perfectly convinced that every man in his sphere is bound to practise it, and we would deprecate most sincerely the sentiment, that public and social charity ought to annihilate wholly the claims and the exertions of individual beneficence. But the question with which we have to do at present does not respect so much the *obligation* of the duty, as the *extent* to which it ought to be carried? Ought the claims of the indigent and dependent part of the population to be left *entirely* to the sympathies and to the exertions of *private* benevolence? This is the question which naturally presents itself; and to the question, as thus stated, we have no hesitation in returning an answer in the negative. That private Charity, however amiable in itself, and however binding in its calls, is extremely apt to be abused, and on that account should not be sustained as the sole resource of indigence, will appear from such considerations as the following:—

1. Private Charity is extremely apt to be *checked* and *perverted* in its exercise, by *ignorance of the actual situation of its objects.*

It must be obvious to every impartial observer, that such a knowledge of the real situation of the children of poverty, as may be subservient to a judicious distribution of alms, is rarely to be met with in the ordinary walks of human life. It requires a habit of patient minute investigation—a disposition of mind and of heart that will not shrink from the painful task of exploring the dark and gloomy receptacles, where indigence dwells in all its squalid wretchedness—a *practical* benevolence which spends not its sighs and its tears on the fictitious heroes of romance, but reserves them for the real woes of suffering humanity—a judgment and a caution, which mere feeling cannot disarm, while they shrink not from its juster suggestions. Those who have had any extensive experience in the work of benevolence, understand very well what is meant by all this; and will accord with us when we say, that the *real business* of charity requires for its performance, qualifications far superior to what are commonly possessed by those who are most able and most willing to supply the necessary means of its perform-

ance. There are, we trust, many examples among the rich and the charitable, of that accurate knowledge of the state of the poor around them, which may render them fit almoners of their own bounty. But we appeal to experience when we say, that for *one* who is thus competent to act on his own information, there are *twenty* who know little or nothing of the poverty which dwells at their own door, and unceasingly solicits their beneficence. It is melancholy to think that it should be so; but such is the fact; and we challenge the world to contradict it. And is not this practical ignorance of the state of the poor, one principal reason why so much money is squandered in useless profusion; and distributed with so little attention to the actual merits of the case? "Within the limits" which reason and religion prescribe "no mischief can arise from the most unbounded exercise of charity. *Beyond* those limits, donations in money, under the guise of charity, partake not of the nature of virtue, but of thoughtless profusion, and tend more to encourage profligacy than to relieve distress."*

2. Private Charity is checked and perverted in its exercise by *natural indolence* of temper.

If men are ignorant of the state of the poor, it may be said, have they it not in their power to make the necessary inquiries? and thus to qualify themselves for being the humble and unobtrusive distributors of their own bounty? Unquestionably they have the power; and long may they avail themselves of it. But he must know little of human nature who sees not, that besides the obstacles which ignorance presents to the judicious distribution of private charity, there are obstacles from another quarter far more strong and far more difficult to remove. Happy would we be did we think that in all cases where men know not the actual state of the poor, they *themselves* were sensible of their ignorance, and *practically* desirous of its removal. But what is the real state of the case? Is there not in the human constitution, a principle of natural or acquired *indolence* which disposes a man to sit down contented with things as they are; satisfied that although they may not be just as might be wished, they are nevertheless "well enough." I appeal to the experience of the charitable, when I ask,—Have you never given alms to an applicant at your door with no other view than to save yourselves the trouble of making the requisite inquiry into his case?

* Weyland, p. 396.

He told you a tale of woe perhaps—you listened; and you felt the compunctions of sympathy. Sensible at the same time you were, that for any thing that appeared, it might be true; or it might be false; or it might be a tissue of truth and falsehood; or it might be wholly true, and yet the object a very improper one for gratuitous pecuniary donation. All this you were perhaps fully aware of; and felt the obligation of instituting an accurate and candid inquiry. But inquiry is a work of time—and of patience—and of thought. A little money is to you a small matter; and if the gift of a mite can save you from all this trouble, and all this patience, and all this thought, you think it very well bestowed. Have I described an imaginary case? or are there not many who, rather than be put to the toil of investigation, would willingly give treble the amount of what is expected or desired of them? But let it be remembered that by this thoughtless and indiscriminate profusion, (small as may be its amount to individuals, though great in the aggregate,) they strengthen the wandering, and idle, and vicious habits of the poor—they take from the deserving objects what they bestow on the worthless—they weaken the hands of those wise and benevolent men who are labouring to improve the state of society and of morals—they waste in the air of a desert that benevolence which, under proper cultivation, might have refreshed, and enlivened, and invigorated the society of man. Those who have perused the very interesting and instructive reports of the Society lately instituted in Edinburgh for the "Suppression of Begging and the encouragement of Industry among the poor" need not be told, that by far the strongest obstacle to the certainty and success of their efforts has arisen from the pernicious habit of indiscriminate distribution. They have observed again and again that so long as the benevolence of the public allows itself to be abused by the clamorous demands of private applicants, their hands are weakened and their benevolent object proportionally defeated. Let it be recollected that the applicants for charity at the doors of our houses are in general the most worthless of the vile; and that the alms thus bestowed go in general to encourage habits of idleness and profligacy. Of this matter a pretty correct idea may be formed, when we propose the question,—Of those applicants in whose behalf you have promised to make the requisite investigation, how few have ever returned to learn the result of the inquiry?

3. Private charity is limited and perverted in its application, by the *want of suitable opportunities for its exercise.*

We can suppose a generous man who is both able and willing to bestow a large portion of his wealth on objects of charity, but who wants the proper means and opportunities of doing so. We may suppose him to be neither ignorant of the state of the poor, nor indolent in his dispositions; and yet placed in circumstances which put it completely out of his power to distribute his charity with the wisdom and the discrimination which are necessary in order to prevent the evils of thoughtless profusion. The secular business in which he is engaged may require so much of his time, and of his thoughts, as to render it extremely inconvenient for him to bestow that attention which may be requisite in order to a suitable distribution of benevolence. However desirous he may be to benefit the poor, regard to his family, and to the interests of the public, prevents him from devoting the time and thought that he could wish, to the serious consideration of the subject. The same thing may be affirmed in regard to the varieties of rank and of situation in which men may be placed. They may be of such a nature as to put it out of the power of the individual, however willing, to be the judicious and wise almoner of his own bounty. Now, in cases of this kind, which are of daily and obvious recurrence, we are not surely warranted to infer that the individuals, so circumstanced, are wholly freed from the obligations of benevolence; or that they are bound to give alms privately, however indiscriminate and however injudicious the gift may be. On the system of those who condemn all public charities, one or other of these consequences must inevitably take place; and yet it is certain that both of them are at direct variance with the dictates of common sense and the high authority of revelation.

4. Private charity is extremely liable to be influenced by *passion* and *caprice.*

We shall take it for granted that the benevolent individual who proposes to be the exclusive distributor of his own bounty, has made all the necessary inquiries into the state of the indigent whom he aims to relieve—that he is disposed to be active and persevering in the work—and that he has ample opportunities for the discharge of it. What is there wanting now?

you will be ready to ask. Or what can there be in such a case as this that can prevent distribution from being equally judicious and liberal? I answer: Man is a *capricious* being. He acts frequently on the spur of the moment. He yields to present impressions; and allows passion to tyrannize over the sober dictates of reason and understanding. In the business of ordinary life, we know that the temper and the conduct of men are influenced and controlled by circumstances of the most trivial nature. *Man*, it has been often and justly remarked, is *the creature of circumstances:* and in no department of human concern, does this hold good so strongly as in the department of charity. In distributing of our bounty to the poor, how seldom do we abide by the rigid merits of the case! How numerous and diversified the considerations which, if not formally before the mind, nevertheless imperceptibly influence it, in the business of benevolent distribution! The character and the station of the person who may propose to us an object of charity—the external appearance of the object—the nature of the distress to be relieved—the temper of mind in which we chance to be at the time when the request for aid is presented—these and similar circumstances associated in our minds with the particular objects for whom our interference is solicited, exert an influence more or less powerful in determining the extent and the direction of our beneficence. It is obvious that a creature such as man, affected as he must be by such a variety of minute associations, is extremely apt to become capricious in his feelings and in his actions. The slightest circumstance will excite a prejudice either for or against an object; and the feeling of interest which is experienced at one time, may at another be wholly lost, or transferred to a totally different object. In consequence of this powerful control which passion and caprice have over the minds of all men, in a greater or in a less degree, it is clear that private charity must partake of a corresponding character. It will be capricious in its feelings—in its aims—and in its distributions: and the effect will inevitably be, an abundant profusion of alms without discrimination in the method, and without any substantial good in the practical result.

Let it be seriously considered, that benevolence, though the most *amiable*, is the most unsteady and capricious of all our moral feelings. It is influenced by a thousand circumstances. It takes a tinge from every object with which it may chance to be associated. It is affected with more or less power by the

state of the blood and of the animal spirits—by the natural temper of the mind—by the friends with whom we associate——by the employments in which we engage—and by the nameless trifles which pass daily and hourly in review before us. Hence arises the absolute necessity of placing such a changeable and capricious principle under the guidance of sound judgment and Christian discretion.

5. Private charity is extremely apt to be *unequal* and *partial* in its distributions.

We shall allow, for the sake of argument, that all the individuals engaged in the process of benevolent enterprise, are well qualified for the office undertaken—that they possess the requisite knowledge of the state of the poor—that their activity and perseverance of mind carry them through the difficult business without shrinking—and that in all material cases they are enabled to rise superior to the influence of passion and caprice. Such a statement of the case, we are fully aware, never was realised, and probably never will be realised, in actual life. But for the sake of strengthening our conclusion, we shall suppose it to be all founded in fact. What now is the result? Fit instruments are prepared—proper objects of beneficence are selected—and suitable means of beneficence are applied to their relief. All this looks well in theory; and you may be at a loss to discover the precise point of deficiency. Let it then be remembered, that the charity which is supposed to be dispensed under such favourable auspices is private charity. Every individual is supposed to stand alone—completely insulated—and independent of the advice and co operation of his neighbours. What now will be the result? Donations are liberally given—the stream of benevolence flows strong and deep—and a thousand tongues are ready to chaunt the praises of such disinterested goodness. But where is the *principle* which presides over the whole business of distribution, and with wisdom and judgment proportions its different departments? It does not exist. Every distributor adopts his own plan—selects his own objects, and proportions his own charities, without any intercourse whatever with others who may be labouring in the same field. We have no difficulty in determining that such individual and solitary benevolence will be partial and unequal in its distributions. One object will receive beyond the due proportion that belongs to him; while

another will fall far short of it. The most clamorous and the most eloquent in the detail of sufferings will in general secure the most extensive patronage, and the most liberal alms; while modest want, which shrinks from public notice, and weeps in solitude, will be in imminent danger of being overlooked and forgotten. To the cottage of an aged man or of an aged woman who happens to attract notice by superior knowledge; by more elevated piety; or by severer sufferings than fall to the lot of ordinary mortals, the sympathies and the footsteps of many are directed. A deep interest is excited. One kind friend after another is attracted by the same sympathetic influence; and the favoured object of benevolence grows rich on the diffusive charity of the humane. In the mean time the charity which ought to have flowed in a wide and comprehensive current, is directed to one point; and objects of benevolent regard requiring equal, if not superior, aid are unfortunately neglected. The human mind is powerfully arrested by what is *romantic* in suffering. The penury and the wretchedness of ordinary life have no charms to allure. Let something out of the common road be presented; let the sufferer possess in his character or in his history something very remarkable; let there be a measure of the picturesque and the pathetic interwoven with the contexture of his case; and he needs no other passport to the hearts and the pockets of the humane. Crowds attend at his levee; and pour their contributions into his treasury. You may perhaps ask, cannot these private individuals understand one another, and co-operate so as not to interfere with each other's arrangements? Most certainly they can: But have you forgotten that it was private and individual charity we were considering; and do you not perceive that when a number of individuals meet, and consult, and arrange matters together, they no longer exist in a *private* capacity? They become a *benevolent association* in which each gives up something in order to secure a greater and more rational result; and in which the combined skill and wisdom of many are brought to bear on one common object of interest and endearment.

I beg it to be distinctly understood that throughout the whole of this statement, we have not advanced one position that militates against *private charity considered in itself*. Our object has been, singly and absolutely to point out the principles on which the distributions of private charity ought to be conduct-

ed; and by exhibiting the hazards which inevitably attend such charity, to shew the inexpediency of leaving the whole business of benevolence to the promptitude of solitary sympathy. The duty of private charity we wish to assert and to vindicate; and the practice of it we would by all means encourage. We need it all and much more. The evils which afflict humanity are pressing and clamant; and we wish every man in his place to do what he can to lighten the burden. But we are alive to the dangers of indiscriminate, injudicious, and partial distributions; and we would wish to open the eyes of the benevolent to a just perception of them, in order that they may be on their guard against them. We should be sorry to think that all private charity, however judicious, were prohibited; but we should be still more sorry were the whole business of charity to be left to the feelings and energies of individual minds. Our object is, to promote both *individual* and *social* benevolence, convinced, as we are, that thus, and thus alone, will the best interests of human society be most rationally and most succcessfully secured.

# DISSERTATION X.

## ON BENEVOLENT ASSOCIATIONS.

THE basis of every benevolent association is private charity. Individuals are supposed to feel the emotions of sympathetic benevolence, and in order to apply that benevolence to its ends, they associate together, and agree to act in concert according to a previously arranged plan. They proceed on the principle, that what is the duty of one is the duty of all, and that what one may imperfectly accomplish by his own unaided efforts, will be much more effectually done by the united co-operation of many. The bond which connects them together is the affection of social benevolence, deriving its energy from the zeal and the charity of each individual member. The object of the association is to relieve the distress which each member perceives to exist, and feels it his duty to alleviate.

It will be readily acknowledged by all parties, that there are certain species of evils which can be effectually relieved or removed only by means of benevolent associations. Those distresses which are brought on individuals by the immediate agency of Providence, and which no efforts of private benevolence can possibly remove, naturally devolve on the sympathies of social charity. Hence it is, that with regard to associations for instructing the industrious blind in the arts of life; for educating the deaf and dumb, and thus admitting them to share in the functions and in the enjoyments of rational existence; for curing or relieving the diseases to which humanity is

inevitably doomed; or for calming the sorrows of the troubled mind, and restoring mental health to the unhappy victims of insanity;—to such associations it is not possible to conceive that a single objection of the slightest plausibility can be advanced by the keenest advocate of private beneficence. It is not to be expected, nor indeed is it desirable, that for such cases as these, the government of a country should interpose, and by legal enactments make provision for the existing exigence. In every civilised country we take it for granted, that there is a sufficient fund of charity treasured up, in the mind of the public, and requiring only to be called forth by the presentation of a suitable object. For this end no legal or compulsory measures are required; and when the government of a country knows this, it will never surely be so foolish as to interfere for no definite purpose. When the stream of public benevolence is sufficiently ample, nothing more is necessary than to give it a proper direction; and for this end legislative enactments seem to be altogether superfluous.

The question which comes at present under consideration respects rather the ordinary casualties of life as comprehended under the general name of indigence. It is to this object that our attention has been hitherto directed; and we must still proceed on the assumption that indigence, as such, ought to be relieved. The single point of inquiry is, Ought the business of administering relief to indigence to be left entirely to the casual exertions of private individual beneficence; or, while such beneficence is by no means set aside, may it not be expedient and necessary that private individuals should associate together with the view of accomplishing the object which each of them singly is supposed to contemplate? That benevolent associations on this general principle are worthy of the approbation and support of the public, may appear from the following considerations:—

I. *It seems reasonable and right that the social sympathies of men should lead them to unite in the concerns of common benevolence.* In every concern of human life, association is subservient to the purposes of improvement and of happiness. Man, when left to the seclusion of solitude and to the resources of his individual efforts, is a weak and helpless creature. It is by the union of *mind* with *mind*, and of *man* with *man*, that the fabric of human improvement has been reared. By the

superior resources of one mind, the deficiencies of another have been supplied; and by the co-operation of many in one common object, ends unattainable by individuals may be successfully secured. Such appears to be the general principle on which the business of human society proceeds; and shall we say that the concerns of charity and benevolence form an exception to the principle? The charitable feeling which prompts to relieve human indigence, is a social disposition; and when not perverted by false ideas of things, it prompts those whom it influences to unite in mutual co-operation. If indeed, the object which individual charity has in view, be *in itself* a good one; it cannot surely be wrong to *unite* in order to its more effectual accomplishment. While the social principle is freely permitted to unite mankind together in the investigations of science, in the improvement of arts, in the extension of commerce, and even in the ravages of war, would it be reasonable or wise to lay an interdict on the kind feelings of sympathy, and confine them rigidly to the breast of the individual? Surely some strong reasons must combine to warrant such a departure from the ordinary laws of human nature,—such a harsh invasion of the social prerogatives of man.

II. While benevolent associations secure substantially all the best objects of private charity, *they guard most effectually against the risques to which it is exposed.*

If private charity is apt to be checked and perverted by ignorance of the actual condition of its objects, the most effectual means of avoiding this inconvenience is, for one individual to take the advice of others more competent to judge. And what is the primary design of a benevolent association except to provide the means by which may be acquired that knowledge of the state of the poor which a solitary individual cannot be supposed to possess?

If private charity is apt to be checked and perverted by the *indolence* of individuals who act under no responsibility, benevolent associations appear to be the best means of preventing this danger, in as much as they collect into one centre the energies of numbers, and attach to each member a degree of responsibility to the general body. Into every thing human, indeed, indolence and inactivity will insensibly insinuate themselves; but there is, comparatively speaking, *less* danger from such a source,

in the case of a society whose professed object is to make the due investigation before relief is apportioned.

If private charity is checked and stinted in its range by want of time and opportunity in those who would be its willing administrators, benevolent associations seem to be the only adequate substitute for this deficiency. No person will become an active member of such an association who has not some portion of time at command, and who cannot devote a certain measure of attention to the objects of charity without trenching on claims that are more imperious. It is obvious that there must be many individuals in society, who, without the pecuniary means indispensible for individual charity, are peculiarly well fitted to become the steady and faithful distributors of the bounty of others. They can inquire into the state of the poor around them. They can furnish the information necessary for a judicious distribution; and they can convey to the abodes of indigence, the alms of their wealthier brethren. Now, does it not appear desirable that such individuals should be associated together, that their services may not be lost to society, but may be rendered subservient to the great interests of social benevolence?

If private charity be liable to the injurious influence of passion and caprice, it seems desirable that something should be done in order to prevent and counteract that influence. We do not deny that passion and caprice may affect societies of men as well as individuals. But of this we are certain, that if the influence of private passion and caprice *can* be counteracted in any degree, it is by an union of individuals, in which the tendencies of one are counteracted by the spirit of the whole, and in which the order and the stability of a regularly organized system combine to check the irregularities of individual inclination.

If, once more, private charity is extremely apt to be *partial* and *unequal* in its distributions from the very circumstance of its being private; benevolent associations seem to be necessary in order to *proportion* the kinds and the degrees of charity according to the character and the circumstances of the objects. By mutual association, a mutual understanding is effected. The operations of one are known to all the members of the association. The objects of charity who may be placed under the cognizance of an individual member, receive at the same time the notice and the sympathy of the whole. In this way, no material interference or confusion can arise. Each has a particular province assigned him; each knows his own province; and the distributions of one are subject to the general review. When at

distinct periods a particular survey is taken of the operations of the whole society, the proportion of charity allotted to each pensioner is at once ascertained. If one individual appears to have received an undue portion of alms, the reasons are inquired into, and a resolution adopted accordingly. If the same person has been receiving aid at the same time from different members without their knowledge, the imposition is at once detected; And thus is effectually counteracted a scheme of falsehood which on the exclusive plan of individual charity might for ever escape disclosure. It is true, even a collective body may be influenced by partial feelings: But surely experience warrants us to affirm, that an association of different minds and different interests is infinitely less in danger of undue influence, than an individual acting on his own solitary impressions, or a number of individuals acting without concert or co-operation. We have no hesitation in saying, that if an equal and impartial distribution is to be made, it can be only through the medium of a society of benevolent individuals, consulting together, carrying on their inquiries mutually, and distributing the beneficence of the public according to a plan regularly organized, and systematically prosecuted.

III. Benevolent associations exercise *a salutary moral influence on the individuals engaged in them, and on society at large.*

If the social and kind affections of men are to be cultivated; and if their cultivation be productive of substantial benefits, associations for benevolent purposes must be approved as highly favourable to the best interests of men. They call into exercise the best feelings of the heart, and direct them to the most suitable ends. Thus are the original sympathies of nature strengthened, and expanded, and improved. Moral feeling acquires, by exercise, additional stability and force. The mind is enlarged by liberal sentiment; and the expansive influence of benevolent affection passes from heart to heart. If union, for advancing the interests of art and of science tends to strengthen and improve the love of literature; If patriotic association tends to fan the flame of patriotism, and to bind us in closer ties to our country and our kind; If united industry adds to the vigour, the patience, and the skill of industrious individuals; on exactly the same principle, united benevolence must exert a salutary influence in strengthening the benevolent affections, while it regulates and controls their

voluntary operations. It spreads a softening influence over all who are within the sphere of its agency. It smoothes the rugged surface of human society, and strengthens the social tie.

There is another obvious advantage attending benevolent associations which has been already hinted at, but which deserves a more specific notice: They afford favourable opportunities of doing good to such as have time and inclination for the duty, but who want the pecuniary means. Those in the middling and lower ranks of life who possess the affection of good-will to their neighbours, and the principle which is necessary for its guidance, are by far the fittest instruments for the work of active beneficence. They associate freely and without restraint among the poor and indigent. They are well acquainted with their habits and their peculiar wants. They can enter into familiar conversation with them, and share in their feelings with all the kindness of sympathetic tenderness. They are well qualified to judge of the capacities of the poor—their opportunities of industry—the probable extent of their earnings—and the modes of their application. Now, in regard to such persons thus well qualified for the toils of benevolent enterprise, it seems desirable that a certain field should be marked out as the scene of their activities. Though perfectly independent and comfortable themselves, it is obvious that they cannot be expected to do a great deal by their own resources in behalf of their brethren in indigence. The only effectual plan is, to unite them in the bonds of a benevolent association, and thus convert them into channels through which the bounty of others may flow to its appropriate objects. I mean not by this to say, that the business of benevolence should be left entirely in the hands of persons of this description. If they have advantages and facilities for benevolent distribution, they are also exposed to peculiar temptations: and we should be sorry to think that the rich thought it sufficient, merely to put their money into the hands of such faithful distributors. Let the higher and wealthier ranks take part in the business; and while they give their donations, let them not forget to give, at the same time, their thoughts, their time, and their active energies. But by all means, let them avail themselves of the services of such as have the leading qualifications while they want the means. On this plan, "the rich and the poor" may be said to meet together; and while they feel towards each other the kind affec-

tions of benevolence, they unite in soothing the troubles of life, and adding to the sum of human enjoyments.

I am aware that *objections* have been brought against the plan and procedure of benevolent associations, and that these objections have been greedily taken up by those who wish a plausible excuse for their selfish parsimony. When men are previously disposed to keep their hands in their pockets, they require little reasoning to induce them to do so. The objections to benevolent associations, magnified, as they have been, and blazoned forth by prejudice—by whim—or by self-interest, seem all to merge into *one* general principle; namely, that benevolent associations give encouragement to the *growth of indigence*, and that they tend to *check the spirit of manly independence*. We admit that there would be some force in the objection, had every individual applicant *a claim* on the bounty of a charitable association as on a legal assessment; and had the association no other object in view than the mere relief of indigence. But in reply to the argument we beg to observe:—

1. That the benevolent associations, whose claims we advocate, are entirely *voluntary* in their constitution and procedure. Every case that is proposed is minutely examined; and relief, more or less, is given according as the character and circumstances of the applicants recommend them as suitable. On this plan, the society has it fully as much in its power to exercise discrimination, as a solitary individual; nay, more: The diffusive benevolence of an individual is almost certain of being imposed on by the worthless; that of a society is far more likely to be cautious and careful in its operations.

2. The objection applies equally to *charitable associations of every description*. A society for the education of poor children; or for the gratuitous circulation of the Sacred Scriptures; or for reclaiming the abandoned to the paths of virtue, may each in their own way be abused by the indolent, the mean spirited, and the vicious. In all this, however, there can be no objection to the general principle on which such societies are formed. The only practical inference which it warrants is, that in all cases of gratuitous distribution, the greatest care, and caution, and judgment, ought to be exercised. But for this very reason, benevolent associations are to be preferred, as involving less risque of error and mistake.

3. Benevolent associations have *certain specified objects*. They are not designed for the ordinary classes of the poor, nor for the ordinary kinds of pauperism. The design of their institution is *special*. It is for behoof of the aged men or the aged women whose wants must, at all times, be clamant; or it is for the widow, the orphan, and the fatherless, of whom there must be, in every state of society, a large proportion: or it is for the sick and wounded, who, for a season, have been thrown destitute on the public. When a benevolent association is formed for *general poverty*, it is not understood to be permanent. It is intended only to relieve immediate want or distress, brought on by particular local or temporary circumstances; and when the precise object is attained, the association naturally dissolves. In this way, there is very little encouragement given to reliance on such associations as a fund of permanent provision. *

4. The *funds* and the *occasional distributions* of such societies are so scanty as almost to prevent the possibility of undue dependence on them for maintenance. The societies uniformly denounce as absurd and chimerical the idea of their making provision for absolute want. This is not their object: They aim merely to *assist* the industrious—to supply an occasional want—or to relieve from present sickness—or to ward off a threatening evil—or to furnish a few simple comforts to such as are placed beyond the reach of them. The supply which they can afford to bestow on individuals is altogether inadequate to their support; and those must be very ignorant or very indolent indeed, who can presume to depend on it as an ultimate resource.

5. Benevolent associations have it generally in view to *encourage industry, as well as to relieve* distress. In the annals of a benevolent association indeed, there must be many who are simply the objects of charity—such as old men and old women, whose industry has supported them when able to exert it, but who, in the course of Providence, have been reduced to indigence. But in every case where the smallest effort for personal support can be made, there the benevolent association feels itself bound to give efficacy and encouragement to that effort. It provides the instruments, or it opens the sphere of exertion—or it interests the public in favour of industrious

* As examples of this species of benevolent associations, we refer to the accounts, given in Part Second, of the *Destitute Poor Society* and *Clothing Society* of Paisley, as well as others of a similar nature.

poverty. We may safely say this of almost all the benevolent associations whose claims have been submitted to the public. They all make it a principal object to encourage an active and independent spirit; to counteract servility and indolence; to administer the most salutary advice to the children of poverty; and to supply, if necessary, the means of moral and religious instruction. The adversaries of such associations confine themselves to the supposed effects of the small pecuniary donation which may from time to time be given. They leave out of their computation, the truly moral and Christian effects produced on the objects of social sympathy, by the visits which are paid to their habitations—by the kind interest which they *feel* to be taken in them—by the affectionate inquiries which are, from time to time, made into their state and circumstances —by the seasonable reproof and advice administered—by the books and other instruments of instruction which are furnished —and by the thousand nameless offices of tenderness which the ministers of beneficence are in the daily habit of discharging toward the objects of their care.* Indeed we may be warranted to affirm, that few, if any, of the benevolent associations at present existing, proceed on any other principles than those of religion and morality. If there are any who disown such principles, and profess to aim at nothing more than the secular good of men, we pretend not to defend them. They may do good in so far, but their constitution is sadly defective. A benevolent association is then only deserving of unqualified approbation, when it gives encouragement to habits of moral order and sobriety—when it promotes the influence of religious education—when it encourages the reading of the sacred records—when it gives advices suited to the moral character and habits of its objects—when, in short, it exhibits the concerns of secular industry, and of mental improvement, in close and inseparable union. When associations proceed on such principles as these, and almost all of those now in operation do recognise such principles, we may safely affirm, that their tendency is favourable, not to indolence, but to sober industry, to manly independence, and to social virtue.

6. Lastly, An objection precisely the same may be brought but with double force against private charity. Suppose the scheme of individual beneficence to be realized in all the ex-

* As illustrative of all this we refer to the account given of the Paisley Female Benevolent Society, and of the Edinburgh Destitute Sick Society, &c See "Facts and Documents:" Part Second.

tent to which its friends would wish to carry it, what would be the inevitable consequence? There would not be a *society* to trust to; but there would be a number of *individuals* possessing all the generosity of the most generous association, without any of its cool and deliberate procedure. In a case like this, we may take as competent witnesses, the idle, the slothful, the mean-spirited, and the profligate part of the population. Put the question to them—Whether would they prefer as a ground of dependence, the cautious and limited pittance of a charitable institution; or the open-hearted generous donations of a wealthy and benevolent individual? Have you not found that an idle mendicant at your door has been uniformly better pleased when you supplied his wants personally, than when you sent him with a recommendation to a benevolent society? On the comparative tendencies of social and individual charity to promote a dependent and dastardly spirit we can refer to experience; and one fact on such a subject as this, is worth many arguments from abstract reason. A few years ago a society was formed in Edinburgh, for "the suppression of begging; for the relief of occasional distress, and for the encouragement of industry among the poor." Their professed object was to encourage a spirit of independence, and to check the growing evils of pauperism. They had many obstacles to combat; but what I ask, was the greatest by far of these obstacles? Of what do they most bitterly complain as subversive of their plan? Not of the plans and operations of benevolent associations—not of the female friendly societies for relief of the indigent—not of the clothing society—not of the orphan hospitals—not of the destitute poor, or destitute sick societies. Of these they say nothing, because they had no evil to say of them. But of what do they complain? They complain in all their Reports, and most justly, of the evils of indiscriminate and profuse *private almsgiving;* as tending more than any other cause to increase the evils of pauperism, and to induce a character of servility and dependence. To the testimony of this most useful society we confidently appeal as sufficient to cast the balance in favour of benevolent associations, against all the speculations of abstract theorists, and all the prejudices of ignorant pretenders.

It has been objected to benevolent associations that they are in danger of abusing the public bounty, because they are under no direct responsibility. Never was there a more futile and ill founded objection brought against any institution. If it has

any force whatever, it can apply only in the case of chartered establishments, for whom ample funds have been provided, independently of the voluntary beneficence of the public; and yet it is certain that even these establishments pledge themselves to lay their accounts regularly before the public, and the humblest individual who can state an interest, may call on them imperiously to do so. But in regard to such benevolent associations as we have been all along defending—associations which depend for their very existence on the continued favour and countenance of the public—the responsibility is the most serious that can be conceived. From year to year, their accounts must be audited and a statement submitted to the public eye, of all their intromissions. If they dare not make such an appeal as this, they have assuredly lost the confidence of the public, and must speedily expire.

Taking it for granted that the principle of benevolent associations is essentially a good one, the question has been asked, Ought *females* to engage in the business of such associations? We would reply to this question by putting another. We would ask then, Upon what principles of reason or of religion would you exclude *one half* of the species from the delights of beneficence? If it be said, Let females exercise their charity at home, and not come before the public in the attitude of a formal and regularly organized association: we would again request to be informed, On what principle of reason or of common sense, would you restrain the benevolent feelings which are by far the most *social* of all our feelings; and tie them down to all the pensiveness and all the dreariness of solitude? We would farther request to know the principle on which you act, when you guarantee to the female world the right, and the exclusive right, of consulting and determining upon the laws which are to regulate your conduct in regard to the fashions and the amusements of the season; while you sneer or frown at them when they proceed from trifles to what is substantially useful and express a wish to make their talents and their influence subservient to the prosperity and improvement of their brethren? I never yet heard a lady of fashion found fault with as acting inconsistently with her character and her station, because she formed one of a party, or in other words, of a *society* to patronize an assembly—or to encourage a musical festival—or to raise from the ranks of pauperism an unfortunate comedian—or to give *eclat* to the pretensions of some aspiring votary of the Muse»

I demand then, on what principle of consistency do you proceed when you tolerate female zeal, and female union, and female enterprise in *every case* excepting only when that zeal, and that union, and that enterprise chance to take a direction in favour of what is in itself, and by your own confession, benevolent and praise-worthy? We hesitate not to say, that the sympathies and the distributions of charity do with peculiar propriety devolve on the female sex; and that in multiplied instances of human wretchedness, they, and they alone, are the natural and the competent administrators of the public bounty.

There are *three* reasons why we consider *female* benevolent associations as peculiarly agreeable to the character and the station of the female sex. The one is, that the investigations and the distributions of charity accord particularly with the mildness, the gentleness, the patience, the perseverance, which hold such a prominent place in the female character. The second is, that in the varieties of affliction which distress humanity, there are particular cases into which the other sex cannot with propriety inquire, and of which they are altogether incompetent to judge. The third is, that in such departments of charity as the distribution of female clothing, the encouragement of female industry, and the improvement of the habits and houses of the female poor, the female sex must from the obvious nature of the case be far better qualified to judge of what is right and proper to be done in every case that may come under review. On these principles, the application of which is obvious, we rest the vindication of female benevolent associations, and hesitate not to give them a place among the brightest ornaments of the female character.

---

Having taken this review of the principles on which benevolent associations are established, and having vindicated them from certain objections which have been brought against them, I shall finish this Dissertation by suggesting a few practical directions to those who may be engaged in the business of such institutions.

1. Benevolent associations ought to have for their immediate object, not so much the relief of *general indigence*, as the alleviation of *particular* and *special* instances of distress. For general poverty, the legally established resources appear to be amply

sufficient, except in cases of extraordinary pressure when *temporary* associations may be formed. Institutions which are designed to be permanent ought to address themselves peculiarly to the specific cases of occasional distress—unavoidable casualties—the wants of strangers, and the infirmities of old age. By thus limiting the object, the plan of operation is simplified; the labours of managers are facilitated; and the dangers of abuse and imposition are greatly lessened.

2. Benevolent associations should pay a marked regard to that distress which may be termed *involuntary;* as not being the result of wilful misconduct or habits of improvidence. The wants of the blind—the lame—the constitutionally diseased—the weak in mind—the unfortunate through unforeseen casualties—aged men, or aged women, who have had no suitable opportunities of providing against future evils;—the wants of all such ought to carry a powerful claim with them on the sympathies of social beneficence. The distresses indeed which have been the result of improvidence or misconduct must not be entirely overlooked: but there ought ever to be a *marked difference* between the mode of treatment applied to them, and to such as are involuntary. If this is not particularly attended to, the improvident and the worthless may be tempted to rely on the resources of charity.

3. While benevolent associations aim at the relief of bodily wants, they should make it a special object to encourage industry—and cleanliness—and frugality—and moral and religious habits among the poor; and with this view, should distribute the scriptures and religious tracts, encourage attendance at the house of God, and seek to secure the moral education of poor children.

4. The business of all such associations should be conducted with as little parade, and bustle, and display, as is consistent with the accomplishment of their objects. The more nearly that the distributions of an associated body resemble, in this respect, the charities of private individuals, the better. There is a danger of exciting expectations which may never be realized.

5. Every appearance of vanity, ostentation, or self-conceit among the administrators of social charity should be carefully guarded against.

6. The members of *one* society should not even *appear* to be jealous of *others;* nor should they allow their affections to be so completely engrossed by one object, as to overlook all others as unworthy of notice; on the other hand, they ought

to associate with the members of other societies, from time to time, that they may each understand one another's motions, and *proportion* their benevolence accordingly.

Lastly, The office bearers of benevolent associations should consider themselves possessed of equal power in all matters connected with the society; and all appearances of assumed authority should be carefully and promptly checked.

## APPENDIX.

The Rev. Mr. Andrew Thomson, Minister of St. George's, Edinburgh, has lately circulated a series of Queries, embracing the various lights in which benevolent associations may be viewed. If information on the different topics is liberally and promptly furnished from the different districts of the country, I have no doubt, that, with the talents of the gentleman who has taken the business in hand, a work of permanent interest and utility will be produced. The following are the Queries, with replies that were given to them, in reference to the

### PAISLEY FEMALE BENEVOLENT SOCIETY.

| QUERIES. | ANSWERS. |
|---|---|
| 1. When was your Society instituted? | 1. November, 1811. |
| 2. What are its special objects? Or to what description of persons does it confine its benevolent attentions? | 2. Aged indigent females. |
| 3. Over what district do its operations extend? | 3. The town and suburbs. |
| 4. Have you a visiting Committee, and of what number does it consist? | 4. Thirty-six; Superintendents and Visitors. |
| 5. How many individuals have you relieved during the last year? | 5. Five hundred and thirty-four. |
| 6. How long have any of them received assistance from you? | 6. Some from the commencement; others, more or less. |

| QUERIES. | ANSWERS. |
|---|---|
| 7. Do you find them in general grateful, or the contrary? | 7. In general grateful; although among such a large number, there must be instances of ingratitude, as may naturally be expected. |
| 8. Do you give the alms of the Society altogether in money? or partly in meal, clothes, coals, &c. | 8. Of late, *principally* in clothes, coals, &c. At first, about one half of the funds was given in *money*. |
| 9. How much money do you expend annually? How much of that is got by public Collections, and how much by Subscriptions, Donations, &c. | 9. Average £300; of which £80 by Collection; the rest, Subscription. |
| 10. Have you any permanent funds? Or do you depend entirely upon the public bounty? | 10. Entirely on public bounty. |
| 11. What is the smallest sum that any of your poor persons receive? What is the largest? And what is the ordinary sum? | 11. For the last two years there has been almost no money given. Previous to these, three shillings per month was about the average of distribution to each receiver. There was also given occasional charity, to industrious females to defray rent, &c. |
| 12. Do the members of your Visiting Committee inquire with much strictness into the circumstances of those who obtain relief, before that relief is given? | 12. With very great strictness. They see more and more the necessity of this in order to prevent imposition. |
| 13. Do they visit weekly? Or how often? | 13. *Monthly:* but some more and others less frequently. The extent of visitaton is also regulated by the *state* of the pensioners. |
| 14. Does bad character prevent you from giving any thing at all? or if it does not, has it any effect in making you less liberal? | 14. *Decided and open bad character* prevents from giving any thing; and in *all cases*, character, as good, bad, or indifferent, regulates the mode and measure of distribution. |
| 15. Are you aware that your attention to the persons whom you visit, and to whose wants you minister, ever prevents them from applying to the parish funds? Or does it prevent them from being so great a burden on these funds as they would otherwise be? | 15. It prevents some from becoming a *permanent* burden; and others from being a burden to the *same extent* as without this aid; but the pittance both of the Society and of the Session is so small as to make together a very slender ground of dependence. |

| QUERIES. | ANSWERS. |
|---|---|
| 16. Do yonr Visitors make it a point to inquire, and, if possible, to ascertain, whether they are already receiving supply from the Parish Funds, or from any other funds? | 16. Very particular inquiry is made. |
| 17. Are your Visitors ever instrumental in getting any of the relations of your poor to be kinder to them than it is likely they would otherwise have been? | 17. Very often; und this matter is particularly attended to. |
| 18. Does it appear to your Committee that the care you take of your poor has the effect of preventing their friends and relations from supplying their wants or assisting them? | 18. No. The Society apply *first* to the friends, and if they shew any disposition to rely on the attentions of the Society, these attentions are *withdrawn*, or lessened, or modified accordingly. |
| 19. Does it often, or sometimes, happen that your Visitors discover persons labouring under great distress, who might not probably have been otherwise cared for ? | 19. Very often. The severest distress is unknown. |
| 20. Do many persons apply for aid, who, on inquiry, are found not to be proper or needy objects? | 20. Many, as may always be expected. |
| 21. Is the number of applicants upon the whole increasing? And if so, do you think this is owing to an increase of real distress? Or to what other cause may it be ascribed? | 21. Of late years, the "real distress," particularly of females, has greatly increased with us, through the cessation of the thread trade, and the diminution in the wages of female industry. During last year circumstances have in these respects changed for the better; but still in a population of 40,000, there must at all times be many deserving objects. |
| 22. Do the Visitors consider it a part of their duty to attend to the religious and moral welfare of their Poor, in the way of giving them a good advice, furnishing them with a Tract, procuring for them a Bible, &c? | 22. They pay *very particular* attention to this; and *especially* they ascertain whether all the family *can read*, and *have Bibles*. If not, they endeavour, if possible, to supply the want.—They insist particularly on the poor keeping themselves and their houses clean. |

| QUERIES. | ANSWERS. |
| --- | --- |
| 23. Is it your opinion that the personal visiting and attention of the Committee, have a good effect on the temper and character of those whom they thus care for? | 23. There is not the least doubt of it. Their visits, &c. have been eminently useful. |
| 24. Are you ever imposed upon by those who do not need, and do not deserve? Or do you find your personal inquiries, in general, a sufficient guard against imposition? | 24. Besides personal visitation, minute inquiry is made of the Elder of the Quarter, the neighbours and acquaintances, &c.; and these precautions *in general* are found sufficient; though certainly the members of the Society do not claim *infallibility*. |
| 25. Do you find much, or any difficulty, in getting well qualified Persons to undertake the duty of Visitors? | 25. Very great; for many refuse to come forward who might be expected to do so. |

# DISSERTATION XI.

## ON THE MORAL TENDENCY AND EFFECTS OF SABBATH SCHOOLS.

ROBERT RAIKES, the father and the founder of Sunday Schools in England, and whose name deserves to be associated in the ranks of benevolence with those of Howard, and Sharp, and Reynolds, was born at Gloucester, in the year 1735. He was by trade a printer, and proprietor as well as publisher of the *Gloucester Journal*, in which capacity he raised himself honourably to wealth and respectability. His heart seems to have been endowed with a susceptibility of benevolent impressions; and his natural dispositions, purified and exalted by the influence of Christian principle, prompted him to seek, with avidity and perseverance, the temporal and the spiritual welfare of his fellow creatures around him. The first object which engaged his philanthropic exertions, was the miserable situation of the prisoners confined for lesser crimes in the county jail, for whose instruction and reformation he made a noble and successful struggle.

The circumstances which led him to think of the establishment of Sunday Schools were simple and interesting. One morning, happening to be in the suburbs of the city of Gloucester, where the lowest of the people who are chiefly employed in the pin manufactory reside, he was struck with concern at seeing a group of children, wretchedly ragged, at play in the streets. By a woman to whom he applied for information, he was told that the state of things on Sundays was infinitely worse; for that then the street was filled with multitudes of idle and ill-disposed young persons, who, released on that day from their

employment, spent their time in noise and riot, playing at their usual games, and cursing and swearing in a manner too horrid to be described. A few of them were kept at school during the week, by the worthy clergyman of the place; but on Sabbath they were all given up to follow their inclinations without restraint, as their parents, totally abandoned themselves, had no idea of instilling into the minds of their children, principles to which they themselves were strangers. It immediately occurred to Mr. Raikes that something might be done to check this deplorable profanation of the Sabbath, as well as to promote the reformation and improvement of the young. As Sabbath was the only day when the greater part of the children were at leisure to attend instruction, he engaged four female teachers for that day, and placed under their care as many of the children as could be induced to attend, giving the teachers a small gratuity for their trouble, and binding them to teach the pupils to read the scriptures, and to repeat the catechism of the church of England. The clergyman of the district immediately gave his cheerful patronage, and stimulated the teachers and taught, by periodical visitations of the schools. In a very short time the effects of the system were strongly perceived, in the change on the outward appearance and behaviour of the children,—in the manner in which the Sabbath was observed,—in the vast numbers who learned to read and repeat the Scriptures,—in the increasing comfort of the parents,—and in the moral improvement of the district and city at large. The schools were held in the mornings and evenings of the Lord's day; and, in the interval, the children were all conducted by their teachers to the places of public worship, whither, previous to the adoption of the plan, neither they nor their parents were ever found to resort. In a very short time, the plan, thus sanctioned by experience, was adopted by other individuals in the city and suburbs; and during the course of the third year from the commencement of the first attempt, about 300 of the children of the poorest and most ignorant were in regular and constant training to habits of piety and good order. "If," says the benevolent leader in the good work, in a letter to one of his friends, "if the glory of God be promoted in any, even the smallest degree, society must reap some benefit. If good seed be sown in the mind, at an early period of human life, though it shews itself not again for many years, it may please God at some future period to cause it to spring up, and to bring forth a plenteous harvest."

It appears that Mr. Raikes' effort commenced in the end of

1781, or beginning of 1782. Information as to the nature, operations, and success of his scheme, was communicated widely to the public, through the medium of the newspapers and periodical journals. An extensive correspondence commenced, and was carried on between Mr. Raikes and the friends of religion and the poor in all parts of England, and schools on his plan were speedily organized in the different counties. Christians of all denominations, wondering that the scheme should never have been devised before, seemed determined to repair as much as possible the mischief of past neglect, by applying, with the utmost diligence, the benefits of this new discovery in the world of morals and religion. On the 7th of September 1785, there was held at London a public meeting of Christians of all sects and classes, at which that eminent Christian senator and philanthropist, the late lamented Henry Thornton, presided, when a society was formed, under the designation of "the Society for the support and encouragement of Sunday schools in the different counties of England." This establishment was exceedingly beneficial to the growing cause. By the respectability of its members, it increased the public confidence; by their talents, it enlightened the public mind; by their activity, it stimulated the public zeal; and by their property, it assisted the public expenditure. A great proportion of the nobility, and of the bishops and clergy, came forward as coadjutors in the good cause. Among the dignitaries who patronized the plan, the then Bishops of Salisbury and Landaff, and the Deans of Canterbury and Lincoln, obtained a conspicuous place by their zeal and talents. Among the nobility, we must notice particularly the late Lord Barham, who gave not only his name and his purse, but his bodily and mental capacities to the service; and for more than 30 years adorned the institution by his talents and his piety. Among the most active of the ordinary members, we must enrol the names of Wilberforce, the Thorntons, Granville Sharp, and others of the same spirit. So rapidly had the flame spread through the country, that by the close of 1786, it is conjectured that not less than *two hundred and fifty thousand* children were every Sunday receiving instruction.

The schools were at first universally conducted by *hired* teachers. This occasioned two evils of great magnitude. The one was, an extent of expenditure which the society could not sustain, and by which their efforts would be inevitably cramped. The other was, that hireling teachers were not found, and could scarcely be expected, to possess either the zeal or ability of those

who engage in the work from motives of pure benevolence. Accordingly the plan was gradually changed. Teachers of approved talents, and prompted by considerations of pure benevolence, were selected by the society, and the good effects were soon perceived. It was not, however, until 1800, that this part of the plan was brought into general operation.

By the Report of the Society, read at the general meeting on the 16th April, 1817, it appears, that besides aid in money, and other ways, the society has, since its commencement, given 460,342 spelling books, 90,233 Testaments, and 8,166 Bibles, for the use of 4,917 schools, containing upwards of 410,000 scholars. Applications have been repeatedly made to it from New South Wales and from Ceylon, for assistance in the education of the numerous children in those colonies, and such assistance has on all occasions been most cheerfully granted by the Society.

On July 13, 1803, a public meeting was held in London, when the *Sunday School Union* was formed. Its professed objects, as stated in the constitution and plan, are, to stimulate and encourage each other in the education and religious instruction of the ignorant,—to improve the methods of tuition by mutual communication and advice,—to extend old schools, and ascertain those situations in London and its vicinity where Sunday schools are most wanted, and to endeavour to establish them, to print books, &c. suited for Sunday schools, at a cheap rate,—to correspond with ministers and others, in the united kingdom, and abroad, relative to Sunday schools, and to afford them such assistance as they can supply—and, finally, to promote the formation of country and auxiliary Sunday school unions. The society takes no concern in the internal management of any of the schools, but by encouragement and aid, endeavours to diffuse life and energy through them all. Its managers have compiled a spelling book, particularly designed, and certainly well calculated for facilitating the business of religious instruction; and in 1806, they published a very useful tract entitled "A Plan for the Regulation and Formation of Sunday Schools." The various local unions in connexion with them, have been the means of extending education to innumerable places which would have been otherwise destitute. From the local societies, which have been formed in only a part of the empire, reports are regularly received, from which it appears that there are at present upwards of 200,000 children under Christian instruction in the

Sunday schools connected with the union. Among the effects which have resulted from the formation of the London and other Sunday school unions, may be mentioned, the establishment of new schools in neglected parts of large towns, and amidst the darkness of benighted villages—a fresh excitement given to those employed in the work of tuition—the diffusion of Christian affection, and in many instances a great improvement in the modes of instruction. The formation of the Sunday School Union must therefore be regarded as an event of vast importance to the success of this valuable scheme.

Hitherto the efforts of Sunday schools had been confined to children and young people. In England and Wales it was soon found that *adults* frequently stood in as much need of attention as the young. Accordingly schools for their behoof have been established in various parts of the kingdom, and promise the best effects. The honour of commencing these is due to the Rev. Mr. Charles of Bala, whose name will long be associated in the pious mind, with all that is sublime in practical godliness, and with all that is captivating in the efforts of enlightened benevolence. This man had long been distinguished as the successor of Mr. Jones in the system of *Circulating Schools*, so admirably adapted to the physical circumstances of such a country as Wales, and which were blessed with such signal effects on the moral character and state of the inhabitants of that interesting department of the British empire * He early turned his attention to the importance of Sunday schools; and in the course of frequent journies through the principality, was made instrumental in establishing them, wherever there was real necessity and the requisite encouragement. It was not, however, till the summer of 1811, that Mr. Charles directed his mind to the establishment of Sunday schools for adults. "We had," says he, "no particular school for the instruction of adults *exclusively*, till the summer of 1811, but many attended the Sunday schools with the children, in different parts of the country, previous to that time. What induced me first to think of establishing such an institution, was the aversion I found in the adults to associate with the children in their schools. The first attempt succeeded wonderfully, and far beyond my most sanguine expectations.

* The establishment of the British and Foreign Bible Society was chiefly owing to the demand for Bibles from the schools in Wales, through the medium of Mr. Charles.

The report of the success of this school soon spread over the country; and in many places the illiterate adults began to call for instruction." "As the adults have no time to lose, we endeavour (before they can read) to instruct them, without delay, in the first principles of Christianity. We select a short portion of Scripture, comprising the leading doctrines, and repeat them to the learners, till they can retain them in their memories, and which they are to repeat the next time we meet." The work thus begun under such favourable auspices by Mr. Charles, has since his death prospered under the fostering care of those good men who have imbibed his spirit, and entered into his labours.

In 1812, at the second anniversary of the Bristol Bible Society, a letter was read by one of the Secretaries, from which it appeared that "many poor inhabitants of the city and district were omitted in the distribution of Bibles, *from their inability to read them.*" The statement made a powerful impression on the mind of a humble but pious individual present, of the name of William Smith. His benevolent mind longed to impart instruction to ignorant adults who were perishing for lack of knowledge. He laid his proposal before Stephen Prust, Esq. a respectable and truly philanthropic merchant of Bristol; and by him, as well as by the immortal Reynolds and others, he was liberally encouraged and aided in his scheme. In the course of collecting subscriptions for the Bible society next day, he took down the names of those persons who could not read, but who were willing to learn; and in a few days his school was opened with eleven men and ten women. The number rapidly increased, till after a few weeks a society was formed for the special purpose of teaching grown up persons on Sundays to read the Scriptures. Besides those already mentioned, the society soon received the active co-operation of Thomas Pole, M. D. one of the society of Friends, who has published a full account of the experiment. Within the period of two years, this society admitted 1,508 scholars, exclusive of 276, which were taught in schools belonging to several dissenting congregations. The spirit has been caught in other places. In London a society similar to that of Bristol has been established, and many schools for adults are under their patronage. In almost all the large towns in England the same plan has been adopted; and we may now rationally indulge the hope, that by means of these institutions, combined with the schools of the *National Society*, and the

*British and Foreign School Society*, the rising generation in England will yet exhibit to the philanthropic eye a scene somewhat similar to that which has long been exhibited by the land of our fathers.

The situation of Scotland was, as it has all along been, very different from that of England in the matter of education. In England the idea of Sunday schools was excited, not by the consideration of the need of *religious* instruction, so much as by the fact that the great mass of the lower orders were *without any instruction whatever*. No regular system of education having been provided, the inevitable consequence was, that the children of the lower orders were generally allowed to grow up in ignorance, vice, and wretchedness. In order to meet this exigency, Sunday schools were thought of as at least a partial expedient. No doubt, the communication of moral and religious knowledge, and the formation of moral and religious habits, were kept in view by Mr. Raikes and his coadjutors, but still we maintain that the circumstance which first prompted to the benevolent effort, was the generally prevalent want of instruction. In Scotland, it is obvious that Sunday schools, on precisely the same plan, *could not possibly* exist. Here the great mass of the community enjoy the invaluable blessing of early education. Not only since the union, but long before it, and even to a certain extent, up to the very era of the Reformation, Scotland has enjoyed the advantages of a regularly organized system of education, by means of the parochial schools. For this our forefathers long contended, and at length, after many a hard struggle with bigotry and with avarice, Divine Providence blessed their labours with success. The benefits of the system are not confined exclusively, as some seem to think, to the *southern* part of our country. No doubt, they are there for obvious reasons enjoyed to a greater extent; but still it is a fact, that now, and for a considerable time back, very few parishes indeed, whether in the South or in the North, are destitute of their parochial school. For the establishment of such institutions in the northern parts of the island, we are mainly indebted to the exertions of the society in Scotland for propagating Christian knowledge, who make it an essential principle in their plan, never to establish one of their schools until the legally authorised provision has been made, and found to be inadequate to the exigency. Let it also be recollected, that in the education prescribed for our parochial

schools, religion has always occupied a distinguished place; and in a multitude of instances, we believe, that it still receives due attention from the respectable teachers. By this means, as also by the salutary operation of private and charity schools —by the exertions of the clergy who are always resident—and by the co-operation of a vigilant and zealous dissenting ministry, the moral situation of Scotland was so different from that of England, as to render the application of the same means not only unnecessary, but prejudicial to the best interests of the country.

Still it must be supposed, that in this country, as well as in England, there will be many parents who are either unable or unwilling to instruct their children—and many children who are permitted to spend their Sabbaths in ignorance and vice. This must be particularly the case in large towns, and in manufacturing districts. Accordingly Sabbath evening schools, expressly for the purpose of communicating Christian knowledge, may be considered as highly desirable, and as even absolutely necessary. They have, in consequence been always attended to. For a period long before Mr Raikes and his coadjutors began their benevolent career, it was not uncommon for the ministers of all denominations, assisted by their office-bearers, to devote part of the Lord's day to catechetical examination of the young, precisely upon the plan of a Sabbath school. Let us not forget the deeds of our pious fathers. We love to cherish their memory, and to record their names and their labours.

Perhaps the first regularly organized Sabbath school in Scotland was taught upwards of half a century ago, under the superintendence of the Rev. David Blair, one of the ministers of the city and parish of Brechin, Angus-shire. That venerable man was long distinguished by his primitive piety and zeal, and his memory is still fragrant in the district which witnessed and enjoyed the benefits of his laborious exertions. The parish over which he presided was populous; and as a means of aiding the instructions of parents, he wisely adopted the plan of a Sabbath evening school. We have reason to hope that others, particularly in populous towns, followed his example, but their names we regret that it is not in our power to record. In the town of Paisley a Sabbath school was in operation between 30 and 40 years ago, sanctioned by the magistrates, and regularly visited, from time to time, by the clergymen of the established church. In Glasgow also, Sabbath

schools have for the same period existed, under the superintendence of the ministers and kirk session.

The society for propagating Christian knowledge, was incorporated by royal charter in 1709, and many of its schools, both in the Highlands and Lowlands, are held on Sabbath as well as on other days, and are consecrated to the business of sacred instruction.

It was, we believe, in the year 1787, that the "Society for promoting Religious Knowledge among the poor" was formed at Edinburgh. Its object is to promote the knowledge and practice of religion among the lower and poorer classes; partly by the distribution of bibles and religious publications at a cheap rate; and partly by the establishment of Sabbath schools for religious instruction. The society has been honoured in doing much good. It still exists, and superintends between 20 and 30 schools in various parts of the country, as well as in Edinburgh and its vicinity; and we trust the time will soon come, when it shall again acquire that degree of efficiency and support to which it is justly entitled.

The spirit for the establishment of Sabbath schools was rapidly diffused through all the large towns and populous districts of the country. In Edinburgh, Glasgow, Paisley, Aberdeen, Greenock, Perth, and in almost all the towns of any considerable size, societies have been formed for the establishment and patronage of schools for the religious instruction of the young and the ignorant. It would require a volume to narrate the history, and progress, and results of these institutions. Suffice it to say, that they are all formed on the same general principles, and are conducted nearly on the same plan. There is one leading feature which distinguishes them all, and which stamps the Sabbath schools of our country with a distinguishing excellence. We beg it may be kept in mind, that the design of all these institutions in Scotland, is *exclusively* the communication of religious knowledge to the young. They have nothing to do with the mere mechanical business of general education. *That* is provided for by other institutions; and the day of God is entirely devoted, as it ought to be, to the more immediate concerns of the soul and eternity. I have had many opportunities both of visiting and engaging in the business of these institutions; and have no hesitation in saying, that when conducted with prudence, judgment, and zeal, they are fitted to render unspeakable blessings to the country which owns and patronizes them.

The spirit of the Sabbath school institutions has not confined itself to our native land. In Ireland, in addition to the schools hitherto in operation, there was formed in 1809, the "Sunday School Society for Ireland," under the powerful patronage of the Duke and Duchess of Dorset, the members for the county and city of Dublin, many of the Bishops, and a splendid list of the nobility and gentry of the country. Their object is, not to establish schools of their own, but to give encouragement to Sabbath institutions already formed, or to encourage their formation by the promise of aid. The aid they give consists of Spelling-books, Bibles, Testaments, &c. Up to the year ending April last, they had given assistance to 554 schools, in which are taught 59,888 children; most of whom also attend the schools during the week.—The "Hibernian Society" was formed at London in 1806; and by last Report it appears, that the number of their schools (most of which are kept on Sabbaths as on other days) is at present about 450, and the scholars upwards of 40,000.—In 1815 was established at London, the "Irish Circulating School Society," for teaching the poor Irish to read the Scriptures in their native tongue. Their schools are kept on Sabbath as well as during the week, and contain at present about 5,000 children. The Reports of all these institutions I have read, from time to time, and I must be allowed to say, that they all deserve well of their country and of the Christian world. Opposed they are, and have been, by Catholic intolerance; but their light is clear and steady, and it must be diffusive.

In France, Ceylon, New South Wales, and in other parts of the world, several Sabbath schools have been recently established; and in the United States of America, they have commenced two years ago, under favourable auspices. In the year 1815, schools for *adults* were established in Philadelphia and New York; and in the beginning of 1816, Sabbath schools on an extensive scale were set on foot at the latter of these cities, where the need of them was peculiarly great. The example will, we doubt not, be rapidly copied by the other cities and towns of the United States; and it will give us pleasure to hear of the adoption of the same, or similar plans, throughout the extensive colonies of Great Britain in the more northern parts of the new world.

But it may be asked, Have the beneficial effects of Sunday schools borne any proportion to the expectations and hopes of their friends and supporters? In answer we appeal to the ex-

perience of those who have engaged in the business of them, or who have candidly and carefully watched their progress; and for the sake of those who may not have access to such experience, we appeal to the mass of evidence lately laid before the House of Commons on the state of *education*, and on the state of *mendicity* and *pauperism* in the metropolis. We cannot quote the testimonies of all the respectable witnesses who were examined on the occasion; but we must be allowed to select, as a specimen, the testimony of Joseph Butterworth. Esq M. P. for Coventry, a gentleman who ranks high in the scale of Christian principle and patriotic benevolence. The following is part of the examination.

" Do you think it necessary to encourage both day and Sunday schools, and for what reason?"—' I am decidedly of opinion that both are necessary. Each has its peculiar excellencies: the day school to instruct in reading, writing, and accounts; to preserve from idleness; to induce habits of industry, subordination, and order. The Sunday school is more particularly adapted to instruct in moral and religious duties; and, therefore, to raise the moral character of the poor on its proper basis of true religion. Sunday schools are also useful and necessary to teach reading to that numerous class of children, who have not opportunity of attending day schools. There are a great number of poor children, who are employed by their parents during the week, either nursing younger children, attending to household work, or engaged in labour, who have no other opportunity than that afforded on Sundays, for obtaining instruction. Sunday schools have also the advantage of inducing the habit of attending public worship, and creating a reverence for the sabbath day; points much insisted on in all well-regulated Sunday schools.'

" Have you practically, in your observations on Sunday schools, seen particular good effects from them?"—' I have had many opportunities of seeing their good effects in a series of years; but more particularly of late, my attention has been drawn to the subject in consequence of some scandalous reports from Newgate, made to the disadvantage of schools in general, and among others, of one of the Sunday schools of which I am treasurer. It was determined to visit the children and their parents at their own habitations, and thoroughly to investigate their several characters. Five hundred were so visited. I called upon upwards of 80 children myself, and I was highly satisfied with the general report made by their parents, friends, or employers,

of the benefits they had received at the school, and of their general good behaviour. Much good also I found had been done to the parents themselves. Many had been induced to read the Bible which they before had neglected, and also to attend public worship, which formerly they were not in the habit of doing. Many of the elder children in the same families, who were once in the school, were now grown up, married, and settled, of whom I heard from their parents very excellent accounts. I have the names, addresses, and particulars of many interesting cases which were visited. The practical benefit of Sunday schools to society is incalculable; for not only the principles of loyalty and obedience are instilled into the minds of the children, but they are fitted to serve the state in various ways, by being taught to serve themselves in an industrious and honest course of life. The attachment of children to Sunday schools, and their improvement in them, is very considerable. A small school has lately been instituted in St. Giles's, where some few of the teachers from a large school, were induced to attend, from the wretched state of that neighbourhood. The school has only been opened about four or five months, and its good effects are already visible in the neighbourhood, and the progress of the scholars in learning is surprising.'—'As visitor, I have been in the habit of receiving many respectful and grateful letters of thanks from the children, for the benefits which they have received, and of which they appear to be deeply sensible."

The whole of this valuable report is interesting, and throws much light on the moral effects of religious education.

We add the following gratifying testimony given by the Edinburgh Gratis Sabbath School Society, in reference to their own schools. The statement may apply to all of the same kind.

"The reports of the teachers with respect to the state of their schools for the last year, are, in general, highly satisfactory. Several boys and girls appear to have died in a humble confidence in their Saviour, and in the hope of eternal life. Many who survive, afford evidences of real piety; a still greater number are promising characters; and the great majority are regular in their attendance, diligent in preparing their lessons, and there is reason to think, well behaved in their general conduct. In some places, the schools have wrought a visible improvement in the manners, not only of the children, but also of their parents. Your committee can state, from personal knowledge, that several young persons, who are apparently pious and consistent

characters, date their first serious impressions from the instruction they received in your schools."*

It may appear surprising, that a system apparently fraught with such blessings to society and to the church, should nevertheless stand in need of vindication. We mean not to notice the puling objections of the enemies of education in general, and of religious education in particular. Persons of this class are not to be reasoned with, because there are no common principles on which we can proceed in reasoning with them. They must be denounced either as the victims of unconquerable prejudice and bigotry, or as the enemies of truth and of human society. We feel ourselves called on to notice the scruples and the objections of those who are the friends of education and of religion, but who, on such grounds as the following, decline giving their patronage and support to Sabbath school institutions.

I. They object that such institutions are *unnecessary;* that the natural guardians of the young are their parents: and that to take children from under the eye of the parent, is injudicious and wrong. In reply to this objection, we have much pleasure in quoting the following passage from the 20th Report by the Committee of the Edinburgh Sabbath Schools.

" It is indeed an obvious truth, that the natural instructors of youth are *their parents.* The duty of impressing on the minds of their children, even from infancy, the grand truths of religion and morality, was particularly inculcated on parents under the Mosaic dispensation, (Deut. vi. 6, 7; xi. 19.) Nor can any one who is acquainted with the doctrine of Him who ' came not to destroy the law, but to fulfil,' suppose for a moment that this duty is less obligatory on Christian parents. No system of public education, whether of a common or a religious kind, can exempt parents from the obligation of this high duty; nor are any efforts of others likely to be so efficacious as those of intelligent and conscientious parents themselves. But if it be found that many parents are altogether *unable,* in consequence of their own ignorance and irreligion, to communicate religious instruction to their children, and that many, though possessed of some share of speculative know-

* Report, p. 10.

ledge, are quite *indisposed*, in consequence of idle and vicious habits, to bestow the necessary care on their children; your Committee conceive, that those who, from motives of benevolence, step forward to supply their lack of service, render an important benefit to the community. Such gratuitous endeavours to impart instruction to the young, are especially called for in great towns—where parents of an ignorant and vicious character are always to be found in great numbers—where, screened by a crowded population from the inspection of their superiors, such parents have no motives powerful enough to induce them to take much pains in improving the minds or regulating the morals of their children, and are often tempted, by mercenary views, to train them up in habits of deceit—and where the children *themselves* are often corrupted from their infancy by the example of their fellows, and quickly become instruments of corrupting others. In such cases (and your Committee are convinced, by personal observation, that there are many such cases even in this city) a greater benefit cannot be bestowed on the tender minds of the young, than to place them under the tuition of an intelligent and affectionate teacher; that they may receive from his lips that instruction which they would never receive at home, and be brought under the influence of motives to a right conduct which would never otherwise be presented to them."*

Such are the general principles on which all Sabbath schools ought to be constituted; and so long as these principles are adopted and steadily acted on, the objection must vanish as nugatory. Should we find that these principles had been renounced, and another system habitually acted on—should it so happen, that the conductors of Sabbath schools hold themselves out as the public teachers of *all* children whose parents may choose to put them under their care, and delight more in swelling the lists of their pupils than in ascertaining their suitable quality as objects of gratuitous exertion; then would we say that they depart from their proper design, and in *this particular* ought not to be encouraged. But if a suspicion of such departure from their declared object is entertained, what should be the conduct of those who hold the suspicion? Most assuredly they ought to prevent the evil, not by abolishing or railing against the institution, but by co-operating cordially in a cause which they must allow to be good—by aiming to bring

* Report, pp. 10, 17.

back its conductors to their original principles—and by labouring to bring within the reach of Sabbath school instruction all whom they know to be suitable subjects for it. In many cases, it may be a very difficult matter to draw the line of distinction between proper and improper objects, as it is certain that the most suitable objects will not be among the first to think themselves so; and the presence of a few, who may not just be proper objects, may, without injuring *themselves*, be of essential service to the *others*, in the way of example and encouragement. If there are any instances in which Sabbath schools have been abused by parents to the neglect of their appropriate duties, we would say, *first*, That the regular weekly or occasional catechetical exercises of ministers, may be abused in exactly the same way; *secondly*, That in opposition to such instances of abuse, we have to place at least an equal number of instances in which Sabbath school instruction has proved the means of introducing family religion and instruction into circles where they were never known before; and *thirdly*, That the parent who can thus deliberately abuse such a holy institution, would not, even independent of such an institution, be very able or very willing to engage in the work of parental duty. We would deprecate most sincerely whatever might enfeeble the obligations of parents; but we have never heard of any facts sufficient, in point of number or of authenticity, to make us relinquish our opinion, that Sabbath schools prove a most valuable auxiliary to weak parents in the discharge of their duty; while to the children of the ignorant, the irreligious, and the poor, they furnish a noble substitute for parental solicitude and care.

II. It is objected, that the mechanical business of education is not an appropriate work for the Lord's day—that teaching children to read is not a religious exercise, and ought not to have place in our Sabbatical arrangements. There is much force in this objection, as directed against not a few of the Sunday schools established in England. In them, we fear, that no higher object is aimed at than the mere rudiments of *general* education. If so, we conceive that, unless the plea of *absolute necessity* can be pleaded, there is an abuse of the sacred day. If *absolute necessity* can with truth be pleaded, and if the mechanical business of education is engaged in, *merely* in order to the higher and nobler end of communicating religious knowledge, the practice may be vindicated as involving a

" work of necessity and mercy." At the same time where it can be had, the business of mechanical instruction ought invariably to be committed to the charge of the charity schools which are held during the week; and in this way, while the ignorant are taught to read, the appropriate business of the Lord's day is kept pure and inviolate. With respect to Scotand the objection is null, because *not one* of the Sabbath schools in this country is applied to the mere drudgery of elementary education. When the teachers find a child who cannot read, they endeavour to obtain access for him to one or other of the charitable institutions for education; but they never think of interrupting the regular business of the school, or trenching on its sacred character. On this point, we quote with pleasure the following valuable remarks of Mr. James, in the first chapter of his Treatise on Sabbath schools, the whole of which indeed is admirable, and worthy of being read and studied by every superintendent of a Sabbath school, and by every teacher.

" Delightful," says he, " as it is to produce in the breast of a poor man a taste for reading, together with a habit of thinking, and thus teach him to find entertainment at home, without being tempted to repair to the ale-house;—delightful as it is to bring him into communion with the world of reason, and help him, by the joys of intellect, to soften the rigours of corporeal toil;—delightful as it is to teach him to respect himself, and secure the respect of others by industrious, frugal, and peaceful habits, to assist him to become the instructor of his own domestic circle, and thus to raise him in their estimation; —in short, delightful as it is to strip poverty of its terrors, and render it at least respectable by clothing it with moral worth;—this, of itself and alone, is far below the ultimate object of your exertions: Higher even than this you must look for the summit of your hopes. A man may be all that I have represented; he may be industrious, orderly, moral, and useful in his habits; and still, after all, be destitute of that faith and ' holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.' Addressing you as believers in all that revelation teaches concerning the nature, condition, and destiny of man, I must point your attention to an object which stands on higher ground than any we have yet contemplated. It is for you to consider, that every one of the children, which are every Sabbath beneath your care, carries in his bosom a SOUL as valua-

ble and as durable as that which the Creator has lodged in your own. Neither poverty, ignorance, nor vice, can sever the tie which binds man to immortality. Every human body is the residence of an immortal spirit; and, however diminutive by childhood, or dark by ignorance, or mean by poverty, or filthy by vice, the hovel may appear, a deathless inhabitant will be found within. Every child that passes the threshold of your school on a Sunday morning, carries to your care, and confides to your ability, a SOUL, compared with whose worth the sun is a bauble, and with whose existence time itself is but as the twinkling of an eye."*

III. It is objected that Sabbath schools have a tendency to what is commonly called lay preaching. They afford a strong temptation to the young and the forward to push themselves into notice by their attempts at expounding the Scriptures, and addressing large assemblies; and therefore they ought to be discouraged as interfering with the office of the regular ministry. We answer, that an objection precisely the same may be brought against schools of all descriptions, whether public or private, and particularly against all charitable institutions for education. If in these seminaries there is any moral and religious instruction given at all, (which we must suppose there is,) the teachers must occasionally address the children; they must not only catechise them in the common formal way, but now and then give an exhortation or advice to the pupils; and they must, if they do their duty, engage with them in the exercises of prayer and praise. We do not see any difference between the cases. If there is any, it is in favour of Sabbath schools; for, in them, it often happens that the teacher is only one of a number who take a joint superintendance, and divide all the honours, such as they are, with him. But perhaps the best answer is an appeal to experience. We positively deny that they have had the effect which the fear of some would have anticipated. They have now existed in many places for twenty years, and have had ample opportunity of evolving their natural tendencies. We believe,—indeed we know, that in a great variety of instances, their effect has been, to produce in the minds, both of teachers and pupils, a more ardent attachment to a regular evangelical ministry, and peculiar punctuality in attending on the ordinances of religion. We are fully aware of the temptation to abuse to selfish purposes, and particularly to

* Sunday School Teacher's Guide, pp. 43, 44.

vanity, an institution which necessarily calls in the service of private Christians; but we are convinced that a wholesome check may without much difficulty be applied. Let the teachers be selected with peculiar care, and let not mere novices in knowledge and experience, or such as display a forward disposition, be allowed to occupy a conspicuous place. Let the plan of *simple catechising* be invariably preferred to that of addressing at any length in the way of scriptural exposition. Let a vigilant superintendence of ministers and private Christians be constantly exercised, and let them mark and report every unfavourable symptom, and we entertain not the smallest doubt that it will be rectified. It may be impossible to prevent abuse in all cases; but while we lament a few instances of such abuse, what is their weight when thrown into the scale against the solid and permanent advantages which have resulted, and which indeed must result from the general system? They shrink into insignificance.

IV. It is objected that the teachers are *unqualified*, and that the seminaries are not suitably conducted. We answer, This is an objection, not against the system itself, but simply against the *mode of management*, and it is much the same as if it should be objected to the system of established parochial schools, that in not a few instances the teachers are sadly deficient, both in point of qualifications and of moral character. In the case of Sabbath schools, those who object upon this ground, ought, if they are consistent, to come forward and give their advice and aid, in order that proper teachers may be obtained, and a suitable mode of management adopted. We believe, that in many cases, the teachers are deficient in many respects. But what is this owing to? It is owing entirely to the great difficulty of getting teachers in all respects qualified in the manner desired; and the consequent necessity of taking such as can be got, rather than such as may be wished. The effect of this should be, to lead the friends of religion (instead of cherishing secretly a murmuring and dissatisfied spirit) to come forward and lend their aid to the cause, that deficiencies may be supplied, improvements suggested, and the general interests of religion advanced.

V. Finally, some object to the union of Christians of different denominations as injurious to their several peculiarities. We reply by a broad appeal to experience. Christians have

for a series of years united in the Bible, and Missionary, and Sabbath school institutions, and the very best effects have followed. There has been a concentration of talent, of wisdom, and of energy, against a common enemy. The points of agreement, which are many, have been selected as so many bonds of union; and those points on which there may, and must be, a diversity of sentiment, have, by common consent, been left to be tried by their own independent merits. The social and benevolent affections have thus been cherished. Bigotry and party spirit have lost at least some portion of their influence. The efforts in favour of religion and morality have been steady and persevering. A friendly emulation has actuated the members of the various religious institutions; and the common enemy of all has been compelled to revere the zeal which animated, and the harmony which controlled them. Whatever others may think or feel, we confess that we never feel ourselves more pleased and happy than when contemplating an union among the friends of the Redeemer, for promoting a common object dear to the hearts of all, and for showing forth the glory and the grace of him who "died for all," and who hath by his death purchased for all "a common salvation."

The following remarks by the Committee of the Paisley Sabbath School Society, in their report for 1817, will shew the principles on which their seminaries are conducted.

1. Although the general outline of procedure in all the Schools be the same, yet a certain discretionary power is left in the hands of the teachers and sub-committees, to modify the general plan according to circumstances, and to make such alterations as may be rendered expedient by incidents, for which no general plan can make provision. In all the schools the same exercises find a place—reading of the Scriptures—singing the praises of God—social prayer at the commencement and termination of the meeting—repeating of catechisms, particularly the Assembly's Shorter Catechism, and approved explanations of it,—repeating from memory portions of the word of God, hymns and prayers. To these objects the Committee are desirous that the attention of every seminary should be directed: But the minuter concerns of mechanical arrangement and procedure they think are wisely left to the discretion and judgment of individuals.

2. The Committee are more and more convinced of the great importance of plainness and simplicity in inculcating re-

ligious knowledge on the minds of the young. The truths of Scripture are no doubt in one sense mysterious and difficult: but in another sense they are plain and level to the meanest apprehension. The Bible, it has been well observed by one of the Fathers of the Church, (Augustin) "contains depths in which the elephant may swim, and shallows in which the lamb may wade." Revelation presents strong meat for them that are of full age, "*and milk for babes.*" It is of vast moment that the capacities and attainments of children be accurately studied, and that the instruction given be adapted accordingly. By a learned doctrinal discussion, spiritual pride may be gratified, and the children may be made to stare; but we doubt much if any practical good can be rationally anticipated. As the truths of Scripture stand in close relation to the leading facts of its history, we are decidedly of opinion that the minds of young persons should be imbued chiefly with the knowledge of these facts, that through them a way may be opened for divine truth to reach the understanding and the heart.

3. The Committee are more and more convinced that the prayers with which the assemblies of children are opened and dismissed, should be as short, and as simple, as is consistent with the dignity and the propriety of a religious exercise. The attention of young persons cannot be long kept up by any one thing; and as prayer is an exercise which we would wish to make agreeable to them, it seems desirable and necessary that the terms in which it is expressed, be few and simple, and as far as possible derived from Scripture. We are aware of the difficulty of bringing ourselves down to the level of a child's apprehension; but where the will goes before, and the persevering attempt succeeds, we doubt not that the object will be to a very considerable extent gained.

4. The Committee have been reminded, and they would now remind all concerned, of the duty of attending to the *manner* in which the Scriptures are read and repeated by the young people. We speak not so much of the *style* and *pronunciation*, which are not properly in the province of a Sabbath school teacher; we speak rather of what may be termed the *moral character* and *spirit* of the exercise. There is a tendency among the young people both to read and to repeat in a rapid, light, and thoughtless manner; altogether at variance with that slowness,—that solemnity,—that gravity,—and that aspect of intelligence with which it becomes us to honour the

word of God. Young people are apt to boast of the quantity they have been able to get by heart; forgetting that the proper subject of praise in every case, is not the proportion of work done, but the manner in which it is done. It is right to improve the memory; but when nothing more is accomplished, the exercise is wholly mechanical. It falls short of the understanding and of the heart. *These* are the proper subjects of attention to the teacher of a Sabbath school: the memory is only the door of entrance to the secret recesses of the mind.

5. The Committee have been particularly impressed with the importance of having every school properly arranged, and placed under the inspection of one or more fixed teachers. The value of order and method in the arrangement of classes according to progress, is obvious to the slightest notice; and the Committee have had repeated proofs of the importance of having every seminary placed under the same systematic and continued superintendence. In this way the pupils never fail to recognise their teacher and guide, and to look up to him with reverence and affection. The plan of procedure assumes a character of stability and uninterrupted harmony; and the exercises of one day, in place of being insulated from all the rest, form only one small department of a great and regularly-organised system of moral tuition and discipline. Let the inspectors and monitors be varied as you please, but by all means let there be one centre of union, and one point of reference.

6. The Committee beg leave to notice the peculiar advantages of the catechetical mode of instruction above that which proceeds in the order of a continued address. It is the duty of every teacher indeed, occasionally to address the children, reminding them of their dangers and of their duties: but in general we are inclined to think that instruction by catechising is by far the most likely method to arrest the attention of the young, and to convey knowledge in the plainest and simplest manner. Nor need a teacher confine himself to the dull repetition of a set form of catechetical instruction. When the Scriptures are read he may put short questions as he goes along, to keep up attention, and to convey a knowledge of what is read. When the Shorter catechism is repeated, a teacher may make it simpler, by taking it to pieces, and analyzing its minuter parts. When hearing a child repeat a portion of the word of God, he may render the exercise more

profitable, by examining on the passage, dividing it into its different parts, and pressing each on the attention and on the heart.

Lastly, The Committee are seriously impressed with the necessity of enforcing on young persons the duty of giving regular attendance in the house of God. It is melancholy to reflect, how small is the number of children and young people who are to be seen in our churches; and how indifferent parents in general are to the obligation of thus presenting their children to Christ. Teachers, we beg to state, have at least something in their power, by calling the children to account for their behaviour during the Sabbath; by inquiring of them what they recollect of the texts and subjects of discourse; and by addressing themselves occasionally to the parents or superintendents. We trust a hint on this important subject will have its due effect.

On the subject of Sabbath schools and the manner of conducting them, I have much pleasure in recommending warmly to all who are interested in the subject, two publications which have lately appeared, and which are well calculated to accomplish the end designed by them. The one is entitled, "The Sunday school Teacher's Guide, by the Rev. J. A. James of Birmingham." The other is entitled "Hints to Teachers on the mode of conducting Sabbath schools," lately published at Glasgow, by Mr. W. Wardlaw, Junr. a Tract which ought to be in the hands of every teacher of a Sabbath school.

---

I have perused with some interest a small pamphlet on "the expediency of Sabbath schools in Scotland" published in 1815, by the Rev. Dr. Pollock, minister of the Parish of Govan. There is nothing in its general style or strain of reasoning to which I am inclined particularly to object. On the contrary, I do most cordially approve of the pious zeal with which he inculcates on parents the plain and unalienable duty of instructing their children—a duty which no system of principles and no institution, however commendable on other grounds, can be allowed to weaken or to supersede. His argument applies almost entirely to the case of Sabbath schools

in *small country parishes* where there is certainly much less occasion for them than in great towns or large manufacturing villages. With regard to schools in these cases, he acknowledges that much good may be, and has been done. With regard to the localities of the parish of Govan, I can say nothing: and certainly the minister of the parish ought to be a most competent judge of the expediency or inexpediency of Sabbath schools in his peculiar circumstances. But certainly the respectable author will not deny that in the town and vicinity of Paisley, in the Calton and Bridgeton of Glasgow, in Glasgow itself, and in many large manufacturing villages around, such as Lochwinnoch, Kilbarchan, Johnston, &c. a strong case in favour of Sabbath schools is made out. In all these places there are, and may at all times be supposed to be, great multitudes of young persons who are deprived of one or both parents—or who have parents so ignorant, or so careless, or so irreligious as to prove very incompetent guides in the business of religious instruction.

Besides, there is a class of young people from the age of 14 to 20, who are in a great measure, beyond the range of parental tuition, and who yet are not beyond the need of religious instruction. Seminaries of a higher description for such a class, appear to be highly useful; and to this class belong about a fifth part of the pupils attending the Sabbath schools in Paisley and in other places.

The question agitated in Dr. P's. pamphlet was under discussion at the late meeting of the Synod of Glasgow and Ayr, at Irvine, in October last, when the general sense of all the members present ran strongly in favour of Sabbath schools. One respectable member* candidly and openly declared that from actual experience he found that the Sabbath school in his parish, far from relaxing, tended rather to help forward the duties peculiarly incumbent on parents. At the same time, I believe, that the Synod, had it appeared expedient, would have unanimously concurred in a caution to all parents to guard against the abuse of a system essentially good, but like all other good things, very liable to abuse: and an exhortation to "train up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord."—Indeed, to the necessity and importance of such establishments we have the combined testimony of the different ministers throughout the church by whom reports on the sub-

* The Rev. Dr. Laurie, Minister of Newmills.

ject, were transmitted to the assembly Committee. "There can exist no doubt, the sub-Committee conceive, from the general tenor of the reports, that these Sunday schools produce the most beneficial effects on the habits and morals of the young. Where local circumstances therefore render it practicable for children to give due attendance; and where parents from their ignorance or carelessness, are too little disposed to "train them up in the way they should go," there is a loud call on every considerate and pious person, to encourage these schools by their countenance, and to secure for them duly qualified teachers. The Committee at the same time are highly gratified in saying, that in very numerous reports from different quarters, it is said by the ministers; "There are no Sunday schools in our parish, and we want none; the house of every parent in the parish is, on Sunday evening, a Sunday school, and the parent himself is the teacher." Most desirable certainly it would be, if such an arrangement could be made universal." *

* Assembly Report, p. 38. The statement contained in the latter part of this quotation, is indeed extravagant and ridiculous; but it does not affect the validity of the testimony given in the former part, to the importance and necessity of Sabbath schools. That there are parishes in which "every house is a Sunday school," is *not true*. Human nature is every where alike, and Scotland never did exhibit such a brilliant exception to the general prevalence of carelessness and indifference in parents. Luckily, the statement by its extravagance has committed suicide; and thus has become perfectly harmless.

# DISSERTATION XII.

## ON THE CAUSES WHICH HAVE INJURED THE MORAL CHARACTER AND INTERESTS OF SCOTLAND, PARTICULARLY IN ITS MORE POPULOUS MANUFACTURING DISTRICTS.

Our object in this article is, specifically to point out and illustrate certain causes of a moral nature which have of late years been in operation among us, and have to a certain extent affected, by their poisonous influence, the moral character and condition of the mass of our people. These causes have been in operation principally in the more populous manufacturing districts of the country; although their influence has been felt far beyond their immediate range.

I. In general it may be remarked, that as a place increases in extent and in population it also increases in wickedness. In a small community every man is known to his neighbour—each family is the object of interest to other families—the changes which, from time to time, take place, are instantly marked—and vices and crimes which in other circumstances might be overlooked, never fail to give a shock to the public feeling, and to make a deep, and general, and permanent impression. The local magistracy is easily exerted with promptitude and vigour, and the pastoral superintendence is felt in its salutary influence through every department. It is obvious at first sight that when a community swells in extent and population, a radical change is produced in all these respects. Vice escapes in the crowd. The civil and spiritual superintendence being spread over a larger surface is perceptibly weakened. The

intermixture of various characters has the effect of exhibiting new forms of vice, and the boldness which is produced by numbers gives to the votaries of wickedness, a fierceness and a determination of spirit to which they would otherwise be strangers. It is clear also that the cause thus in operation will be regulated, in its measure of power, by the moral character of the growing population. Had the inhabitants of the large towns and manufacturing districts of Scotland increased during the last 30 years, merely by the addition of new members from different parts of the country, the effect would not have been so extensively pernicious. But it is very well known that for many years past, the incursions from the darker parts of Ireland have been incessant; and we may naturally conclude that it is by no means the best part of the people who seek to emigrate. Those who have traced the history and progress of the manufacturing districts of Scotland can bear witness to the demoralising effects of such incursions. The emigrants from Ireland have, in most instances, been brought up in ignorance and irreligion, and they seldom fail to imprint the same characters on their children: and hence we find that the tendency of our intercourse with them has been to change the very character of the country; to crush the virtuous spirit of independence; and to infuse into our population a spirit very remote from that sobriety, subordination, and religion, which once distinguished our people both as Scotchmen and as Christians.

II. The increase and extension of *public works*, have tended in no small measure to change the habits of the people, and to deteriorate the moral character of the country. When crowds of young persons habitually assemble together, they initiate one another in vice. Besides, it often happens that the young people who are employed at public works are taken to them at a very tender age, and before their education and habits have been fixed; and being placed beyond the reach of parental superintendence and control, they become careless of reproof and obstinate in their temper. Mixing with loose characters, they are soon contaminated by them, and the contagion of vice spreads imperceptibly.—It is also proper to state that the very early age at which children are now put to work, even with regular operative weavers, and the gains they are able to make, have operated with a most malignant influence in ruining their education and their morals. Boys, and even girls, from the age of seven, are employed at looms in drawing, by which exercise they can earn from 2s. to 3s. 6d. per

week; and in the case of large families this operates as a strong temptation to the greed of the parents, who value a little cash far beyond the blessing of early education. For most part of the year, the poor children are employed in the drudgery of labour from six in the morning till ten at night; and thus their education is interrupted, and their early habits are fatally injured. We mourn the consequences which are flowing, and which will flow from this source; and we mourn with deeper sorrow at the reflection that the cure seems to be far distant so long as parents and masters and guardians of the young appear to have such a slender impression of the incalculable value of early education.

III. When I speak of the *modern infidelity* of the continent, I mention a cause which has been universally operative of late years, in corrupting the hearts and manners of our industrious population. No where, perhaps, were the malignant effects of the French revolution so deeply experienced, as in the populous manufacturing districts in the West of Scotland; and, although the tide has turned, it has deposited a deadly and pestiferous sediment. We experience the sad results of the moral inundation, in daring infidelity of principle—in neglect of religious institutions—in cold and crude speculations of perverted minds—in contempt of established order and government—and in profligacy of sentiment and of manners. The intercourse between the classes who are engaged in the same occupation, tends to increase, and to perpetuate the malady. In a public workshop, where 6 or 8 operatives may be assembled, it not unfrequently happens, that one or more of them, may be men of infidel or irreligious principles and habits; and is it to be supposed, that they will conceal their sentiments? No. They glory in avowing them. From morning to night, they spread the poison around them. Truths the most sacred, and institutions the most venerable, are treated with ridicule. The more sober are made the victims of sarcasm and reproach; while the children who must always be within hearing, imbibe the principles and spirit of irreligion, with their earliest impressions and habits. That this is no imaginary scene, can be testified by dire experience.

IV. From the continent of Europe, and particularly from revolutionary France, has been imported, along with bold infidelity of principle, the wildness of *political fanaticism*. To canvass freely the claims of contending systems, and the measures of men in power, is not only allowable, but highly com-

mendable. It is the inalienable birth right of men, and the high prerogative of Britons. But when the privilege is abused to the purposes of anarchy, sedition, and insubordination; and when the pretended leaders in the career of improvement set themselves forward, against all that is sacred and venerable in our religious and civil institutions, shall we be blamed for hinting our suspicions and our fears, both of the principles which are in operation, and of the results which may be rationally expected. Can we be too much alarmed for the safety of our moral and religious interests, when we behold an unseemly union between the professing friends of piety, and the leaders in anarchy and in crime? Shall we be deemed rash and precipitate, if we express our alarm for the principles and purity of the rising race, when we see them habitually in contact with the teachers of sedition—trained by their example to speak evil of dignities—taught to regard all that are above them in rank and station, as on that account their enemies, and the objects of rancorous revenge? We have already seen, and experienced the demoralizing effects of modern infidelity, when combined with the wildness of political fanaticism; and late events are too well calculated to rekindle our fears, and to excite painful apprehensions.

V. Every Christian, and every lover of his country's best interests, will acknowledge that the prosperity of religion and morals in a country, depends deeply on the respect which is paid to religious ordinances, and particularly, to the institution of the *Sabbath*. In exact proportion as the sacred day is reverenced, and its institutions observed by the mass of the people, will be the progress, or the decline of practical godliness. That, of late years, the obligation of keeping the Sabbath holy unto the Lord, has been less felt, and practically exhibited than in former days, is a fact which no reasonable observer will question. That the manufacturing districts of Scotland, have exhibited more palpable signs of declension in this respect than others, it would perhaps be precipitate, positively to affirm; but there cannat be a doubt, that the causes which tend to produce contempt of Sabbatical institutions, have operated in them with an extensive and deadly influence. Among the causes which have led to a carelessness and indifference, in regard to the sanctity of the day of God, there are three to which we shall shortly advert. The first is, The influence of English ideas and customs, on the inhabitants of Scotland. That the influence of the publication of the infamous *Book of Sports*, is still per-

ceptible in England, even after the lapse of nearly two centuries, no man can question who is conversant with the state of morals and religion, in that part of the empire. It is seen in the prevalent practical impression, that the sanctity of the day, and the obligation of its observance, are confined exclusively to the times of public devotion; and it is felt universally in the relaxed and desultory attendance on the places of social worship. That a similar influence should be felt to a certain extent in Scotland, might naturally be expected from the increased, and constantly increasing intercourse, between the southern and northern parts of the kingdom. The *second* cause which has operated powerfully in secularizing the day of God, in the sentiments and habits of our people, appears to have been, the introduction and practice of *military manœuvres* on the Lord's day. It was highly creditable to the people of Scotland, that the pernicious practice of Sunday-drilling was declared by the same authority which sanctioned it, altogether irreconcileable with the prevalent principles and practices of Scotchmen. Perhaps, the British Parliament entertained too favourable an opinion of our religious spirit; for it is a melancholy fact, that the custom, or something equivalent to it, though not sanctioned by law, was actually introduced into many parts of the country. Every sober thinker will agree with me in opinion, that the habitual practice of military manœuvres on the evenings of the Sabbath, had the most malignant effect in secularizing the minds of the people—in banishing serious impressions—in familiarizing the attending crowds of young persons to idleness and sports—and in practically annihilating the distinction between the day of God, and the other days of the week. To the present hour we feel the effects of it, and we may probably feel them more deeply at a future day.—The *third* cause of the prevalent profanation of the Sabbath, appears to be the adoption and avowal, by certain religious professors, of lax opinions regarding the morality and obligation of the day of God. Although these opinions have been broached, chiefly by the adherents of one or two of the smaller sects of Christians in this country, and are disavowed even by some of the more sober and thinking among them, still their influence has, we fear, been extensively pernicious. A sentiment which accords with the depravity of fallen nature, and which frees men from inconvenient restraints, must always be acceptable to men of corrupt minds: but when associated with a more than ordinary measure of strictness, and zeal for punctilios in matters of religion, need we be surprised that it should be

greedily embraced, and acted on by multitudes, who only wait for such a sanction, and are ready at a moment's call to rally round such a standard?

VI. I shall only notice at present, one other fruitful cause of the prevalence of vice and immorality among us, and that is, the increase, of late years, in the numbers of houses licensed and unlicensed, for the sale of ardent spirits, and the consequent growth of intemperance.

The prevalence of intemperance has been emphatically termed "the curse of Scotland." In what proportion it prevails with us, compared with England, I cannot say; but most certainly there is no cause that has operated more powerfully to demoralize the minds and habits of our people. While it has injured the interests of religion and morals, it has tended to destroy our social prosperity, and to accumulate the evils of pauperism and indigence. The existence of the evil requires only to be stated, in order to be acknowledged. The direct counteractives are: to diminish the number of licenses—to punish more severely those who sell ardent spirits without license—to keep a strict guard, by means of the police, on all who occupy public houses—and to put the laws in force against intemperance.*

* The following list shews the number of recommendations for license, granted by the Justices during the last five years, in the town and parish of Paisley, and in the parishes of Lochwinnoch, Kilbarchan, Houston, Inchinnan, and Neilston.

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| May 1814, | to 1815, | ..... | 355 |
| 1815, | to 16, | ..... | 326 |
| 1816, | to 17, | ..... | 291 |
| 1817, | to 18, | ..... | 290 |
| 1818, | to 19, | ..... | 376 |

The rise during these years does not appear to have been considerable. The number during the current year, may have been increased by the favourable change on the state of trade, and the greater ability to pay for licenses.—The following is the form of recommendation granted by the Justices.

At a General Meeting of the Justices of the Peace for the County of holden at on the day of eighteen hundred and years, for the purpose of authorising persons to keep common Inns, Ale houses, or Victualling Houses, the said Justices do hereby authorise and empower

in the said County, to keep a Common Inn, Ale-house, or Victualling-house, and to utter and sell in the House in which he now dwelleth, and in the Premises thereunto belonging, and not elsewhere, Victuals, and all such Ex-

The following remarks by an intelligent and pious writer on the poor laws, are worthy of serious consideration. They are equally applicable to Scotland as to England.

" Let us finish the catalogue of demoralising causes among the poor, by taking a view of public-houses, those hot-beds of vice, those nurseries of the rankest weeds which infest the political inclosure. But here I feel the task too irksome and disgusting, to attempt even a faint description. Language, at least any language that I am master of, would sink under the burden of exposing the abominations that are practised at all hours, both day and night, in these haunts of profligacy. I am, however, aware that indiscriminate censure is both cruel and unjust; and I therefore, hasten to exempt from this general charge, many sober and decent houses, especially in well conducted villages, and where scenes of drunkenness and riot never occur, and which furnish the peaceful and industrious inhabitant with a wholesome and necessary beverage,* to enable him to undergo the fatigues of labour, and recruit his exhausted strength. And such houses have become the more necessary, since the pernicious custom of excluding day labourers from the kitchen table, which the pride and fastidiousness of modern times have introduced, prevents their obtaining this necessary support in any other way.

Let then this deduction be made from the general censure, and let every publican who is conscious of his own correctness take the advantage of it; but, when they have done this, a residue will be found, sufficient to overwhelm the country with the most fearful evils. I shall not attempt to go into the detail of these evils, they obtrude themselves, particularly in populous

ciseable Liquors as he shall be licensed and empowered to Sell, under the authority and permission of any Excise License which shall be duly granted by the Commissioners of Excise, or person to be appointed or employed by them for that purpose, or by any Collector and Supervisor of Excise respectively; provided that the true Assize in Bread, in Beer, Ale, Cider, and all other Liquors be duly kept; and that no unlawful Game or Games, or any drunkenness, or other disorder be suffered in House, Yard, Garden, or Premises; but that good order and rule be maintained and kept therein, according to the Laws of this Realm in that behalf made. The authority and power hereby granted, to continue in force for one whole year from the day of eighteen hundred and years, and no longer.

*By order of the Justices.*

* I speak here, it will be perceived, as it *should* be, and as the law requires, and as in some cases it probably is: but, alas! is this the *general* fact?

towns and cities, at every step, and are the common source of lamentation to every well-wisher to the best interests of mankind. Here it is that the young man gets initiated in vice. He is allured to the public-house by the social company it offers, and gradually acquires the habit of intemperance. He marries, and has a family; his constant visits to the tap-room exhaust his earnings; and his wife and children are clothed in rags, and pine away for want of food. At home he finds nothing to gratify him. Here there is no society, but such as is calculated to give him pain. Every thing upbraids his want of attention to those who ought to be dearer to him than his own life:—his greatly injured wife has no reason to treat him with kindness, for he has reduced her to wretchedness, and is in the daily habit of indulging his own appetite to excess, whilst her children are crying for bread, and she herself, sharing in their distress, has no means to relieve it. The squalid and comfortless appearance of every thing around him, again drives him to his accustomed haunt, where he meets with a perfect contrast to home, a cheerful fire-side, companions like himself, intoxicating liquors, and every thing calculated to drown reflection and banish care. The public-house first made his home cheerless, and now his cheerless home drives him again to the public-house; thus acting and re-acting upon each other, and, at every step, plunging him deeper in ruin. But he finds, at length, that his vices have put it out of his power any longer to indulge them; for his drunkenness has induced both idleness and penury; he is, therefore, under the necessity of finding some expedient for the emergency; and his favourite place of resort furnishes him with it. There he meets with others in the same circumstances of want with himself, and brought on by the same means. The plan is soon formed; and their neighbour's property, and life too, if the temptation offer, is the prey. To follow up a single instance of this species of profligacy, in all its bearings, on the individual himself, on his wife—who, in her turn, is not unfrequently driven to the gin shop, to drown her own cares—on his children —who are familiarised with the grossest vices in their earliest years, left destitute of all moral culture, the natural soil overrun with weeds of the rankest nature, and every day growing up to outstrip the parent himself in crime—to follow up, I say, a *single* instance of this kind, and trace it in all its ramifications, would exhibit an accumulation of wretchedness, which might appal the stoutest heart. But the instances are not solitary. The crowded rooms in the almost innumerable pot houses of

large towns and cities, exhibit tens of thousands of cases of the most deplorable wretchedness and extreme depravity. Here is the resort of gangs of nightly depredators, who sally forth from the haunts of vice, like wild beasts from their lair, to disturb the repose, to plunder the property, and to shed the blood of the virtuous and industrious citizen. Here are formed regular schools for training youths, of the tenderest age, to the most enormous crimes. Here, in one frightful assemblage, will be found the spendthrift, the drunkard, the gamester, the female wanton, the reprobate youth, the veteran profligate, the traitor, the felon, and the murderer. Here "the prince of darkness" holds his court, and here his subjects pay him homage, and here is the gate of hell!* With these things before our eyes, can we be at a loss to account for the "crying sins" of the times?†

It might be easy to notice other causes of a malignant kind, which have been, and are extensively in operation, to injure the prosperity of our country, in its substantial interests. But the facts stated, may suffice to account for the present appear-

* Some recent enquiries in the House of Commons, respecting the state of public-houses, and the manner of licensing victuallers, have brought to light facts, of which the public in general had not the least conception; and various plans have been agitated both in and out of Parliament, for remedying the evil. It has been ascertained, that the monopoly, which common brewers have acquired of public houses, and the interest they have indirectly exercised with licensing magistrates, have been two main causes of the great abuse complained of. On the one hand, few persons, it is said, can obtain a license who are not immediately under the influence of a brewer; and many have been deprived capriciously of their licenses for no other assignable reason than that the brewer has had an interest, and exercised it, in putting them down. For the remedy of this evil, it has been proposed, among other things, that the magistrates shall not have the power of depriving publicans of their license, without bringing the alledged offence to a jury, at the quarter sessions, and thus the power be taken from a bench of magistrates to put down a publican. Whatever evils may have arisen out of the present system, (and I am persuaded they are great) if such be the proposed remedy, I will venture to say, that they will be increased tenfold The only consideration which keeps a publican in awe, and prevents irregularities in his house, is the vigilant inspection of the neighbouring magistrates, (I am speaking chiefly of the country) and the knowledge he has, that improper conduct will endanger the continuance of his license; and in no case have I ever witnessed a single instance of a license being wantonly withdrawn. Such cases have no doubt occurred; but I presume that a *remedy for the abuse* should rather be sought, than *a total change of the system*. Few things, I am persuaded, more imperiously demand the wisdom and energy of the legislature, than the monopoly of public-houses. It is fraught with evils of a most serious nature, both in a moral and political point of view, and calls aloud for correction.

† Jerram on the Poor laws, pp. 151—155.

ances of things; while they are certainly well fitted to excite alarm and anxiety in every mind, that is alive to the true glory and happiness of the country. They stand up before us in all their array of horrors, while they powerfully press on us the question, What have we been doing, in order to stem the tide of moral desolation? Extraordinary times call for extraordinary exertion.—Has such exertion been made?—Of the solution of such questions, I shall leave it to others to judge.

---

I intended to insert in this work, a complete Dissertation, on the subject of *intemperance*, particularly as it prevails in Scotland. On examining the subject, however, and perusing the publications of medical, and other gentlemen, regarding it, I found the collection of facts so voluminous, and the relative bearings of the subject so ample, as to place it completely out of my power to do any thing like justice to it, within the limits of a short Essay. I have, therefore, omitted it entirely, with the view of, perhaps, taking it up at some future period, in a separate form. I had intended to address a few observations, to the Rev. James Yates, A. M. of Birmingham, who has lately published, four very interesting Sermons on the "Effects of intoxicating Liquors, &c." and has collected together a variety of important facts, illustrative of the subject. In the mean time, I have simply to say, that were it not for a Note in p. 27. I would not hesitate to recommend his publication to general circulation, in the form of a cheap tract. In the note referred to, the author directly, and broadly insinuates, that the only effectual preventative of intemperance in Scotland, will be the diffusion of Unitarian principles; or as he expresses it, "the introduction of more correct and rational, more scriptural and practical views of Christian doctrine." On this matter, I have to propose one or two questions to Mr. Y., relating to a few historical facts. At what period, I would ask, in the annals of Scotland, did the people exhibit the greatest sobriety of manners, combined with the greatest portion of intelligence? Was it not, when the standards of the Presbyterian church held their most commanding influence? and has it not been by education, grounded on these, and inseparably linked with them, that Scotland has been elevated above other nations in the scale of morals? Among all the objections brought against the Puritans, was it ever in-

sinuated, that they were more licentious, and more given to intemperance than their adversaries? By whom, have the interests of pure and scriptural morality been more powerfully promoted, both in England and in Scotland, than by those who have held most firmly, and proclaimed most earnestly, the principles of Evangelical Christianity? By whom, have our *educational establishments*, and our societies *for reformation of manners*, been more strongly patronised and encouraged, than by those very men, who hold most firmly the very principles which Mr. Yates, and his brethren would condemn? Has it not been confessed by Priestley, and Belsham, and even Mr. Y. himself, that the adherents of Socinianism, have been generally more distinguished by zeal in speculation, than by ardour of devotion or strictness in moral practice? In fine, Does Mr. Y. think, that in order to teach the people sobriety of thinking, and of acting, the most effectual means would be, *to destroy their reverence for the inspired record, and to dissipate their fears of future and eternal punishment?*

# PART SECOND.

# FACTS AND DOCUMENTS

AND

# Miscellaneous Inquiries

ILLUSTRATIVE OF THE

# MANAGEMENT OF THE POOR

# IN SCOTLAND,

AND

# COLLATERAL TOPICS.

THE object of this part of the work, is, to exhibit some facts of a historical, statistical, and miscellaneous nature, illustrative of the practical management of the poor, and other subjects more or less closely connected with it. It is by collections of this kind, that our acquaintance with the actual state of man is corrected and enlarged; and the only office which philosophy has to perform is, to deduce the plain and obvious inferences which fact and experience appear to warrant. There is, perhaps, no subject on which men have more freely indulged the wildness of speculation, than on the science of political economy; and there is, perhaps, no department in which it is more completely out of place. The propensity to speculate, indeed, has, in too many instances, led to the formation of those Utopian schemes, for the improvement and happiness of man, by which the public mind has been deluded, and the progress of the cautious inquirer most effectually checked.

The statements which follow, are partly of a *general*, and partly of a *local* interest. With regard to the latter, it may be remarked, that the facts exhibited in them belong to a field of observations which comprehends by far the most populous manufacturing district of Scotland; and it is my earnest wish and hope, that those who have favourable opportunities of observing similar phenomena, or recording similar experiments on other fields, will, from time to time, favour the

public with the result of their inquiries. It is by the united contributions of many to the common treasury, that knowledge is diffused, and the limits of human improvement enlarged.

In the course of the preceding Dissertations, I have endeavoured to confirm the general principles announced, by a few practical illustrations. In what follows, this object is prosecuted more fully, and in detail; and it is hoped, that the selection such, as it is, will not prove uninteresting to those who concern themselves in the business of the poor, and in the great moral questions which affect the permanent interest and improvement of the species.

# FACTS AND DOCUMENTS,

*&c.*

## No. I.

*The Election of Eldaris and Deaconis in the Church of Edinburgh.**

(See Dunlop's Confessions, p. 636—641.)

"BEFORE that there wes any public face of the trew religion within this realme, it pleased God of his mercie, to illuminate the harts of many private persones, so that they did perceave and understand the abuses that war in the papistical church, and thereupon they did withdraw themselfis from participation of their idolatrie.

And because the Spirit of God will never suffer his awin to be idil, and voyd of all religion; Men began to exercise themselfis in reading of the scriptures secretlie within their awin houses, and thereunto war added secret prayers publiclie made within the houses, after schort proces of time, God gadthered houses togidder in one hous to the same exercise, some times in the feild, and some times in houses by nyght: and then began men inspyred, no doubt by the Spirit of God, to consider that diverse houses and varietie of persones could not be kept in good obedience and honest fame without oversearis, eldaris and deaconis; and so began that smal flok to put themselves in such ordour as if Christ Jesus had plainlie triumphed in the mides of them by the power of the evangel, and so they did elect

* It is uncertain when this was written: But it is in the Manuscript Copy of *Knox's* History, which is in the College Library of *Glasgow*, and is printed at *Edinburgh* with other publick Papers: by *Robert Lekprevick*, *Anno* 1569. It is approved by the General Assembly, *April*, 1582. *Ses.* 12. in these Words. *Concerning ane general Order of Admission to the Office of Eldaris, referris it to the Order usit at* Edinburgh, *qwhilk we approve.*

some to occupy the supreme place of exhortation and reading, sum to be eldaris and helparis to them for the oversight of the flok, and sum to be deaconis for the collection of almis to be distributed to the poore of their awin bodie. Of this smal beginning is that ordour that now God of his mercie hath gevin unto us publiclie within this realm, and principallie within this town of *Edinburgh* proceded: for when it pleased the merciful goodness of our God to geve the victorie to the evangel of his deare Son our Lord Jesus, and to suppresse and beat doun the pryde of the enemies of all trew religion within the realme; of the principles of such as war knowin to be men of good conversation and honest fame in the church war chosen eldaris and deaconis, to rule with the minister in the publick Church; which burden they patiently sustened a zeir and more: and then because they culd not, without neglecting their awin private houses, longer wait upon the public charge, they desired that they might be releaved, and uthers might be burdened in their roume; which was thought a petition reasonable of the whole church; and therefore it was granted unto them that they shuld nominat and geve up in election such personages as they in their consciences thoght most apte and abil to serve in that charge, providing that they shuld nominat double moe persones then wer sufficient to serve in that charge, to the end that the whole congregatioun might have there fre vote in their election. And this ordour hath bene ever observed since that tyme in the church of *Edinburgh; that is*, the old session before there departing nominates twentie four in election for eldars, of whom twelve ar to be chosen; and two and thirtie for deacons, and of them sixtene to be elected: which persones ar publictly proclaimed in the audience of the whole church upon a *Sonday* before noon, after sermon with admonition to the church, that if any man know any notorious cryme or cause that might unable any of those persones to enter in such a vocation, that they should notifie the same next *Thurisday* to the session, or if any knew any persones more able for that charge, they shuld notifie the same unto the said session, to the end that no man without the church shuld complein that he was spoiled of his liberty in electioun.

The *Sonday* following in the end of the sermon before noon, the hole communicantes ar commanded to be present at after noon, to geve their votes, as they will answer before God, to such as they think most able to bear the charge of the church with the ministers. The votes of all being receaved, the scrolles

ar delivered to any of the ministers, who keipeth the same secret from the sight of all men till the nixt *Thurisday*, then in the session he produces them, that the votes may be counted; where the maniest votes, without respect of persone, hath the first place in the eldarschip, and so proceding til the number of twelf be compleit: so that if a poor man excede the rich man in votes, he precedeth him in place and is called the first, second and third eldar, evin as the votes answereth. And this same method is observed in the election of the deaconis.

The *Fryday* after that judgment is tane what persones ar elected for elders and deacons to serve for that Zeir, the minister after his sermon readis the same names publiclie and geves commandement publiclie that such persones be present in the church the nixt *Sonday* at sermon before noon, in the place to be appointed for them to accept that charge, that God by the plurality of votes had laid upon them: who being convened, the minister after sermon readis the names publiclie, the absents ar noted, and the presentes are admonished, to consider the dignitie of that vocation whereunto God hath called them, the dewtie that they aw to the people, the danger that lyis upon them if they be found negligent in that there vocation; and finallie, the dewtie of the people towardis the persones elected. Which being done, this prayer is red.

*The prayer in the election of Eldaris and Deaconis.*

O Eternal and everlasting God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who of thy infinite mercie and goodnes, hast chosin to thy self a church of the lost seid of *Adam*, which thou hast ever reuled by the inspiration of thy holy Spirit: And yit not the les hast always used the ministerie of men, als weill in preaching of thy word, and administration of thy sacraments, as in guiding of thy flok and providing for the poor within the same; as in the law, prophets, and in thy glorious Evangel we have witnesis. Which ordour, O Lord, thou of thy mercie hast now restored to us again, after that the publique face of thy church had bene deformed be the tyrannie of that *Roman Antichrist*. Grant unto us, O heavenlie Father, hartis thankful for the benefits that we have receaved, and geve unto these our brethren, elected unto the charges within thy church, such abundance of thy holie Spirit, that they may be found vigilant and faithful in that vocatioun whereunto thou of thy mercie hast called them.

And albeit, O Lord, these small beginningis ar contemned of the proud world, yet, Lord, thou for thy awin mercyis sake blesse the same, in such sort that thy godlie name may be glorifyed, superstitioun and idolatrie may be rooted out, and verteu may be planted not only in this generation, bot also to the posterities to come. *Amen.* Grant us this mercieful Father, for Jesus Christ thy Sonnes saik, in whose name we call unto the as he hath taught us, saying, *Our Father*, &c.

And so with the rehearsal of the beleif. After which shall be sung this portion of the 103d Psalme, ver. 19. *The heavens hie ar made the seat*, and so to the end of that Psalme. After the which, shall this schort admonition be given to the elected.

*Exhortation to the elected.*

Magnifie God who of his mercie hath called you to rule within his church, be faithful in your vocation, schaw your self zealous to promote vertew, feir not the faces of the wicked, but rebuke their wickedness; Be merciful to the poore, and support them to the uttermost of your power; and so shall ye receave the benediction of God present and everlasting.

God save the King's Majestie, and geve unto him the spirit of sanctificatioun in his zong age. Blesse his Regent and such as assist him in upryght counsal. And ather fructfullie convert, or suddanlie confound the enemies of trew religion, and of this afflicted Common-wealth."

---

" Calderwood places his account of the election of elders and deacons at Edinburgh under the year 1555; but I think that date too early. It was rather in the end of 1556 or in the course of 1557. The names of the first elders in Edinburgh were, George Smail, Michael Robertson, Adam Craig, John Cairns, and Alexander Hope. There were at first two assemblies in Edinburgh, but Erskine of Dun persuaded them to unite into one, which met sometimes in the houses of Robert Watson and James Barron, and sometimes in the abbey.'*
" There was at that time but one place of worship in the city of

* M'Crie's Life of Knox, Vol. I. p. 226.

Edinburgh.* The number of inhabitants was indeed small, when compared with its present population; but, still they must have formed a very large congregation. The place used for worship in St. Giles's church was capacious, for we learn that on some occasions, three thousand persons assembled in it to hear sermon.† In this church Knox had, since 1560, performed all the parts of ministerial duty, without any other assistant but John Cairns, who acted as reader.‡ He preached twice every sabbath, and thrice on other days of the week.§ He met regularly once every week with his kirk session for discipline, and with the assembly of the neighbourhood, for the exercise on the Scriptures. He attended besides the meetings of the provincial synod and general assembly, and at almost every meeting of the latter, he received an appointment to visit and preach in some distant part of the country." ‖

## No. II.

*View of the law and practice of Scotland with regard to the Poor.*

THE following article from Tait's Justice of Peace, affords a concise and comprehensive view of the law and practice of Scotland with regard to the poor, from the period of the Reformation down to the present day. It is inserted in this place, as affording additional confirmation of the views already exhibited of the subject.

(See p. 248 of Tait—Article Poor.)

"This subject cannot be passed entirely unnoticed; but a very slight sketch is sufficient.

Sheriffs, Justices of peace, and magistrates of royal bor-

* St. Cuthbert's or the West Church, was at that time (as it is at present) a distinct parish, of which *William Harlow* was minister. There was also a minister of Cannongate or Holy-rood-house.

† Cald. M. S. II. 157.

‡ Records of Town Council, 26th Oct. 1561.

§ Ibid. 10th April, 1562.

‖ M'Crie's Life of Knox, Vol. II. p. 52.

oughs, are directed to take trial how far the laws for supporting the poor have been duly executed.* It is said that, under this power of control, the quarter sessions have on some occasions interfered to get a proper fund provided for the poor, when neglected;† and that, under the same power of control, justices sometimes modify a proper allowance to a pauper from the parish funds, if refused in the first instance by the kirk-session, &c.‡: but it is believed that they seldom exercise this power.

## I. Collection of Funds.

The following are the funds for maintaining the poor of a parish.

1. The collection at the parish church.

2. Sometimes, letting out a hearse, or mortcloth; which a kirk-session may, by immemorial exclusive usage, acquire the sole right of doing.§

3. Fees exacted by immemorial usage at marriages and baptisms.‖

4. Mortifications of lands, sums of money, or other subjects.

5. Voluntary subscription, in order to avoid an assessment.

6. If all these be deficient, an assessment on the parish; which however is seldom necessary; and, if it can be avoided, by voluntary subscription, or otherwise, is seldom advisable.

This assessment is imposed by the heritors, minister, and elders, of each parish, who are directed to meet on the first Tuesdays of February and August, to make up a roll of the poor of the parish, and to determine what assessment for their relief is necessary for the next half year.¶ The meeting must raise a sum sufficient to enable the poor requiring aid to live without begging; which is prohibited.** See *Vagabond*. Half

* Proclamation, 31st July, 1694. † Hutcheson, ii. 37.

‡ See Note, Dict. iv. 85, on the case of Paton against Adamson, 20th November, 1772;—and Buik, Howie, and others, against Kirk-session of Arbroath, &c. 25th January, 1800, and session papers in this case.

§ Turnbull against Maclaws, 10th August, 1756.—Kirk-Session of Dumfries against the Squaremen, 18th February, 1783.

‖ Kirk Session of Dunfermline against Bayne and others, 26th June, 1765.

¶ 1672, c. 18.—Proclam. 11th August, 1692.—1695, c. 43.—1698, c. 21.

** 1579, c. 74.—1661, c. 38.—1663, c. 16.—Proclam. 11th August, 1692.—1695, c. 43.

of the assessment is paid by the heritors, according to the old extent of their lands, or according to the valuation by which they last paid assessment, or otherwise, as the majority of them think best.* The rule understood to be followed, where that can be done without impropriety, is the valued rent; but the real rent may be adopted where that is more conducive to equality.† The other half of the assessment is paid by the tenants and possessors according to their substance.‡

In boroughs the assessment is imposed by the magistrates on the inhabitants, according to their substance,§ which is differently estimated in different boroughs.

## II. Distribution of Funds.

### 1. *By whom.*

The distribution of funds, or modification of an allowance, is generally made, at least in ordinary and incidental cases, by the minister and kirk session; but the heritors have a joint right of management and distribution.‖ Though the judge ordinary must decide what parish is bound to aliment a poor person, the heritors and kirk-session have the exclusive power, in the first instance, of modifying the allowance.¶

### 2. *To whom.*

*Cause of poverty.*—The persons relieved are either those who require permanent relief, whether partial or total, who are commonly called the ordinary poor, and who form the roll made up at the meeting already mentioned; or those who require only temporary relief, whether partial or total,** who are commonly called the extraordinary poor, and who are not usually entered upon that roll.

*Legal parish.*—The parish primarily liable to aliment a poor person is that in which he has last resided for three years; but this residence must have been industrial, that is, prior to his

* 1663, c. 16.

† Scott against Fraser, 19th January, 1773.

‡ 1663, c. 16. The poor have no right to glean without consent of the occupier of the ground. John Wilson, 1771. Maclaurin's Criminal Cases, p. 744.

§ 1579, c. 74.—1597, c. 279.

‖ Hamilton against Minister of Cambuslang, 23d November, 1752.

¶ Paton against Adamson, 20th November, 1772.—Parish of Coldingham against Parish of Dunse, 28th July, 1779.

** Pollock against Darling, 17th January, 1804.

being supported even by private charity.* It is sufficient that the residence have been as a lodger, and not as a householder. Residence as an apprentice is sufficient.† A soldier cannot acquire a settlement by residence upon duty. When workmen, such as slaters, masons, &c. have their principal residence for a course of years in one place in winter, *e. g.* a town, they acquire a settlement in such place, though they may have been in the habit of going to the country every summer for work.‡

Where a person has not acquired a settlement by residence, the parish in which he was born is liable.

In the case of vagabonds, who have never had a fixed residence any where, the place of birth is primarily liable; and if that be unknown, the parish 'where they have any residence, haunt, or most resort, for the space of three years immediately preceding their being apprehended.'§

The Scots parish in which a settlement has been acquired is not liberated by the person having subsequently had such a residence in an English parish as would have given a settlement by the law of Scotland, if, from its not being for the due period, or for want of other necessary circumstances, it has not been such as gives a settlement by the law of England.‖

A married woman's settlement is in her husband's parish. A widow may acquire a settlement by three years industrial residence.

A child, being considered as part of the family, must be maintained by the parish of its parents, though not that of its own birth or residence.¶ A natural child must be supported by the mother's parish, if the father be unable to maintain it, not by the father's.** If the parish of the parents of a child be unknown, the parish of its birth is liable.

It is sometimes necessary to afford a small temporary relief to strangers. And it is understood that, in practice, a person

* Runciman against Parish of Mordington, 24th January, 1784.

† Heritors of Cockburnspath, 9th June, 1809.

‡ Parish of Dalmellington against Town of Irvine, 3d December, 1800.

§ 1663, c. 16.—Kilkerran, p. 406.

‖ Brown against Kirk Session of Mordington, 4th March, 1806.

¶ Heritors and Kirk Session of Coldingham against Heritors and Kirk Session of Dunse, 28th July, 1779.—Buik, Howie, and others, against Kirk Session of Arbroath, 25th July, 1800.

** Parish of Rescobie against parishes of Aberlemno, Dunnichen, and Forfar, 28th November, 1801.—Parish of Gladsmuir against Parishes of Preston and Salton, 11th June, 1806.—Parish of Edinburgh against Brown, 11th June, 1806.

having had such a residence in a parish as distinguishes him from a vagrant, is relieved till his legal parish be ascertained; for which that parish has relief against his legal parish, at least from intimation of his situation. And this seems to be the course followed in England."*

## No. III.

*Abridged View of the Law of Scotland, with regard to Vagabonds and Sturdy Beggars.*

(Art. Vagabond in Tait, p. 368.)

"JUSTICES of Peace are directed to execute the acts 'against wilful beggars and vagabonds, solitary and idle men and women without calling or trade, lurking in ale-houses, tied to no certain services, repute and holden as vagabonds; and against those persons who are commonly called Egyptians.'†

Under the denomination vagabond, are comprehended all sorners, or masterful beggars; all idle persons that go about using subtile, crafty, and unlawful play, as jugglery, fast and loose, and the like; the people calling themselves Egyptians, (gypsies) or any other that pretend to foresee future events, and to tell fortunes, or to have skill in magic, or the like; pretended idiots; able bodied persons, alleging that they have been burnt out in some distant part of the country, or that they have been banished from some other place for crimes; others having no land nor masters, nor following any lawful trade or occupation, and who can give no good account of themselves how they earn their living; all tale tellers and ballad singers, not properly licensed; (*i. e.* not being in the service of the Lords of Parliament, or great boroughs) all common labourers, able bodied, refusing to work; all sailors alleging that they have been shipwrecked, unless they have sufficient testimonials of the truth of their story.‡ The Egyptians were a race of disorderly persons who came from the East, and overspread

* Brown against Kirk Session of Mordington, 4th March, 1806.

† 1661, c. 38.

‡ 1449, c. 22.—1457, c. 79.—1579, c. 74.—1592, c. 149.—1698, c. 21.—Of these, 1579, c. 74, seems to be the leading regulation.

Europe, some centuries ago. They were of the worst character; and, being joined by all the idle and dissolute in the countries in which they settled, were an intolerable grievance.

Poor persons who beg, even in their own parishes, are to be punished as vagabonds;* as provision is made for supporting them without begging, if they cannot find work, or are unfit for it.†

For the multifarious description of delinquents above enumerated, a great variety of corrections have at different times been appointed; such as banishment, loss of the ears, &c. and some even more severe; vagrancy, particularly sorning, having at one time been a very great grievance. The Egyptians were banished successively from the different countries of Europe; from Scotland, under pain of death. But rigorous punishments have not for a long time been applied to vagrancy. The severe part of the enactments against Egyptians, in particular, are now in desuetude;‡ though they are still liable to be dealt with as vagabonds. The punishment usually inflicted by justices, (and, it is believed, few other judges, though of more extensive powers, go farther) is a short imprisonment; and sometimes they also lay under surety for their good behaviour. Beggars are directed to be imprisoned, and fed on bread and water, for a month.‖ The pretending to exercise any sort of witchcraft, sorcery, enchantment or conjuration, fortune telling, or discovery of stolen goods, is, by a modern statute, made punishable with a year's imprisonment, and pillory (which last justices can hardly inflict) quarterly, at the market town of the shire; and with laying under surety for good behaviour, if the judge see cause;§ which justices may often be disposed to do, as they will hardly venture to pillory.

Harbouring the kind of persons above described as vaga-

* 1579, c. 74.—1661, c. 38.—Proclam. 11th August, 1692.—Proclam. 29th August, 1693.—Ratified by subsequent acts.

† The lucrative trade of begging, which is the source of many evils, can be sufficiently checked by the existing laws, if they be not obstructed by indiscriminate charity; particularly when they are aided, as recently in Edinburgh, Perth, and elsewhere, by some provision for putting those who beg from necessity, upon a course for obtaining relief.

‡ Hume, ii. 337, seq. ‖ Proclam. 29th August, 1693.

§ 9 Geo. II. c. 5.—This act prohibits all prosecutions for the supposed crime of witchcraft: for which many suffered death in former times, chiefly about the year 1661; (Hume, ii. 559) one in Sutherlandshire by burning, which was the usual mode, so lately as 1722. (Arnot's Criminal Trials, p. 366–7.)

bonds, the earning a livelihood by keeping a known and peculiar house of haunt or harbourage for them, was made the subject of some severe enactments in former times; and, independently of those, is punishable at common law.* Justices of peace are directed "to punish and fine their resetters and setters of houses to them accordingly, by such competent pains as is proper for them to enjoin."† The most common course is said to be to inflict imprisonment or a fine, and to lay under surety for good behaviour.

By an old act, vagrants and sturdy beggars may be compelled into service by any manufacturer within the kingdom, at the sight of the magistrates of the place, where they are laid hold on;‡ but few manufacturers were willing to take such persons into their service; and this provision has long been in disuse.§

* Hume, ii. 353. † 1661, c. 38. ‡ 1663, c. 16.

§ Erskine, i. 7. 61.—*Note.* The English vagrant act, 17 Geo. II. c. 5, appears (though a different opinion is entertained by Lord Bankton, Mr. Hutcheson, and Boyd) not to extend to Scotland; except a single clause for transmitting Scots vagrants found in England into Scotland, to be dealt with according to law. The whole frame and texture of the act seems to show this. The establishments mentioned are entirely English. There is no provision for passing vagrants from Scotland into England, though there is the reverse. The act only directs such vagrants to be disposed of *according to law;* and provision is made for punishing Scotch vagrants so transmitted, who shall, "after being sent as aforesaid, be found wandering, begging, or misbehaving himself or herself within that part of Great Britain called England, *contrary to the true intent and meaning of this act.*" The act makes provision, sect. 14, for the expense occasioned "to the maritime counties, towns, and places in England and Wales, where they (vagrants to be transported to Ireland) may lie for such exportation;" but has no such provision for maritime places in Scotland. The act provides, sect. 8, that a certain duplicate "may be read in any court of record in England, Wales, or the town of Berwick upon Tweed, as evidence." The former vagrant act, 13 Geo. II. c. 24, provided for conveying Scotch vagrants from England into Scotland, to be there disposed of "according to law;" and also (which the present does not) for conveying English vagrants from Scotland into England, to be there disposed of "according to the directions of this act." Both acts profess to be general regulations, comprising the whole law on the point, and enumerate and repeal former acts; but all of these are English acts. The present act makes a general reference (sect. 31, 33,) to two acts which certainly do not extend to Scotland. Mr. Hume (vol. ii. p. 351, seq.), in treating of vagabonds, takes no notice of it. Lord Kames (Statute Law, tit. Police) doubts whether it extends. Lord Swinton (Abridgment of Statutes, tit. Vagrant) says expressly that it seems not to extend; and the general practice of Scotland is understood to be conformable to this opinion. It seemed proper to touch upon these different points, from the importance of the question, and from Lord Bankton, Mr. Hutcheson, and Boyd, having given a very different view of the law with regard to vagabonds, as the vagrant act, if it had extended to Scotland, would have almost entirely superseded the acts cited in this article.

## No. IV.

*Acts of Assembly with regard to the Poor.*

By Act Session ult. Ass. 1647, it is recommended to presbyteries, to consider the best means to get the children of ordinary beggars baptised, and to prevent their own living in so great vileness.

By Act 40 Assembly 1648, while weekly collections are recognised and enjoined, they are forbidden to be taken *during the time* of Divine service, but either *before* or *after* it. The general practice long was, to make them after Divine service, and immediately before pronouncing the blessing; the elders going to each pew with their ladles, and receiving what the hearers chose to give. The practice still obtains in the north and elsewhere, and it has lately been revived with effect in Edinburgh, on occasions of extraordinary collection.

By Act 22. Assembly 1700, it is recommended to all presbyteries, to be diligent and careful in visiting the parishes within their bounds, and to take particular notice how all sums of money mortified or otherwise belonging to the poor of the parish have been managed and applied from time to time; and if they shall find any dilapidations of any such sums, that those guilty thereof be punished according to law; and that the several synods take account of the presbyteries within their bounds, of their diligence therein.

By Act 11. Ass. 1711, it is recommended to presbyteries to apply to the justices of the peace, and other magistrates, to put in execution the laws concerning the poor, and vagrant beggars, and to provide work and maintenance for them.

By Act 7. Ass. 1724, it is recommended to ministers, kirk sessions, presbyteries, and synods to take effectual care, and use all due means to get every parish to maintain its own poor; and to make application to sheriffs, justices of the peace, commissioners of supply, and heritors in their respective bounds, and to magistrates of burghs, that the laws against vagrant and sturdy beggars be put in rigorous execution; and that they shall strictly observe the act 1696 which prohibits sessions and presbyteries from giving recommendations for charity to persons not resident within their bounds; and enjoins that in all cases, such recommendations shall only be for a definite time

## No. V.

*On the Pastoral Duty required of Ministers of the Church of Scotland with regard to the Poor.*

The following extract from Principal Hill's View of the duties of the pastoral office, will afford a clear and comprehensive idea of the nature and extent of that pastoral inspection, with regard to the poor, which is required of the clergy of the church of Scotland.

(Hill's Institutes, p. 405.)

"A fifth duty of the pastoral office, is a care of the poor.

It is proper for you to understand, that there is no legal obligation upon the minister of a parish to act as an administrator of the poor's funds. Like other Christians he is bound to acts of charity according to his ability; and by his office he is bound to put all ranks in mind of this, as of every other part of their duty. But neither his ordination-vows, nor the laws of the church, nor the laws of the land, impose upon him as one of the parts of his office, the charge of managing the charitable funds in his parish. The maintenance of the poor is a burden for which the law makes provision. Those who are entrusted with the power of laying on an assessment for that purpose, are the legal trustees for the application of the sum assessed; and all the funds, either in land or money, which are vested in the kirk-session for behoof of the poor, are placed by law under the control of the heritors of the parish, who have a right, if they please, to be present at the distribution of them, and without whose consent, no part of these funds can be alienated, or moved from one kind of security to another.

If the heritors of a parish, therefore, should at any time harass a minister in that ultroneous labour of love which, from christian principles, he bestows upon the concerns of the poor, he is at liberty to discontinue it; and, after having rendered an account of his former management, he cannot be compelled to expose himself again to the same persecution. But the landholders of Scotland must be blind to their own interest, and actuated by motives very unbecoming their rank in society, before their conduct to their minister can be so vexatious as to justify him for taking such a measure in self-defence. Accord-

ingly, in most parts of Scotland, the minister and elders are left by the heritors, some of whom are commonly members of the kirk-session, to make the weekly distributions to the poor according to their discretion; and except in large towns, the permanent funds, aided by the voluntary collections on the Lord's day, are generally sufficient, without any poor's rate, not for inviting persons to come upon the poor's roll, nor for superseding that assistance which ought to be given by the relations of the distressed, but for preserving the poor from the extremity of want.

This method of providing for the poor, which generally prevails throughout Scotland, is the most effectual and the most frugal that can be conceived. To the situation of the aged and infirm, which often continues for years with little variation, the minister is supposed, by his stated visitation of the parish, to be no stranger; he is informed of occasional distress by the reports of the elders from the different districts; and he is thus qualified to adapt the supply to the necessity. In the discharge of the duties of the pastoral office, we are often called to witness scenes in which there is much occasion for conjoining the relief of bodily wants with spiritual consolation. It is not always possible to administer this relief out of our own funds; and it is not reasonable that, because we see more distress than most other men, we should be obliged to employ in this kind of charity such a portion of our income as might disable us from answering other demands not less urgent. Yet it is most desirable, that we should not be under the necessity of leaving the objects whom we are called to visit as destitute of every comfort as we often find them; and it gratifies our feelings, and gives additional effect to our counsels, that we should be the instruments of conveying the relief which they need. By strict œconomy in the administration of the stated revenue of the poor, and by occasional applications to the generosity of the rich, we are commonly able to provide a supply for the demands which arise either from the ordinary measure of human distress, or from the unusual pressure of hard times; and by our opportunities of collecting information, we may ensure a humane and judicious distribution."

## No. VI.

*Account of the Management of the Poor in the Parish of Jedburgh.*

As a specimen of the manner in which the concerns of the poor are managed in all those parishes, whether town or country, where assessments obtain, in addition to the ordinary funds, and where the actual management remains chiefly in the hands of the Eldership, I shall select the account of the parish of Jedburgh, as given in Volume I. of the Statistical Account. That statement was drawn up by the learned and venerable clergyman of the parish, Dr. Thomas Somerville, under whose wise and prudent superintendence, the affairs of the poor are still conducted with ability and benevolence. The statement, though drawn up in 1791, exhibits the leading features of the present practice; the only points of difference being in regard to the number of the poor, and their rates of allowance, which must, from obvious causes, have greatly increased.

(Statist. Account, vol. i. p. 12.)

"*State of the Poor.*—The number of poor upon the country roll of the parish amounts to 55, and of those in the town roll to 37. They are maintained by assessments. For supporting the country poor, a tax is laid upon the different proprietors of land, in proportion to the valued rents. The common method of proceeding in this business is as follows: The minister intimates from the pulpit, that on such a day a meeting of the heritors and elders is to be held, for the purpose of making a provision for the maintenance of the poor for the ensuing quarter. These meetings generally take place near the term of Candlemas, Whitsunday, Lammas, and Martinmas. Upon the day of meeting the heritors elect a preses, after which the minutes of the former sederunt, and the roll of the parish are read by the clerk. Forming a calculation from the number already standing upon the roll, and the applications made to them, the heritors assess themselves in a certain sum to be collected from them severally, according to the proportion of their valued rents. The proprietor pays one half of the assessment, and the tenant the other.

Though the tenants are not mentioned in the summons, yet such of them as choose to attend are made welcome, and their advice and information listened to by the meeting. The sum assessed is raised by the heritors and kirk-session together, in such proportions as seem adequate to the necessities of the poor. Such persons as are reduced to the necessity of applying to the heritors for charity, from any accidental transient cause, such as *disease* or *misfortune*, receive what is called *an interim supply*, i. e. a certain sum for that quarter only: The aged and infirm, and such as are likely to continue under the same necessity of depending upon public charity, are taken upon the poor's roll at a certain weekly allowance. The persons taken upon the roll are obliged to subscribe a bond or deed of conveyance, making over and bequeathing all their effects to the heritors; and though the heritors seldom exact their effects, yet the subscription of the bond serves as a check to prevent persons, who may be possessed of concealed property, from alienating the public charity. The sum assessed is levied by a collector, appointed by the heritors, and distributed by him to the persons admitted upon the roll, according to the proportions allotted to them. This mode of providing for the parochial poor was adopted in the parish of Jedburgh, anno 1742, when the number of the poor increasing, from the scarcity and high price of provisions, the heritors and kirk-session were obliged to have recourse to the legal method of obtaining the contributions of absent proprietors. These monthly assessments have varied from two shillings to three shillings and six-pence per quarter, on each hundred pounds of valued rent. The assessment for the last twelve months was at the rate of three shillings per quarter, but did not produce the sum required, viz. £37 8 8, per quarter. The deficiency is made up from the weekly collections.

The poor belonging to the borough of Jedburgh, are provided for by a plan in some respects similar to, but in others materially different from, that above described. The magistrates hold quarterly meetings, in which they assess the borough for the maintenance of their poor, and portion the sums in the same manner as the heritors do; but the assessment is not proportioned to the value of the property of individuals within the royalty; but according to a valuation of the property of the burgesses and inhabitants, estimated by sworn assessors appointed by the magistrates. The assessors,

in forming their calculation, and fixing the portion of assessment to which each individual is liable, have respect not only to ostensible property, but to the profits of trade, and other supposed advantages. It is obvious that such a vague and arbitrary mode of calculation, is extremely liable to partiality and error.

The sums appropriated for the maintenance of each individual, vary according to the circumstances of the claimant. To single persons who can do no work, a shilling, one shilling and six-pence, one shilling and eight-pence, is allowed weekly. Six-pence, eight-pence, ten-pence, to those who are infirm and receive small wages. Eight, ten, twelve, and sometimes twenty shillings, per quarter, have been allowed for interim supply. There are few instances of any family receiving above two shillings, or two shillings and six-pence, per week. These proportions refer to the poor belonging to the country part of the parish; but the allowance given to the poor of the town is more scanty and inadequate.

Besides the assessments above mentioned, the town of Jedburgh holds the principal sum of £422, upon bond to the session, arising from the accumulation of various legacies, the interest of which is annually distributed according to the destination of the donors: Some of it for educating poor children, some for the relief of poor householders, some appropriated to the poor within the town, and some to the poor of the town and country equally. A great portion of these charities arises from legacies of the Lady Yester, who was the daughter of Kerr of Fairnyherst in this parish, and celebrated for her charity. A bridewell, or correction-house, has been lately erected in the town, at the expence of the heritors of the county at large, and has been found very useful in overawing vagrants, punishing smaller offences, and, particularly, for the accommodation of persons disordered in mind, who are maintained there at the expence of the parishes to which they belong.

## No. VII.

*Testimony of the Church of Scotland on assessments, and on the general management of the Poor.*

ACCORDING to the statements contained in Sir John Sinclair's Statistical Account, the following appears to have been the state of Scotland with regard to assessments, during the period from 1792—1798.

Number of Parishes in which assessment more or less obtained,.....92
Parishes in which assessment had once obtained, but had been discontinued,..... 3
Number of instances in which assessment for the poor is approved of by the Clergy,.....13.

The following observations will exhibit the sense of the Church at large on the subject of assessments:—

1. The *general* sense of the Church appears to be in favour of the primitive mode of providing for the poor by collections and voluntary subscriptions in all cases, when there are not insuperable difficulties in the way.

2. In those cases where assessments are approved of, it is principally on the plea of *necessity*—arising from the non-residence of heritors—their neglect of public worship and weekly collections—the increase of dissenters—the growth of manufactures and consequent influx of strangers—with other causes of a similar kind.

3. In those instances where assessments are approved of, on the ground of necessity, no attempt is made to conceal or to palliate the evils with which they are more or less attended. The chief ground on which they are vindicated appears to be, their tendency to *equalise* the burden of supporting the poor, and to prevent the progress of mendicity.

4. Many of the clergy, in their accounts, are careful in noticing the *distinctive features* of the English and Scottish systems of poor laws; and in so far as a general survey enables me to judge, their statements go to corroborate the views which have been exhibited in the preceding Dissertations.

5. The Clergy universally approve of the mode of management *by kirk-sessions*, even in cases of assessment; while they at the same time, approve of the heritors taking a co-ordinate share of the burden.

6. Hospitals or work-houses are, almost with one voice, disapproved of, as hot-beds of corruption, profusion, and pauperism.

It may be interesting and useful, to throw together a few specimens of the manner in which Clerymen from different districts of the country, have expressed their sentiments on these topics; as in this way, a pretty accurate idea may be formed, of the general sense of the church with regard to the poor. I shall arrange the selection in the order in which the passages present themselves in the original work. I shall note at the foot of the page, the *general character* or *description* of the parishes.

*Account of Kilmarnock,* by the Rev. Messrs. M'Kinlay and Robertson, Vol.* ii. *p.* 92.

"The poor will never be suitably or permanently provided for, until the proprietors of land agree to assess themselves in a sum that may be adequate to this purpose; and when it is considered, that the greater part of the heritors are non-residing, that they contribute nothing to the maintenance of the poor by their own personal charity, and that the value of their property is greatly increased by the manufactures and population of the place; such a measure must appear to every humane and benevolent heart, to be highly equitable and proper; and, it is hoped, will be soon carried into effect."

*Account of Mauchlin,† Ayrshire, by the Rev. William Auld, Vol.* ii. *p.* 112.

"It must be obvious to every body, that according to the present mode, the burden of maintaining the poor, is most unequally divided. It falls almost entirely on tenants, tradesmen, servants, and charitable persons attending the church; while other people, however rich, particularly non-residing heritors, whatever their income may be, contribute little or nothing to the charitable funds of the parish. Hence there is, in general, ample ground for the common observation, 'that it is the poor in Scotland

* Large Manufacturing town, with landward parish.

† Country parish with large Manufacturing village.

who maintain the poor.' It must be confessed at the same time, that it is very difficult forming a plan that would provide for the poor, without encouraging in them either inattention, indolence, or waste."

*Account of Neilston,* Renfrewshire, by the Rev. Mr. John Monteath, Vol.* ii. *p.* 160.

"In this parish, the non-residing heritors probably hold three fourths of the surface, and may, perhaps, draw the same proportion, of the whole rent. It is said, that in some parts of Scotland, there are instances of non-residing heritors receiving almost the whole rents of several parishes, and yet, in some of them, that they have never contributed a farthing to the support of the poor. Equity, justice, humanity, common sense itself, lift up their united voice, against so disgraceful a circumstance, if true; nor is it any wonder, that in such districts, the discerning part of the inhabitants look forward with pleasure to a coming day, when this 'with-holding more than is meet,' nay, with-holding every thing, may be counteracted, and when those in the middle and inferior ranks of life, shall no longer have the sole burden imposed upon them.

At present, it may be observed, that the burden of maintaining 34 poor people falls upon the residing inhabitants in this parish; and that the collecting, taking care of, and distributing among them the scanty pittance they receive, lies, (with the inspection, and concurrence of the minister) upon six elders; a class of men, who, in the different parishes of Scotland, have for these two centuries past, saved the landed interest a sum, which may, perhaps, seem small, if compared with what has been expended, in maintaining an equal number of poor in a neighbouring kingdom, but which would have been considerably felt, had it been exacted; and, if a trifling salary of £1. or £2. sterling to a treasurer, which is only the case in some parishes, be excepted, the whole is managed without a farthing of expence; an instance of frugality in an extensive and public management, it is presumed, not paralleled in Europe, and exhibiting at once, in these days of venality, a striking and singular example of public spirit, and Christian charity. But this useful body of men appear to be on the decline, as to number, at least in the west of Scotland.

* Extensive and Populous country parish, with numerous public works of all kinds, constantly increasing.

Few people chuse to accept an office, which not only has not the smallest emolument annexed to it, but, as far as connected with the management of the poor, is a thankless and troublesome business. The respective sessions, (vestries) in this part of Scotland, are also in general very ill accommodated, and destitute even of common convenience for managing the public business; few country parishes have a session-house; and the elder, when collecting the offering, in many places, has not so much as a shade, to screen him from the severest tempest. Their attachment also to the Established Church has, in many places, been greatly weakened by causes well known, and now long experienced in the western districts, where with a spirit of commerce, a high sense both of civil and religious liberty now prevails. What the result of this may be, time will discover; but one consequence is evident, that the care of the poor can hardly continue long on its present footing, and must of course devolve on the heritors, and parishioners at large."

*Account of Dalserf,* Lanarkshire, by the Rev. Mr. John Risk, Vol. ii. p. 380.*

"It were rather to be wished, that the poor could be maintained by voluntary contributions, than by assessment. The latter method has a tendency to increase their number, and to encourage dissipation and idleness. It extinguishes charity in those who give, as they give from compulsion, and prevents gratitude in those who receive, since they receive it as a right. The poors-rates are now severely felt in England, and every method ought to be taken to prevent their becoming so burdensome in Scotland, which is so much less able to afford it.

*Account of Burntisland,† Fifeshire, by the Rev. James Wemyss, Vol. ii. p. 431.*

"*State of the Poor.*—The poor, within the borough, are rather numerous. None of them, however, beg. There being no funds, they are supplied by weekly and extraordinary collections at the church-doors. Such of them as have their names put on, what is called, the poors roll, get from 6d. to 1s. a week. Their support must be small, considering from whence it arises. Most of the heritors are non-residenters, which makes the burden fall heavy upon such as are any way able, or rather well-disposed, to relieve the necessities of the poor. Such a general assess-

* Country parish, of moderate size.

† Royal Burgh, with landward parish.

ment should certainly take place in this, and in every other parish, as would affect the landlord and his tenant, in some just proportion, according to their ability, whether inclined to be charitable or not, or whether of the established church or dissenters: and, till this takes place, there is little doubt, but that both the uncharitable and the Seceder, will take but small share in the support of the poor."

*Account of Selkirk,* Counties of Selkirk and Teviotdale, by the Rev. Thomas Robertson, Vol.* ii. *p.* 443.

*The Poor.*—Poors-rates have been long established here, to the great prejudice of industry and virtue, among the lower class of citizens. "The parish is bound to support us," is their apology for dissipation, through every period of life. The extinction of small farms, which has barred their ambition, and damped any spirit of economy, is here attended with fatal effects; whilst their unfortunate dependence upon the poors funds, makes them less disposed to industrious exertion. This, too, dissolves the ties of natural affection, while it multiplies the number, and increases the necessities of the poor. If the children suffer from the want of economy and virtue in the parents, the parents are abundantly repaid by the neglect of their children, when bending under the double load of infirmity and indigence. They will tell you, without a blush, that the parish is better able to support their aged parents, than they are; while you will see them, at the same time, in the prime of life, unclogged with families, indulging themselves in every species of debauchery common to that rank of life. But the mischief ends not with them; many who fill higher stations, and whose circumstances are not only easy but affluent, make their contributing to the poors funds an excuse for throwing their near relations a burden upon the public. While the feelings of nature are thus stifled, and its laws are thus transgressed, it were devoutly to be wished, that the laws respecting the poor, productive of so many baneful consequences, would provide this equitable antidote; "that all who are in circumstances, and who, by law, would succeed to the property of any one were they rich, should be obliged to maintain them when poor." The public, as it is only the last heir, ought to be only the last resort, of those who have none else to support them. From these observations, it would

* Royal Burgh; with considerable country parish.

appear, that poors-rates, without a system of management not yet practised in the country parishes, is unfriendly to the cause of virtue in general, and to the best interests of those they are intended to serve.—It is an undoubted fact, that when people are taught to depend upon any means of support, which flow not from their own laudable industry and economy, the meanness of the thought degrades every virtue, and opens the door to every vice that can debase the soul. Their only dependence ought to be upon their own labour and exertions, which, when joined to economy, will always furnish them with the means of a decent maintenance. Promoting their industry is the best provision that can be made for them. Premiums are cheerfully given for the encouragement of commerce: Might not the same means be employed, for promoting virtue and industry in humble life? A very small sum, properly laid out for that purpose, would do more good, than all that is bestowed on the present system. With what honourable pride would not the poor man's heart swell, and with what renewed vigour and alacrity would he not discharge the duties of his station, when he felt his virtues publicly regarded, and rewarded by his fellow citizens? With what shame and remorse would not the profligate wretch endeavour to conceal his misery, despised and condemned by those among whom he lived, and without any just claim to their assistance? Even during the infirmities of age, their support should be a voluntary gift, and not compulsatory; and should depend upon the character they maintained, in their early days, for their honesty and virtue.

The collections, at the church-door, are dedicated to the relief of incidental misfortunes, among those who have no share in the fund above mentioned, or who happen to fall into circumstances of peculiar distress, between the meetings of the managers. By these means, many are prevented from coming upon the funds, to which, on every occasion, they discover a strong propensity, and which it is not always easy to hinder.

*Account of Coldstream,* Berwickshire, by the Rev. James Bell, D. D.*
*Vol.* iv. *p.* 418.

Two evils have arisen from the rapid increase of the poors rates. The one is, that trusting to these rates, the common people do not endeavour to provide any thing for a time of sickness or scarcity, or for the approach of old age. The

* Considerable town, and extensive landward parish.

other is, that these rates have, in a great measure, deprived them of the natural feeling of giving aid to their relations in distress. The nearest ties of consanguinity are disregarded, and the holiest affections of humanity are thus extinguished. No person, almost, is ashamed of having his father, mother, brother, or any other relation, on the pauper's list.

*Account of Portmoak,* Kinross-shire, by the Rev. Andrew Grant, D. D. now of St. Andrew's Church, Edinburgh, Vol.* v. *p.* 168.

"Perhaps there never was a fund managed with stricter economy, or one that answered better the purposes for which it was destined, than that under the care of the Kirk-sessions in Scotland. No class of men could be fitter for distributing the public charity, than the elders in country parishes. Their acquaintance with the circumstances of the people, prevents all imposition; the laudable vanity, they usually have in bettering their funds, leads to economy; and their time and labour are bestowed cheerfully, and without reward. This is the reason, why few or none of the parishes in this county have had recourse to the legal method of supporting the poor, by assessing the heritors. Of all the methods of supplying the poor hitherto devised, I believe that is the worst. While it is a heavy and increasing burden upon the landed interest, it ruins the charity of the middling class of people, and encourages idleness and dissipation among the poor. As soon as the middling ranks of the people (who, to their honour, bear almost all the burden of supporting the poor) find, that there is a legal provision for them, they withhold their contributions as unnecessary, and the poor themselves, having a legal claim to support, are tempted to lay aside their industry, and economy: Add to these the hardships they must submit to, and the restraints imposed upon them, in removing with their families from one place to another. That those who possess the wealth of a society, are bound to support its poor, there is no doubt; but to proportion this burden to the ability of individuals and, without encouraging indolence, to assign the necessaries of life to those who are unable to earn them, seems to be extremely difficult. All the methods which law hath established for this purpose, are liable to great abuses. There is one, which, though it never had the countenance of law,

* Considerable country parish.

has produced good effects. Many incorporations in towns, and some districts of the country also, have raised funds for the support of their poor, by subscription. Each subscriber, by contributing a small sum annually, while in health and strength, is entitled, when deprived of these, to a weekly or monthly allowance. These funds have been the means of preventing regular assessments upon the heritors in many parishes. To extend them to the whole country, would perhaps be the best method of providing for the poor."

*Account of Caerlaverock,* Dumfries-shire, by the Rev. Wm. M'Morine, D.D. (lately Moderator of the General Assembly) Vol. vi. p. 29.*

"If the situation, circumstances, and manners of the inhabitants of Caerlaverock are considered, it should seem that a fourth part of the sum, allotted to the support of the poor, might be sufficient for all the purposes of real and useful charity. And, indeed, an attentive observer will reckon it a matter of doubt, whether the greatness of the parish funds be productive of most good or evil. The moralist has some cause to complain, that it dries up the sources of private charity, and renders the poorer people less willing to assist their old and needy relations. These, they seem sometimes disposed to abandon to the care of the session, who cannot, by the small allowance they bestow, make up to them the want of that tender assiduity, which proves the cordial of age and poverty, and which natural affection alone can administer.

The farmer with still greater reason complains, that the idea of a plentiful fund established for their support, fills the parish, in spite of every effort to prevent it, with the idle, infirm, and indolent; and renders it difficult for him to obtain day-labourers. In fine, the poor themselves are far from being contented with their respective proportions of the funds, which are, notwithstanding, distributed with great impartiality. They are accustomed to lean too much to them, and to depend too little upon their own exertions: Nay, it is said, that a querulous habit is acquired, and even infirmity feigned, in order to excite compassion, and to obtain a more liberal share of charity.

In the opposite scale of good, these effects of the funds are to be thrown: First, The support of convenient schools; Sec-

* Country parish.

ond, That no distress arising from poverty occurs, which obtains not a prompt relief, without any expense to the inhabitants of the parish. But, though none of the poor of Caerlaverock are under the necessity of begging from house to house, the parish is as much as any other in this quarter, pestered with vagrants, and as liberal to them.

From these facts and observations then, as it has occurred to every man who turns his attention to the solution of this important question, 'How ought the poor to be supplied,' it may be inferred:

That distress and poverty multiply in proportion to those funds that are created to relieve them. 'Where the carcase is, there the eagles will be gathered together.'

That the measures of charity ought to remain invisible, till the moment when it is necessary that they should be distributed.

That in the country parishes of Scotland, in general, small, occasional, voluntary, collections are sufficient.

That the legislature has no occasion to interfere to augment that stream which is already copious enough, though not always derived from its proper source, or confined to its proper channel.

In fine, that the establishment of a poors-rate would be, not only unnecessary, but hurtful, as it would tend to oppress the landholder without bringing relief to the poor.

*Account of the Town of Paisley, Renfrewshire, by the Rev. John Snodgrass, D. D. Vol.* vii. *p.* 68.

"The plan of supporting the poor by the weekly collections at the church-doors, under the management of the minister and elders of every parish, has produced such salutary effects, that it certainly deserves the highest commendation. No set of men are better acquainted with the situation and characters of the poor than they. They therefore can judge exactly both what supplies they may need, and how they may be given them with most advantage. It is much to be regretted, that while this mode of maintaining the poor, in many parts of Scotland, is discontinued, recourse is had to a scheme of supporting them by a discretionary tax upon the inhabitants, under the management of what are called overseers. The progress of this scheme is not a little alarming, as there is too much reason to fear that it will be productive of very bad

effects. It puts charity entirely off its natural principle. It is calculated to multiply the poor, and to increase their demands, by holding out to their view a settled maintenance which they can call their own. It divests them of sensibility, by teaching them to claim it as their right, when they would be ashamed to appear in the character of beggars. Thus it is unfavourable to industry; and it will bring at length an intolerable burden upon the country."

*Account of the Abbey Parish of Paisley,* Renfrewshire, by the Rev. Mr. (now Dr.) Robert Boog, senior Minister, Vol.* vii. *p.* 96.

"Till 1785, the poor were supported by the collections at the church door; by the interest of some donations in the management of the kirk session; by the dues for the proclamation of banns of marriage, and a small sum arising from the use of the mort cloths. At that period it was proposed to put a stop to the practice of vagrant begging, and as for that end it was necessary to provide for the support of the poor in their houses, a parochial assessment was resolved upon, a measure the more reasonable and necessary in this parish, as among the many affluent landholders belonging to it, only one or two who resided within the parish, did ever contribute any thing for the maintenance of the poor."

*Account of New Kilpatrick,† Dumbarton and Stirling shires, by the Rev. Mr. George Sym, Vol.* vii. *p.* 106.

"There is no way of supporting the poor so easy, and so little expensive, as from the collections at church. Assessments are attended with more trouble, and are considerably more expensive; for many claim to be admitted on the poors roll when the poor are supported in this way, who, in the same circumstances, would make greater exertions to support themselves before they applied for supply out of the funds provided in the other way. Assessments, however, are certainly the most equitable method of supporting the poor. When heritors, either from non-residence or unfrequent attendance upon public worship, contribute nothing, or do not contri-

* Extensive landward parish, along with a large part of the town of Paisley, and populous manufacturing villages, &c.

† Country parish, with bleachfields and other public works.

bute their just proportion; and when, from a spirit of sectarianism, many others withdraw from the established church, and also contribute nothing, it is often impossible, and always unfair and unreasonable, that those only who do attend the church should bear the whole burden of the poor."

*Account of Walston,* Lanarkshire, by the Rev. Mr. Patrick Molleson, Vol.* vii. *p.* 120.

"It may be remarked, that in those parishes where an assessment is laid upon the heritors and their tenants to supply the deficiency of the parish funds, the poor are much less scrupulous in applying for parish support, than in those parishes where they are supplied by the session solely from the parish funds. Where this last is the case, the poor are less importunate, and more backward to apply for parish support, and more thankful when they receive it. The cheapest way, therefore, and the best way for the morals of the people, to supply the poor, where it can be done, is to do it by the kirk-session. The elders know the circumstances of every individual in the parish, prevent imposition, and often discover modest merit in want. This consideration should engage every person to be as liberal as his circumstances will admit in contributing towards the parish funds."

*Account of Yarrow,† Selkirkshire, by the Rev. Mr. (now, Dr.) Robert Russell, Vol.* vii. *p.* 509.

"There is reason to suspect, that many taking advantage of this provision for indigence and trouble, squander away what they earn, and are at no pains to secure for themselves a subsistence, either when laid upon a bed of sickness, or subjected to the infirmities of old age. But notwithstanding its abuse in some instances, it is surely a noble institution, and reflects the highest honour upon this country, which is attentive to every class of citizens, and desirous that every individual should enjoy, if not the comforts, at least the necessaries of life."

*Account of Dundee,‡ Angus-shire, by the Rev. Robert Small, D. D. Vol.* viii. *p.* 235.

"Though this tax compels the covetous, and those who rare-

* Country parish in the upper ward of Lanarkshire.

† Very extensive muirland parish.

‡ Populous and growing seaport town, with extensive country parish.

ly attend public worship, to take some part in the maintenance of the poor, and on this account, has the appearance of justice, it is liable to many objections. It tends to impair voluntary charity; it falls as heavily on the most charitable and liberal, as on the covetous and licentious; by being confined within the royalty, it takes no hold on the opulent persons in the country part of the parish, the proprietors of the land especially, who profit more by the industry of Dundee, than any other set of men; at the pleasure of any magistracy, it may be extended beyond all just and moderate limits; and, being like their other funds, under their uncontrolable disposal, may be perverted into an engine of borough politics, and become in future, a grievous nuisance. At present, however, it has produced no real or perceptible evils; particularly it has not, as in England, become extravagant and destructive to economy, nor rendered it in any degree more difficult for strangers to obtain a settlement."

*Account of Melrose,* Roxburghshire, by the Rev. Mr. George Thomson, Vol.* ix. *p.* 87.

"To whom, therefore, can they so naturally look for maintenance, when, through age or disease, they are unable to provide for themselves, as to those who may have reaped the fruits of their past industry, when in the vigour of their days, and favoured with health and strength? As the non-residing, as well as the residing heritors, are subject to this assessment; and as it is imposed according to the valuation of their respective properties, they are burdened only in proportion to their supposed advantages, from the past industry and expenditure of the poor."

*Account of Kinnettles,† Forfarshire, by the Rev. Mr. David Ferney, Vol.* ix. *p.* 212.

"Where collections, dedicated to the support of the poor, are not sufficient for necessary supplies, let there be assessments. This would oblige landed gentlemen, and others, on whom such assessments might be chiefly laid, to exert themselves, by introducing manufactures, or other means of sub-

* Considerable town, with extensive country parish.

† Small country parish.

sistence. The number of poor would thereby be diminished; those who might still need parochial supply, would be less indigent, and others become able to bear a part of the burden of the unavoidably poor. So long as mankind are supported by strolling, the industry and ingenuity of thousands must be lost to the community, and vice cherished to a considerable degree."

*Account of Wick,* Caithness, by the Rev. Mr. William Sutherland, Vol. x. p. 20.*

"*Poor.*—The funds appropriated for the support of the poor in the parish arise principally from the public collections in the church, which, deducting bad copper, do not exceed from £10 to £12 *per annum*, consequently, at an average, it is scarcely two shillings to each pensioner, there being no less than 150 on the parish roll. The smallness of those funds is owing to the absence of the gentry, who spend their rents elsewhere, and leave the poor on their several estates to be chiefly supplied by the inhabitants of the burgh. In such cases it were much to be wished, that either the heritors by themselves or agents would assess themselves, as is done in other parishes in Scotland, or that a law were obtained obliging them annually to pay a certain sum for the relief of the poor."

*Account of Dunnottar,† County of Kincardine, by the Rev. Mr. James Walker, Vol. xi. p. 229.*

"In general, the character of charity may with great justice be ascribed to the body of the people here; so that no subject of distress can be long without relief voluntarily offered. And perhaps, in a *moral* view, the encouragement of THIS VIRTUE may be none of the least arguments against the establishment of *poors-rates.* For *the exercise of private charity, and compassion, must always decline where there is a public assessment.*"

*Account of Westerkirk,‡ Dumfries-shire, by the Rev. Mr. William Little, Vol. xi. p. 529.*

"This rapid increase of poors-rates may indeed be somewhat

* Small burgh, with extensive landward parish.

† Town of Stonehaven, along with a large landward parish.

‡ Considerable country-parish.

alarming to those by whom the assessment is paid. Trusting to these rates, individuals are not so solicitous, perhaps, as they otherwise would be, to make provision for a time of sickness, a season of dearth, or the indigence of old age; and this mode of providing for the poor may serve to lessen that attention to parents, and that desire to provide for their comfortable subsistence, which are so much the duty of, and so very becoming in children: On the other hand, since this method of maintaining paupers commenced, the parish has not been much infested with vagrants and sturdy beggars; and the poor being thus provided for, live comfortably at home, and are not reduced to the necessity of wandering up and down the country begging bread."

*Account of Cargill,* Perthshire, by the Rev. Mr. J. P. Bannerman, Vol.* xiii. *p.* 547.

"In appointing the different quotas the poor shall receive, care is taken not to encourage idleness, and no more is given to the necessitous, than what, with the exertion of their own industry, will support them. But so high is the spirit of independence, that it is looked upon as disgraceful to receive charity from the parish, and none will submit to it till they are necessitated by distress. The effects belonging to those on the poors' list, are, at their death, sold by the session, as belonging to the parish."

*Account of Borthwick,† County of Edinburgh, by the Rev. Mr. John Clunie, Vol.* xiii. *p.* 630.

"Four of the heritors are elders, and do their duty as such. They take a kind interest in the poor, meet with the session regularly twice a-year, examine accounts, listen to new applications, make up the roll for the ensuing half year, fix the allowance of each pensioner as seems needful, and assess themselves and tenants to make up the deficiency of the supplies above specified. A discretionary power too is given to the minister, and any one elder, to attend to circumstances which cannot be foreseen or provided for at the stated meetings.

Such provision, it has sometimes been alleged, has a ten-

* Country parish of moderate size.

† Country parish of moderate size.

dency (by damping industry, and rendering the labouring part of the community less scrupulous in their applications for aid) to lessen the mortification of being assisted by the public charity of people like themselves, and so, in effect, to increase the number of poor; but similar objections may be brought against charitable institutions of almost every denomination. In this country there can be no great cause of alarm while the management is in such hands; and therefore, to compare our trifling assessments with the poor-rates in England in their operation and effects, is ridiculous and absurd. True, indeed, it would be desirable that no assessment were necessary; and did heritors in general, imitate those of the parish of Borthwick, the happiest consequences might be expected: But in many parishes not a single proprietor resides; and where he does, gives not himself the smallest trouble about the poor. The tenants naturally imitate their superiors, in relaxing in their attendance on public worship, and the trifling sums collected at church may be said to be half extorted from the very poorest of the community. On this account, therefore, as in many other instances, we must take mankind, not as what they ought to be, but as they really are, and so treat them accordingly."

*Account of Primrose,* County of Edinburgh, by the Rev. Mr. John Fleming, Vol.* xiv. *p.* 442.

"Poor rates, like every other thing, may be attended with some inconvenience. They may, in some instances, encourage idleness and avidity in those by whom they are claimed, or peculation and extravagance in those by whom they are administered. But it seems undeniable, that they possess this advantage, that they proportion distribution to opulence, and force the churlish to share equally with the charitable, the burden of supplying the necessities of the indigent."

*Account of Bothwell,† Lanarkshire, by the Rev. Michael Macculloch, D. D. Vol.* xvi. *p.* 306.

*Poor.*—The poor are supplied from an assessment, fixed by a meeting of heritors and church-session, who meet once in the

* Country parish of moderate size.

† A large parish, with increasing manufactures.

six months, examine the poors roll, and appoint such a sum to be levied for the ensuing half year, as the state of the poor requires. The landed property pay the one half, and the householders the other. As the parish is assessed, the Sunday collections are small; and are applied to keep the poor-rates in moderation, to aid such as have a small allowance, and to keep others off it, by giving them incidental charity. At an average, there are about 25 upon the roll; and the sum allotted for the current year, is £73 18 8 sterling.

By the mode of Sundays collections in Scotland, the poor are in general supported by the poorer part of society; but a legal assessment secures the contribution of all ranks in the parish, sectarists, and especially the *opulent proprietors*, whether resident or not. Its increase, however, ought to be jealously watched, and as much as possible prevented. The following regulations may be of use.

To prevent any from settling in the parish, whose circumstances may soon, or immediately, need supply; or to have an obligation from the parishes whence they come, that they shall support them.—Not to raise the stent upon every exigency, but to make a collection among the heritors, or at the church, for that purpose.—Never to slacken the hand of industry, by giving too early or too much; for this would render it a nursery of sloth and idleness. A little exercise cheers even the languor of age, and sweetens both the cup and the rest of the labouring man. The real circumstances of every poor person should be precisely known, as representations may be biassed by favour or influence; that when application is made, every proper object may have the necessary relief, and no part of the public charity shall be misapplied —To admit no person upon the roll, unless an intimation thereof is lodged with the church-session six weeks before the meeting, that the session may inquire into the state of the case, and report the same to the meeting.

By such provisions as these, the much dreaded evil of poor-rates in this country, may be prevented, and an effectual support for the poor secured; vagrant begging suppressed, and their children educated in knowledge and virtue.

*Account of Long-forgan,* Perthshire, by a Proprietor in the Parish, Vol.* xix. *pp.* 484, 485, 486.

"*State of the Poor.*—The state of the poor in Scotland is, in every respect, quite different from what it is in England. There is a kind of very commendable pride, which prevents many of the labouring poor in this country from accepting parish charity, as long as by their own industry, or by the bounty of their friends, they can get a morsel of bread. In most parishes, the ordinary funds are sufficient to supply the wants of their poor: These are principally under the management of the minister and the kirk-session, who must be well acquainted with the circumstances of every one; but should the ordinary funds prove insufficient, the care of the poor falls to the heritors. This has happened in some parishes; and hence, something like a rate, or proportional assessment, has taken place; but in this parish there is no such thing.

The least reflection ought to convince every one, that it is of the utmost consequence to society to keep off a rate as long as possible; for although there are many who will exert themselves to the utmost, rather than accept of parish charity, yet, when they know that a fund is established for their aid, they are inclined, from that moment, to consider it as their right: shame is entirely laid aside; their industrious endeavours to support themselves are at an end; and they become a burden upon the parish at a much earlier period than they are entitled to in the spirit of charity.

*Few Poor.*—It may seem extraordinary, that in a parish consisting of 1500 souls and upwards, and in which there is a village of nearly half the number, principally labourers and manufacturers, there are so few who receive charity; and still more extraordinary that there is but one travelling beggar in the whole parish; even she receives parochial supplies, but she has got such a habit of begging, nothing can restrain her. Of that class, many pass through the parish, but they come from the neighbouring towns, and many from the Highlands. This may be accounted for as follows:—

*Reasons why.*—Every native of this parish, who is in real want, upon proper application, gets a supply as far as the funds will admit, and according to his or her necessities.

* A considerable Country Parish.

If they be totally unable to do any thing for their own maintenance, or if they have a family to provide for, which they are unable to do, they get more; if they be single, or if they have friends or relations who can help them, they get less. For it is the leading feature of this charity, that the poor are to be supplied with the necessaries of life, and not with the superfluities, and in such a manner as to be a spur to the industry of all, especially of the rising generation, and not to encourage sloth, and support idleness and extravagance."

*Account of Klmadock or Doune,* Perthshire, by Mr. Alexander M'Gibbon, Vol.* xx. *p.* 84.

"*Poor.*—There are no private donations, or hospitals founded, for the poor of this parish, neither have the heritors ever been assessed. They are, however, liberally supported from the collections at the churches, and by private charity; and common begging is now almost quite gone.

The situation of this parish, with regard to the poor, is a strong proof of the baneful consequence of overgrown hospitals. Innocent misfortunes are always mentioned as an argument in favour of hospitals. It is no doubt an amiable virtue to relieve the distresses of a suffering fellow-creature; but cases of this nature ought to be thrown on private charity alone, which usually exerts itself in a most effectual manner; and the common poor should be provided for by the public. It is an important matter to make charity command gratitude and industry. Private charity effects this most completely: The indigent person knows that the eye of the donor is upon him, and that if he is idle and insolent the donation will be withdrawn. Hence, gratitude excites his industry, and fear commands his respect. But, when a set of gentle beggars are put on the roll of hospital pensioners, they conceive themselves only obliged to the public, that is, nobody. The funds, say they, are their own, and they have none to thank. Hence, they forget their true situation, and become ungrateful, insolent, and lazy.

Let the parish of Kilmadock rejoice that she is free of such nuisances; let her cultivate sobriety, industry, and virtue, and, while prosperity smiles on her borders, affluence will garnish her table, and contentment gladden her heart."

* Small town, with extensive country Parish.

*Account of Hounam,* Roxburghshire, by the Rev. James Rutherford, Vol.* xxi. *p.* 13.

"*State of the Church, and of the Poor.*—With regard to the legal method of provision for the poor in Scotland, the mode of procedure observed in this parish is as follows—Intimation of the meeting is made from the desk by the clerk of the kirk-session after divine service. Ten free days intervene between the intimation and the meeting. On the day of meeting the heritors choose a preses. The clerk then reads over the minutes of the former sederunt. All applications of the poor are made to the preses. To those, who, through accidental misfortune or disease, apply for support, is given interim supply; that is, supply for that quarter only, or so long as the present occasion may require. The roll of the poor being made up, the names are read over by the clerk; and each have a sum allotted to them according to their circumstances, as can be learned from the petitioners themselves, the minister, or any of the elders, or tenants present. The sum to each is marked opposite to their names. The names being gone through, the amount is summed, and ordered to be levied equally on the heritors and tenants. On the admission of any person on the roll, an inventory is taken by the clerk of his effects, which then become the property of the heritors. The money thus assessed is levied by the clerk, and put into the hands of two or three persons chosen annually as overseers for the poor. These persons living in different parts of the parish, the money is speedily and faithfully distributed to the poor. The minister alone, if nobody attends according to the intimation, can assess for the poor. They are not suffered to want on account of the negligence of heritors, and the deed of the minister is valid.

The weekly collections in the church are, by law, the property of the session, for behoof of the poor; and are usually given to such as are known by the minister and elders to be in necessitous circumstances, and who through modesty do not apply for the legal provision."

* Country parish of moderate size.

Among the very few who support the principle and the practice of assessments *on their own merits*, independent of *necessity*, I find the name of the venerable Dr. Samuel Charters, of Wilton. The following quotation will shew his sentiments on the subject, as more fully exhibited in his admirable Sermon on alms.*

"1. It is alledged that poor rates weaken parental and filial affection, 'the holiest affections of humanity.' Let the fact be fairly inquired into, and it will be found, that many children labour hard to prevent their parents from receiving an aliment; and that children in good circumstances who suffer their parents to receive it are infamous:—A proof that the case is rare.—During twenty two years ministry in a pretty numerous parish, where the poor are maintained by taxation, I have known only one instance of children refusing to assist their parents; they forfeited the esteem of their neighbours, and banished themselves to America. Affection, both parental and filial, is chilled by want: *the hind calveth, and forsaketh her calf, because there is no grass:* Under the pressure of poverty, a mother may forget her sucking child; the child that is forsaken, or sent out to beg and to wander, or forced to labour prematurely, retains no affection for a destitute parent: Whereas, among a widow and her children, who are kept together by an aliment, mutual affection grows. When the aged receive an aliment, their poor children are no longer depressed with the view of misery, which they were unable to remove, and which tempted them to turn away from their father's house: Filial affection returns; they think with gratitude on a law which gives the necessaries of life to their parents, and by adding some cordials and comforts, they testify and cherish filial love. The minister of a populous parish, where there is no poors-rate, is distressed with the view of indigence, which he cannot relieve, and may be tempted to turn away his eye from beholding it: But under the benign influence of poor laws, he can enter the abodes of the wretched, as the messenger of good tidings. The law which provides for the poor, instead of dissolving, tends to strengthen pastoral, and parental, and filial love. 2. It is alledged, that the poor-rate prevents the common people from laying up against the time of need. The desire of laying up is so strong, that the poor-rate has not yet, and probably never will extinguish it. A

* Vol. xv. p. 641.

spirit of independence pervades the people; they feel the humiliation of receiving alms; they discern the difference betwixt having of their own, and trusting to what is given. The poor law is an insurance against unforeseen misfortune, and removes that anxious solicitude about what they shall eat, and drink, and put on, which the gospel has forbidden. If a legal provision for the poor shall somewhat abate the general and strong desire to lay up treasures on earth, the effect is happy. View the poor man in his future destination, and whatever alleviates mortal cares, smooths his way to immortality."

---

On an impartial survey of the general management of the Scottish poor, as exhibited in the Statistical account, the following present themselves as features worthy of notice.

1. The Clergy appear as with one voice to recognise the duty of attending to the concerns of the poor of their respective parishes, as an important part of their pastoral functions; to which they are bound, if not by legal statute, at least by their ordination vows, and the general spirit of the ecclesiastical constitution.

2. The importance of *education* to the poor is uniformly contended for; and where necessary, kirk-sessions never hesitate to pay for the instruction of poor children.* In country parishes, it is a very general practice to bind the parochial teacher, at his election, to teach a certain number of poor children of a certain age, recommended by the Session;—either gratuitously or at a reduced price; and to this, the teachers, whether expressly bound or not, are seldom backward, being fully aware of the incalculable advantages of a reading population.

3. The claim of the Session to the effects of paupers is generally recognised, and has been found productive of good effects in checking the growth of pauperism, and cherishing independence.† The claim is advanced, sometimes at the time of a pauper's admission to the weekly roll:—at other times, at the period of his death. To assert the claim even where there is no intention of enforcing it, is found to have a good effect.—It is obvious that this takes place only in the case of *regular*

* Vol. i. p. 26, ii. 395, iii. 307, 475, 558, &c.

† Vol. i. p. 67, iv. 386, vi. 404, &c.

or stated *pensioners*. To exact such a right from *occasional* recipients, would be a tax upon industry, and a death-blow to the sensibilities of independence.—In every case, discretion and regard to circumstances must determine.

4. In those instances where a large provision has been made by lands or money mortified to the use of the poor, it does not appear that the actual burden has been greatly lessened, or that the effects have corresponded to the wishes and intentions of the benevolent donors.—Case of Cærlaverock, vi. 28. Stirling viii. 285. Maryton, ix. 406. At the same time, a moderate fund in the hands of the kirk session, for occasional emergencies, is found to be productive of many good effects.

5. There is nothing of which the clergy in general complain more grievously than of the conduct of the wealthier proprietors in neglecting public worship—in absenting themselves from their patrimonial possessions—in neglecting to aid the funds of parishes where they have large property, but are non-resident—in failing to give due encouragement to elders, &c.*

6. The clergy insist much on the importance of the distinction between *regular* and *occasional* recipients; and strongly assert the advantage of assisting the poor, before they fall too low in their circumstances, so as to become permanent and total burdens.†

7. There is a grievous complaint from all parts of the country against the pernicious effects of the use of *tea* and *ardent spirits*, particularly the latter, in promoting pauperism and destroying the comforts of the poor. The increase of ale-houses indeed is epresented as truly "*Scotland's scaith.*"‡

8. Ample testimony is borne to the modest and independent spirit of the Scottish poor and their extreme reluctance to become permanent pensioners on the poors-roll.‖ That this spirit has of late years been broken in on, and the reluctance to accept parochial aid sensibly diminished, are facts that cannot be questioned. Let not the lessons taught by them be forgotten or disregarded.

* Vol. ii. p. 160, vi. 49, xvii. 152, iii. 238, iv. 433.

† Vol. ii. p. 51, iii. 558, vii. 114, viii. 588, xii. 38, xiv. 223.

‡ Vol. vi. p. 191, vii. 330, iv. 271, iii. 18, v. 68, 479, 545, vi. 60, 101, 485, vii. 36, 89, 381, xi. 468, 606, &c. &c.

‖ Vol. iii. p. 573, vi. 220, 309, 327, viii. 574, xiii. 30, xviii. 140, xix. 431.

## No. VIII.

*Instances of the discontinuance of Assessments.*

The following instances of the discontinuance of Assessments, as stated in the Statistical Account, may be considered as worthy of record.

*Account of Moulin,* Perthshire, by the Rev. Alexander Stewart, (now of Dingwall,) Vol. v. pp. 66, 67.*

"*Poor.*—The number of the poor, who receive regular supplies, is about 16, and those who receive occasional assistance are about 16 more. The capital of the poors fund is £234, made up from legacies, donations, and savings, under the management of economical trustees, yielding an annual income of £8 14. The annual amount of collections, fines, &c. is, at an average, about £18 10, so that the whole produce of the funds comes to £27 4. Out of this is to be deducted the fees of Synod, presbytery, and session clerks, officers, &c. equal to £2 3 6, which leaves the revenue of the poor about £25 0 6. A considerable rise in the collections at church, took place in 1788, when the church was newly repaired and seated. The heritors, observing that the weekly collections had long been very small, intimated to their respective tenants, that if they would make a decent contribution for the poor, they would have their seats in the church free; that, otherwise, every tenant would be charged with a small yearly seat rent, to be applied to the use of the poor. This intimation, accompanied with some exhortations to charity, by the minister, which, for the credit of his people, he is willing to suppose, had some influence, increased the yearly collection from an average of £6 6, to £15 12, in 1788, and £15 2, in 1789. From 1775 to 1784 inclusive, the heritors assessed themselves in 20 bolls of oatmeal annually, for the support of the poor; but since the year 1784, this contribution has been discontinued as unnecessary. In 1782 and 1783, the people were much distressed from the scarcity of provisions, particularly oatmeal, the price of which rose to 1s. 3d. and 1s. 4d. the peck. In 1783, the kirk session and heritors distributed 40 bolls of meal among the poor of the parish."

* Country Parish in the Highlands of Perthshire.

*Account of Kincardine,* Perthshire, by the Rev. Mr. Christopher Tait, Vol. vi. pp. 485, 487.*

*Poor.*—In 1775, in consequence of an act of quarter sessions of the county for restraining the poor from begging, and obliging their respective parishes to maintain them, this parish, with a few others in the neighbourhood, assessed themselves for the maintenance of the poor, who had formerly been in the practice of begging, and they have done so from time to time, since that period. But at the last meeting of the heritors and the kirk-session, it was carried to drop the plan, whenever the money already levied should be exhausted, which it will in a few weeks. The first and highest assessment was 11s. 6d. upon each hundred pound of valued rent. The number of poor upon the roll in 1775 was 12, it has now decreased to 3. The weekly allowance varies from 6d. to 1s. 8d for each person. The session funds (including the proportion of the collections at the chapel ordinarily given to the poor of this parish) amount to £24 yearly.†

* Country Parish.

† When it was determined that the poor should be restrained from begging, this parish very wisely resolved to preserve the distinction betwixt those who had begged, and those who had lived at home, and received supply from the session; these last being in general industrious, and free from the vices that prevail too often among the begging poor.

The begging poor alone were put on the parish fund, and previous to this being done they were obliged to give an assignation of all their effects to the parish.

The intention of this assignation was, not only to prevent any from pretending poverty, but also to put it in the power of the managers to regulate the funeral expenses of such of the poor as died.

People of that rank have their pride and their prejudices, as well as their superiors, and it was wisely determined to make use of these on that occasion, and to affix such a degree of discredit upon those maintained from the poor's rate, as to prevent as much as possible, the establishment of it operating as an encouragement of idleness, or a want of œconomy.

The wisdom of this management has appeared in its effects The aversion of the poor to a funeral, from which any part of the usual expense has been retrenched, has prevented several persons from claiming to be put upon the roll — The desire of what is called a decent funeral, i. e. one to which all the inhabitants of the district are invited, and at which every part of the usual entertainment is given, is one of the strongest in that rank of people. The expense of it amounts nearly to £2. This sum therefore every person in mean circumstances is anxious to lay up, and he will not spare it unless reduced to the greatest extremity.

The session generally allow this sum for the funeral of such of the poor as have been maintained from their fund, if the value of the effects of the deceased do not fall very much short of it. And the desire of securing this has induced some, who had a large share of the vices of the begging poor, and who might otherwise have been clamorous for a high allowance from the parish, to rest satisfied with such occasional supply as the session thought fit to give them.

*Account of Callander,* Perthshire, by the Rev. Mr. James Robertson, Vol. xi. p. 597.*

*Poor.*—The charity of the inhabitants, in general, and of those in the village of Callander, in particular, is eminent. The heritors did, some years ago, adopt a plan for supporting their own poor, by an equal assessment on the landlord and tenants, according to the valuation; but the people could not be restrained from serving beggars, and some were refractory in paying their proportion of the assessment; so that the plan was dropt.

## No. IX.

*Specialties in the Management of the Poor of Scotland.*

The most prominent varieties in the mode of managing the Poor in Scotland appear to be the following:—

1. In by far the great majority of parishes, the primitive method of supplying the wants of the poor, by means of weekly collections, and other funds at the charge of the kirk-session, still obtains, and is found most beneficial.

2. In some instances, while the original method is adhered to, additional funds are, from time to time, created by means of voluntary contributions among the heritors and inhabitants at large; these contributions being regulated by circumstances.

3. In those cases where assessments obtain along with the ordinary funds, the management is sometimes vested entirely in the members of session;—at other times, in a committee of overseers appointed by the heritors;—and again, in a joint body composed of overseers and elders, possessed individually of co-ordinate power.

4. In many parishes, assessed and unassessed, public begging is permitted; and it is only of late that vigorous measures for its suppression have been adopted by some of our large towns and populous districts.

5. In those towns where hospitals or poor houses are erected, their support is exclusively derived from assessments.

* Considerable village, with extensive country parish.

The session funds are either kept distinct, or conjoined with the hospital fund, according to circumstances; and in their management, the session always takes a part.

6. In a few parishes, the funds from mortified money, donations in land, &c. are so ample as to supersede the necessity, both of assessments and of liberal voluntary contributions.

7. In two or three instances, the public works charge themselves entirely with the burden of supporting their own poor. This is particularly the case with the parish of Blantyre.

Among the peculiarities in the mode of providing for the poor, we may select the following instances:—

*Account of Kirkmichael, Dumfries-shire, Vol.* i. *p.* 59.

In extraordinary cases of distress, we have a custom which deserves to be taken notice of in a paper of this kind; and that is, when any of the lower people happen to be reduced by sickness, losses or misfortunes of any kind, a friend is sent to as many of their neighbours as they think needful, to invite them to what they call a *drinking*. This drinking consists in a little small beer, with a bit of bread and cheese, and sometimes a small glass of brandy or whisky, previously provided by the needy person or their friends. The guests convene at the time appointed, and, after collecting a shilling a-piece, and sometimes more, they divert themselves for about a couple of hours, with music and dancing, and then go home. Such as cannot attend themselves, usually send their charitable contribution to any neighbour that chooses to go. These meetings sometimes produce 5, 6, or 7 pounds to the needy person or family.

*Account of Unst, Shetland, Vol.* v. *p.* 198.

The number of poor dependent on alms is generally from 25 to 30. For their support, the parish is divided into 14 parts, called *quarters*, through which the whole poor are dispersed. To each of these a proportional number is assigned. In every family, within each quarter, the poor belonging to it receive their board for as many days as the family occupies merks of land; and after proceeding in this manner through the whole families in that quarter, return upon the first again. When any person, unable to support himself, applies *to be put upon the quarters*, (as it is called) the minister gives notice of the

application from the pulpit; and if nothing be urged against his character or circumstances, as rendering him an improper object of the charity, he immediately obtains his request. The weekly contributions made at the church, together with the more liberal one at the celebration of the sacrament, are expended in the purchase of clothes, and other necessaries, for the poor, who are maintained upon the quarters. None are suffered to go about begging. Children, if in moderately comfortable circumstances themselves, are obliged to support their aged parents, when they fall into extreme poverty; but are assisted from the funds in the hands of the kirk session, with money for the purchase of clothes to them.

*Account of Lochlee, Angus, Vol.* v. *p.* 360.

*Poor.*—The number of poor upon the parish roll, does not often amount to 12. The interest of a small fund, together with the weekly collections, amounting together to about £6 sterling yearly, is divided among them; and if at any time, one or more are bed-rid, it is customary to hang up a bag in the mill for them, into which the tenants put a handful of meal, when they grind their corn. There are no travelling beggars, belonging to the parish, and very few pass through it at any time, except in the months of June and July. At that season 120 and upwards, traverse yearly, begging wool; of whom, many seem to be real objects of charity, but numbers of them appear to be of a different description. They come from Dundee, Arbroath, Montrose, Brechin, Stonehaven and Aberdeen, for the above purpose.

*Account of Aithsting and Sansting, Orkney, Vol.* vii. *p.* 591.

The number of poor on the roll are 10, 8 women and 2 men, all of them aged and infirm Each of them has a particular district in the parish to which they are confined, and every householder keeps them one night for every merk land he labours. They get clothes and shoes from the session annually, and the expense of their funerals is paid from the poor's funds. There are therefore no travelling beggars of this parish. Many poor families also require assistance to buy seed corn, or purchase meal, cattle, &c. The frequent misfortunes at the fishing, greatly increase the number of widows and orphans, who must receive occasional supply. The only fund for the support

of the poor is the Sunday collections, which amount to about £7 per annum, and a few fines imposed by the session for misdemeanours. In 1784 and 1785, the whole money in the session's hands was exhausted, except £10 sterling, which had been lent, and could not be recovered at that time It has been since repaid; and the funds now amount to £17 sterling. So great was the poverty and distress of the people in general at that time, that many would have perished for want, but for the charitable contributions of well-disposed persons in England and Scotland, and a large supply sent from government.

*Account of Clatt, Aberdeenshire, Vol.* viii. *p.* 544.

*Poor.*—There are no begging poor that belong to this parish; although, lying along so many highways, the place is exceedingly pestered with beggars and vagrants, from the Highlands and more northern districts; as well as with *sorners* and supplicants from the south, many of whom are great impostors. It is much to be wished, that some regulations were set on foot for rendering such persons better members of society; or at least restraining them from becoming such burdens on the public, and intercepting, and often extorting, by threats and force, what might be very properly bestowed upon real objects of charity. There are several indigent and infirm persons belonging to the parish, who receive supplies occasionally, as well as at three stated terms, Whitsunday, Martinmas, and when the sacrament is dispensed. The weekly collections in the church, and at the sacraments, and the dues of the mort-cloth, are the only poors funds here. But they cannot be expected to be very considerable in a small parish, where there are no residing heritors, nor gentry who attend public worship; or, so far as the incumbent knows, bestow any thing for the support of the parochial poor. Such poor as live in and about the more populous villages, are supplied, by their beneficent neighbours, with some little necessaries, which they could not otherwise procure; such as milk, whey, turnips, potatoes, fuel, &c. When it is known, that any old or infirm person is in want, it is customary for the young lads of that corner, to go out in an evening through the parish, and to ask meal, or a little money, which the people very cheerfully give; and it proves a most seasonable supply to several, who would be in hazard of suffering want, rather than seem to be importunate, or burdensome.

*Account of Grange, Banffshire, Vol.* ix. *p.* 577.

Besides the above mentioned sources of relief to the poor, there is a great deal given in private charity, not to travelling beggars only, but the people in general are uncommonly humane and benevolent; and when any poor person or family is afflicted with sickness, or any other unexpected calamity, the neighbours do not wait to be solicited, but carry meal, or whatever else the situation requires, or their circumstances can afford, and they watch with the sick, &c. Many of the poor also have bags in the mills, into which every one puts as he can spare, or as charity disposes him. And on the Christmas holidays, the young men go out in parties through the parish a-begging for the greatest objects; and several bolls of meal, and some pounds sterling of money, are collected every year, and committed to the care of the members of session, for behoof of those for whom it is collected. This practice has an excellent effect upon the morals, both of young and old; it disposes the old to acts of liberality, and draws forth their sympathy towards the distressed, and it trains up the young to acts of benevolence and charity. This practice is also a great support to the funds, which are beginning again to recover, from their dilapidation in 1783 and 1784. The heritors also, being convinced by experience of the importance of having a fund in reserve against a time of scarcity, resolved to take the poors money and pay 5 per cent. yearly for it: (whereas before 1783 it was lent out at 4 per cent. a-year, payable only once in two years.) By this means, together with some legacies, and strict œconomy, the funds are again accumulated to £200 at interest. The session takes a disposition to the effects of those that are taken upon the roll, (unless in such years as 1783 and 1784,) with the burden of taking care of them in sickness and in their last illness, and of defraying their funeral charges, which must not exceed £1 sterling; allowing the relations of the deceased to redeem the effects, by repaying to the session a year's contribution, immediately preceding the death of the pauper, and defraying the funeral charges.

## No. X.

*Account of the Management of the Poor in the Town and Parish of Alloa, Clackmannanshire.*

THE following account of the state and management of the poor in this extensive and populous parish, is extremely valuable. It exhibits a beautiful illustration of the care and benevolent attention which are given to this important department of duty, by the legal guardians of the poor in Scotland. I have no reason to believe that the state of the case is materially different now from what it was in 1793, when the account was drawn up.

*Account of Alloa, by the Rev. James Frame and John F. Erskine, Esq. of Mar, Vol.* viii. *p.* 627.

"*Poor.*—The number of poor, who were formerly obliged to accept of constant assistance, was but few, while those who stood in need of occasional aid were numerous; and yet the kirk-session,* besides paying for the education of many young people, have been able to lay up money against any uncommon calamity.

* The Legislature, in 1597, placed the care of the poor in the Kirk-Session, which is an ecclesiastical court. They have esteemed this a most important trust; and have accordingly regarded it as their duty, to be perfectly well acquainted with the situation and disposition, of those who apply for relief; and assisted them in proportion, from the collections made at the church doors, and other small dues payable to the session; which were, for the most part, found sufficient for the purpose. Under such attentive and careful management, the act, 1672, was, for the most part, found unnecessary; and therefore, it is believed, was never put in practice in any parish until the hard winter of 1740. By this act, "the heritors, ministers and elders of every parish, were required to make a list of all the poor within the parish, to liquidate a yearly sum for their maintenance; the one half to be paid by the heritors, the other half by the other householders." In 1740, some counties and particular parishes, in order to oblige absent heritors, to contribute their share towards assisting the poor in their distress, began to enforce it; and most of them have ever since followed that method, although it has brought on some few disputes about settlements, and other disagreeable circumstances attendant on all rates. But the greater part of the country most happily continued to intrust the management of the poor to the kirk-session; and it may therefore be fairly presumed, that most of the kirk-sessions in Scotland have been as attentive to this important part of their duty, as the session of this parish; who have executed their trust, for this century past, most faithfully and judiciously.

*An average Account of the Parish Funds of Alloa, and of the Number of Poor assisted by them, taken every 15 Years from 1700 to 1790, with the average Price of Meal.*

| | Amount of the Collections. | | | | Total of the Receipts. | | | | Number of names on the roll. | THE ORDINARY POOR. Assistance per Head. | | | | Total assistance given. | | | | Number of occasional Poor. | Total number of Poor | Total of Disbursements | | | | Strangers. | PRICE OF MEAL. ℔ Edinb. Fiars. | | | ℔ Clackm. Fiars. | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | £. | s. | d. | 12ths | £. | s. | d. | 12ths | | £ | s. | d. | 12ths | £. | s. | d. | 12ths | | | £. | s. | d. | 12ths | | s. | d. | 12ths | s. | d. | 12ths |
| From 1691, | 18 | 11 | 9 | 10 | 45 | 8 | 7 | 10 | 10 | 0 | 13 | 4 | 9 | 6 | 14 | 0 | | 57 | 67 | 39 | 12 | 11 | 6 | 38 | 11 | 4 | | 0 | 0 | |
| 1701 to 1715, | 38 | 8 | 3 | 1 | 47 | 8 | 7 | 10 | 16 | 0 | 13 | 8 | 2 | 10 | 18 | 10 | 8 | 60 | 76 | 46 | 7 | 3 | 4 | 29 | 10 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | |
| 1716 to 1730, | 49 | 19 | 4 | 2 | 102 | 0 | 8 | 5 | 24 | 0 | 15 | 11 | 4 | 19 | 2 | 8 | 6 | 77 | 101 | 86 | 10 | 7 | 3 | 34 | 10 | 4 | 1 | 9 | 1 | 5 |
| 1731 to 1745, | 44 | 18 | 7 | 2 | 95 | 10 | 0 | 2 | 28 | 0 | 17 | 2 | 6 | 24 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 79 | 107 | 89 | 12 | 8 | 2 | 29 | 9 | 8 | | 9 | 0 | 10 |
| 1746 to 1760, | 42 | 7 | 10 | 3 | 99 | 8 | 9 | 6 | 19 | 0 | 16 | 10 | 4 | 16 | 0 | 4 | 4 | 76 | 95 | 100 | 18 | 10 | | 9 | 11 | 6 | | 10 | 10 | |
| 1761 to 1775, | 56 | 14 | 8 | 11 | 123 | 8 | 8 | | 20 | 0 | 13 | 10 | 3 | 13 | 3 | 2 | 4 | 93 | 113 | 125 | 16 | 7 | | 17 | 14 | 1 | 10 | 13 | 11 | |
| 1776 to 1790, | 59 | 3 | 8 | 5 | | | | | 111 | 1 | 14 | 6 | 6 | 180 | 2 | 2 | 9 | 36 | 147 | 210 | 13 | 7 | 6 | | 13 | 9 | 7 | 13 | 7 | 10 |

The account of the poor, from which this abstract is taken, affords many particulars worthy of observation; but it is too voluminous for this work. In general, the number of poor seems to have increased, when the price of meal was high; but although the price was soon reduced, it was two or three years before the numbers returned to the common average; and in some years the poor were numerous, although the price of meal was moderate.

The collections at the church doors prove the propriety of that method of gathering alms. The diminution that began to take place in them about 1734, was probably occasioned by the secession from the church, as the collection at the meeting-house was never taken, and the funds must consequently have suffered. The assistance given to the paupers, on the ordinary list, in 1691, was 16d. per month. This, at first view, will appear very inadequate; and yet there is no tradition of the poor having been neglected, or of their suffering greater distress than at present. About the year 1720, a greater allowance was given in extraordinary cases; but the 16d. per month still continued the usual assistance till 1776, when applications for assistance from the kirk-session became more frequent and pressing; so that the minister was induced to apply to the heritors, and the rest of the parishioners, for some enlargement of the funds, and an aid to prevent strolling beggars from preying on the parish; when an annual contribution was cheerfully agreed to, and liberally subscribed for. Most of the occasional poor, at that time, were thought proper objects to be put on the ordinary list. Such of the poor as are put on the ordinary list, are obliged to subscribe a writing, making over to the heritors, and kirk-session, all their little clothes and moveables, which, at their death, are sold for the increase of the fund. This is intended to cut off all improper applications for charity from those who can support themselves. Those, whose distress or misfortunes require the public aid, are put on the occasional (or temporary) list; and remain longer or shorter according to their distress.

This fund is managed by a committee of the subscribers, chosen every half year, by the heritors and kirk-session: At the same time, every contributer is welcome to attend the monthly meetings, and to give information or advice. The regular care and attention, that has been paid by the committee, will be seen by the subjoined table.

*A particular Account of the Number of the ordinary and occasional Poor in the Parish of Alloa, and the Assistance given to them per Annum, taken on an Average of* 15 *Years, from* 1776 *to* 1790.*

| | | Total assistance given. | | | | Aver. assist. per Head. | | | | Average of Males. | | | | | | | | Average of Females. | | | | | | | | Aver. of Child. | | | | | | Grand Total. | | Aver of the assist. per Head. | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | | | | | | Married. | | Batchelors. | | Widowers. | | Total. | | Married. | | Spinsters. | | Widows. | | Total. | | Boys. | | Girls. | | Total. | | | | | | |
| | | £ | s. | d. | 12ths | £ | s. | d. | 12ths | | 15ths | | 15ths | | 15ths | | 15ths | | 15ths | | 15ths | | 15ths | | 15ths | | 15ths | | 15ths | | 15ths | | | £ | s. | d. |
| Ordinary Poor, | 111 | 180 | 2 | 2 | 9 | 1 | 14 | 6 | 8 | 14 | 9 | 8 | 11 | 4 | 12 | 28 | 2 | 14 | 9 | 35 | 9 | 36 | 18 | 87 | 1 | 15 | 7 | 15 | 14 | 31 | 6 | 146 | 14 | 1 | 4 | 6 |
| Occasional ditto, | 36 | 30 | 11 | 5 | | | | | | 14 | 14 | 1 | 10 | 5 | 13 | 22 | 7 | 14 | 14 | 9 | 14 | 20 | 5 | 45 | 3 | 5 | 1 | 5 | 6 | 10 | 7 | 77 | 7 | | | |
| | 147 | 210 | 13 | 7 | 9 | | | | | 29 | 8 | 10 | 6 | 10 | 10 | 50 | 9 | 29 | 8 | 45 | 8 | 57 | 3 | 182 | 4 | 20 | 8 | 21 | 5 | 41 | 13 | 224 | 6 | | | |

* The price of meal, taken on the average of these 15 years, is 13s. 7d. 10-12ths, per the Clackmannan fiars, and 13s. 9d. 7-12ths, according to the Edinburgh fiars.

The laws of assessment for the maintenance of the poor, not having been universally put in practice in Scotland, have made many people imagine that there are no laws extant concerning that part of the police. The fact is, that they are very similar to those of England, (vide Dr. M'Farlan's Inquiries concerning the Poor) and differ only in a few points, such as an inattentive reader may conclude are of no great consequence; and yet those little differences have probably prevented the burden, from becoming as heavy, in those parts of Scotland, where the poors laws are enforced, as they are in England.

The kirk-sessions, being a corporate body, are joined with the heritors, as the administrators of the poors funds. The minister and treasurer generally know the circumstances, and character of every individual that applies to them; and, by constant attention, become perfect masters of the business, and pride themselves on executing their trust most faithfully. Whereas in England, the church wardens, and overseers of the poor, to whom this trust is committed, are chosen annually; so that, by the time they have learned the business, they are removed; and whatever good regulations they may have made, their successors, through ignorance, or design, either alter or neglect them. Nor can it be supposed, that any annual office, which, though very troublesome and disagreeable, is not looked on in the most favourable light, will be attended to with diligence by any individual, if he sees little chance of his best intentions being of any service; but, it is more than probable, he will endeavour to pass it over, with as little trouble or vexation as possible. And the power of assessment lies entirely in the church wardens and overseers;* as it is no longer considered, that the concurrence of the inhabitants, for making a rate, is at all necessary. Though the law requires that the overseers, &c. should have the consent of two justices, it has become a mere matter of form;† for, when justices have refused their consent, the Court of King's Bench has compelled them to allow the rate. But in Scotland, the heritors must meet with the kirk-session, before any assessment can be laid on the parish; and this obliges them, (especially as they must pay one half of the assessment) to be attentive to the management of the poors funds.

* Vide Burn's Justice, Edit. 15th, vol. iii. p. 574. † Ditto, p. 535.

## No. XI.

*Tendency of certain Legislative enactments to promote Pauperism.*

In the dissertation on the "Causes which have led to the introduction of the poor rates into Scotland," I have adverted (p. 142) to the tendency of certain legislative enactments to promote the growth of pauperism, by breaking down the barrier between industrious householders, and ordinary paupers. The instances noticed are the *Militia* and *Cottage Tax* Acts; now happily modified or repealed. Since writing that Dissertation I was agreeably surprised to find a striking coincidence of sentiment, between the view taken of the subject in that article, and the observations of an intelligent writer who has lately written on the subject of the *Statute Labour Bill*, for the County of Lanark. I shall quote the following passage, as illustrative not only of this particular instance, but of the general tendency of the principle involved in all such statutes:—

"Letter to the Honourable the Lord Provost, respecting the proposed Statute Labour Bill for Glasgow. By a Citizen," pp. 11—14.

"Having thus shortly pointed out such parts of the Act as refers to Glasgow, I beg leave to recal to your Lordship's attention, that householders of every description, whose rents are under £5 are charged with Road Money at the rate of Two Shillings per annum; this, to a very great proportion of that class of persons, is a grievous calamity. By the existing regulation, it is the duty of the Collector to serve printed Notices on all householders, although he may know them to be paupers; this class of society, (now unfortunately very numerous,) is thus under the necessity of applying to their Elder for a certificate that they are on the poors' roll, which, on presenting to the Collector, procures them exemption from the rate. But there is another, and a praise-worthy class of society, whose case, though not so public, or so well known, does nevertheless deserve the deepest sympathy and compassion, I allude to the householder, an aged widow perchance, or the father of some helpless children, who, struggling with poverty and disease, has for some time, been bordering on the threshold of pauperism, but whose noble spirit has never allowed him to eat the bread of charity: to a person of this

description insuperable difficulties stand in the way of paying the rate; and if he is exempt, it is on terms very dearly bought. In the first place, his feelings must be hurt by unfolding his case to his Minister or Elder, who, on giving a certificate to the Collector, completes only the first step to degradation, for that officer has it not in his power to exempt persons of this description: the poor man is then obliged to apply for relief to the Trustees through the medium of their superintendent: as this officer, from the nature of his avocations, is frequently absent from his office, the applicant, after spending more time than he can well spare from his family, is still left in suspense as to the result of his application; and when it so happens that the Trustees refuse the prayer of his petition, he is left in a worse state than at first; for, in addition to his lost time, if he is decreeted, a certain expense is incurred over and above the rate, which in virtue of the Act, is levied in a very summary manner.

Thus much, my Lord, for the trouble and frequent distress which the poor are put to with this ungracious, I had almost said impolitic, tax; great as the trouble is, however, and distressing as the scenes must necessarily be which the Clergymen, (who have higher duties to perform,) and the Elders, are thus frequently called to witness, the consequence to society must be greater still; for the result arising from this system is truly deplorable: by its means, aided by its kindred spirit, the cottage tax, now in part repealed, that barrier has been gradually broken down, which, for a considerable time past, has protected the honest and independent spirited poor man from becoming a burden on society. If these premises be admitted, and they cannot well be denied, it must be sound policy to exempt all persons whose rents are under Five Pounds, and to lay the sum which would accrue from those rates on the higher classes of society, who, it must be remembered, are alone chargeable with poor rates, for the maintenance of the persons alluded to, the moment they take their place in the rank of paupers."

As another illustration of the impolicy of certain legal enactments, on the ground of their tending to injure the concerns of the poor, and thus to promote pauperism, we may notice the *Bank Restriction Bill*, of which so much has been said both in and out of Parliament. That its tendency is, to depreciate the value of money; to keep down the price of labour; and to di-

minish the comforts of the poor, seems undeniable. The reasonings of Mr. Ricardo, in his work on Political Science; of Mr. Canning, in his Speech; and of the Author of "Two Letters to the Right Hon. Robert Peel, M. P." are richly deserving of serious consideration. It gives me pleasure, to find my views of the nature and tendency of the English system of Poor Laws, confirmed by the testimony of this last very able writer. *The enforcement of charity*, ought on no account, to be made the object of legislative enactment—Laws on the subject of the poor ought to be the result of necessity alone, and when passed, ought to be declared to be temporary and occasional—The highest object aimed at by law, should be *the simple subsistence* of the poor, or their literal preservation from perishing by want—a vigilant system of local superintendence must be universally established—and above all, the Rates ought on no account, to interfere in regulating the price of labour, or in making up its supposed deficiencies. These are the leading principles which this author has established with conclusive argument.

## No. XII.

*Account of the Edinburgh Charity Work-house, and of Mr. Brown's Plan for its regulation.*

In page 185, we speak of it as uncertain, whether or not the Edinburgh Charity Workhouse was opened so early as 1740. I now find on inquiry, that the building was begun in 1739, and opened for reception of paupers on the 20th June, 1743. In December of that year, the first report of the Directors was laid before the Town Council. It states, among other particulars, —"That since opening the house in June last, there have been enrolled in and upon it, about 666 persons, among which are about 120 boys and girls; all of whom have a regular, wholesome, and plain diet; are clothed clean and warm, and have convenient beds: That the house is kept neat and clean by the mistress; that the afflicted and sick are carefully looked after by her, and regularly attended by Surgeons; and that the So-

ciety for propagating Christian Knowledge have bestowed a salary on a preacher, (£20 per annum, and he has board, lodging, and washing in the house) whose duty it is, to instruct both young and old in the principles of religion and virtue; to perform Divine worship every day; and to preach or catechize every Lord's day: That those who enjoy health and strength are employed in useful labour, and the old and infirm have an opportunity of ending their days in peace and quiet, wanting neither the necessaries of this life, nor the means of leading them to a better; that the young, who are either destitute of father or mother, or, which is worse, have parents who would breed them up to vice and idleness, are now usefully employed, and instead of being a nuisance, may become useful members of society; and that those who formerly spent their time in begging, and wantonly consumed what they got, are now employed in work useful to the country."*

The Edinburgh Charity Workhouse was at first managed by deputations from the Council—from the Parochial Sessions —from the Lords of Session—Faculty of Advocates—Clerks to the Signet—Faculty of Physicians and Surgeons—and the Congregations of Episcopals. For many years past, the two first of these bodies appear to have had the entire management vested in them; the others, probably not objecting to give up their claim to a laborious and thankless office.

About forty years ago, the Rev. Mr. Brown, one of the Ministers of the city, submitted to the public, a plan for the more effectual regulation of the Charity Workhouse of Edinburgh † The leading features of it appear to have been these.—With regard to deserted and orphan children, foundlings and others, who devolved on the care of the managers of the house, and formed, perhaps, the heaviest part of the burden, he proposed that instead of being put under the charge

* Scots Magazine for December, 1743.—We almost uniformly find that the first years of an hospital are prosperous. Novelty, zeal of managers, the moderate size of the establishment, &c. &c. sufficiently account for this. In England, workhouses became very general during the early part of last century; and for the first 20 or 30 years, the rates were considerably reduced. From that period, however, to the present, the tide has completely turned, and poor houses have added powerfully to the expense of maintaining the poor. See "Second Letter to Mr. Peel on the Poor Laws, &c." pp. 75, 76.

† The Charity Workhouse of Edinburgh was supported by collections and voluntary subscriptions, till 1782, when a tax or stent of so much per cent, on the house rent was imposed, in addition to the ordinary resources; and it has been supported ever since in this manner.—See p. 185.

of nurses and others, till the age of four or five, and then taken into the house till able to provide for themselves;—they should be sent to the country at the tenderest age, and wholly educated there at the expense of the establishment, until they came to the years of discretion, when they might be able to support themselves. By this means, it is obvious, that they would escape the vices of a large city, and be secured at once in their health and morals.

With regard to adult inmates; he proposed that they should be divided into three distinct classes—the *superannuated*, who can do nothing for their own support—the infirm from disease —and those who are able to do a little work, though not sufficient to support them. Each class is to be kept separate, and treated accordingly. The superannuated to be put into an almshouse, and provided in a full maintenance;—the diseased, to be kept in an infirmary or hospital, and medical aid provided for them;—the third class to be allowed free lodging in the house, with a small quantity of bread or meal weekly, by way of partial aliment, leaving it to themselves to make up the deficiency by their own labour. He farther proposes, that these last shall have the charge of their own provision, and shall be their own masters in all respects, except in so far as they are subject to the occasional inspection of a general superintendent. By this plan, it was conjectured, that a greater encouragement would be given to industry; while there would be a saving to the house of one half of the expenditure. By dividing them also into messes of six or seven, it was supposed that they would live more comfortably, than when huddled together in one common mass. Such is the outline of the plan, as more fully detailed in Mr. Brown's pamphlet, published at the time, but now extremely rare.

To the *first* part of the scheme, that which respects *children*, no objection can be made. If practicable, it certainly ought to be adopted by every establisment of the kind.

To the *second* part of the plan, there are the following objections:—

1. It secures no greater advantages than what arise from the system of *out-pensions*, as established both in Edinburgh and in Glasgow; and we may therefore, fairly ask, Why constitute it part of the hospital establishment at all? It seems a preferable plan just to give the paupers a small aliment, either in provisions or money, and leave them to find their own

lodging; than to lodge them in the hospital, while, at the same time, they are only partially the inmates of it.

2. There seems to be a want of proper *superintendence* over these distinct classes, into which it is proposed, that the inmates shall be divided. One grand objection to Poor houses is, the difficulty of preserving due control over such a confused assemblage of persons of the most opposite characters. It is difficult to see, that the evil would be remedied by subdividing the business, so long as the whole is supposed to remain under one management. Mutual intercourse between the messes could not be prevented; and by the *partial independence* allowed, the difficulty of strict control would be greatly increased.

3. The whole scheme proceeds on the assumption of a principle which ought not to be granted;—namely, that Poor houses are designed for such as are able to work. The fact is, there ought to be no such Poor houses. The superannuated—the incurably diseased—and widows, and orphans, or deserted children, are the classes for whom, and for whom alone, an asylum of the nature of a Poor house should be held out. No doubt, there will be exceptions, and even many that are termed *superannuated*, may be able to do a little work, and should be encouraged in a Poor house to do it. But still, the *prominent* object of a poor asylum should be limited in the way we have suggested, and the poor, but industrious labourer should be left to struggle with difficulties, and aided, from time to time, by means of a small pension, rather than sent with his family to the workhouse, as is too commonly done in England, and even in some parts of Scotland.—This subject will be more fully considered in the article "*on Hospitals.*"

## No. XIII.

### *Queries and Replies respecting the Poor of Glasgow.**

Committees of both Houses of Parliament being now employed in revising the English Poor Laws, have applied to the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland for information as to the management of the Poor in Scotland.—The Venerable Assembly desirous to give every facility in their power in the

* Prepared in Sept. 1817.

prosecution of a measure so interesting to the Country, have issued Printed Queries to the whole Clergy of Scotland, requiring that they should favour the Assembly with the necessary information. In compliance with this desire, the following Answers to the Queries have been drawn up for Glasgow, by the Rev. Dr. Gavin Gibb, one of the Ministers of that city, and Moderator of the General Assembly, and by James Cleland, Superintendant of Public Works for the City of Glasgow.

## QUERIES—Class I.

| QUERIES. | ANSWERS. |
|---|---|
| 1. What is the average annual amount of the collections at the church-doors for the last ten years? | 1. The annual average for the last ten years, is £1,652 6 10, particulars as under:—In 1807, the collection amounted to £1,532 14 3½; in 1808, to £1,605 15 5¾; in 1809, to £1,543 12 1½; in 1810, to £1,574 7 3½; in 1811, to £1,624 10 2; in 1812, £1,503 1 2; in 1813, £1,675 0 5½; in 1814, to £1,715 14 2½; in 1815, £1,905 6 3¾; in 1816, £1,843 6 9¼.* |
| 2. Are any voluntary contributions (independent of the collections) made annually or occasionally by *resident* heritors or others, and to what amount, for the last ten years? | 2. None whatever. |
| 3. Do *non-resident* heritors give such voluntary contributions, and to what amount, for the last ten years? | 3. They give no voluntary contributions. |
| 4. What is the average annual amount, during the last ten years, of poor's funds, (*exclusive* of the collections and voluntary contributions) which have been under the management of the Kirk-session, and of what *items* are they made up? | 4. Exclusive of collections, and voluntary contributions at the church doors, the Fees for proclamations of Marriages, and Donations at Funerals when the church-bells are tolled, are placed under the management of the Kirk session, for behoof of the poor. The annual average from these sources for the last 10 years is £330 1 2; particulars as follows:— |

* The Collections at the doors of the eleven parish churches in Edinburgh from 1st July, 1816, till 30th June, 1817, amounted to £1,886 1 9¾. Of this sum £905 14 7¼, were collected at St. George's, and St. Andrew's Churches.

QUERIES.

ANSWERS.

| | *Proclamations.* | | | *Donations.* | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| In 1807, | £139 | 13 | 0 ... | £128 | 17 | 0 |
| 1808, | 111 | 6 | 0 ... | 299 | 5 | 9 |
| 1809, | 162 | 15 | 0 ... | 251 | 6 | 0 |
| 1810, | 160 | 13 | 0 ... | 140 | 10 | 0 |
| 1811, | 130 | 4 | 0 ... | 132 | 5 | 2 |
| 1812, | 155 | 8 | 0 ... | 145 | 12 | 6 |
| 1813, | 142 | 16 | 0 ... | 149 | 2 | 6 |
| 1814, | 158 | 12 | 0 ... | 195 | 0 | 0 |
| 1815, | 164 | 0 | 6 ... | 225 | 9 | 0 |
| 1816, | 162 | 9 | 6 ... | 145 | 7 | 0 |
| Total in 10 years. | £1,487 | 17 | 0 | £1,812 | 14 | 11 |

5. What has been the average annual expense of managing the poors funds under the charge of the Kirk-session, during the last ten years?

5. Fifty pounds, being the Clerk's salary, and fifteen pounds to each of the eight Church Beadles for taking up annual lists of the population and other parochial duties; in whole, One Hundred and Seventy Pounds.

6. Is there a regular and legal Assessment for the support of the poor?

6. There is.

a. What is its amount?

a. The amount for the year, ending 9th August 1817, is £10,535.

b. By what rule or what rate is it proportioned and levied? and in particular, is it levied in proportion to *personal* as well as *heritable* property?

b. Levied on the Inhabitants, by valuation on heritable and on personal property, according to their wealth, circumstances, and ability.

c. By what authority is the amount fixed and the levying enforced?

e. Under the authority of the general Act of the Scotch Parliament of 1579, and of the Act of 1663, by fifteen persons annually chosen by the Magistrates and Council, but not of their number.

d. When did it commence?

d. Although the Hospital was opened in 1733, the community was not assessed for its maintenance, nor were assessors appointed till 27th November 1770. Previous to this time the poor of the Hospital appear to have been supported by the Annual contributions which the Magistrates and Town Council, the

| QUERIES. | ANSWERS. |
|---|---|
| | Merchants' House, the Trades' House, and the General Session, agreed to make for that purpose, aided by the voluntary subscriptions of individuals. The Assessment in that year amounted to £336 5 1. |
| 6. What has been its progressive annual rise, especially for the last ten years? | 6. The progressive rise is as follows: viz.— 1807, £4815; 1808, £5220; 1809, £6000; 1810, £5866; 1811, £5740; 1812, £7589; 1813, £10273; 1814, £10709; 1815, £9940; 1816, £9063 |
| 7. What is the annual expense of collecting and applying the Assessment, if it is collected and applied by others than the Kirk-Session? | 7. The only expense attending the collection is £100,—being the salary of the Collector, who also assists in laying on the Assessment. The application is conducted free of expense, by the Weekly Committee of the Town's Hospital, chosen annually, which consists of the Preceptor, Treasurer, and eight ordinary Managers, viz Two from the Town Council, two from the Merchants' House, two from the Trades' House, and two from the General Session. |
| 8. Is dependence on the Assessment lessening, in your opinion, the reluctance of the people to apply for aid from the parochial charity? | 8. Very sensibly lessening such reluctance. |
| 9. Although there may *not* have been an annual Assessment hitherto, is it your opinion, that reluctance to apply to parochial charity is generally diminishing among the people of late years. | 9. Such reluctance generally diminishing. |
| 10. Have you reason to believe, from instances falling under your own observation, that the reluctance to apply for parochial charity has been diminished by the practice of drawing allowances under the *Militia* Act? | 10. There is evident reason to believe, that the reluctance has diminished from the cause alluded to. |

| QUERIES. | ANSWERS. |
|---|---|
| 1. What is the number on the poors roll of the *Ordinary* poor, (specifying *males* and *females* respectively) who can earn nothing for their own maintenance, but are supported wholly from the poors funds? | 11. The inmates of the Town's Hospital, in 1816, amounted to 516.<br>The Out door Pensioners during the same period, deriving the greater part of their support from the Hospital, in Nursing wages, meal, or money, amounted to 1,208.*<br>*Note.* The females in the Hospital are to the males as 342 to 174: as the allowance to out-door-pensioners is frequently given to families, it would be very difficult to distinguish the males from the females. |
| 12. What is the *highest* and *lowest* rate of regular relief allowed (where there is no charity work-house) to the *Ordinary* poor, described as above? | 12. The average annual expense of the whole inmates—children and adults—in the Hospital is £9 3 3¼. The sums given to out-door pensioners fluctuating with every change of circumstance, an average cannot be given with the same degree of accuracy. The sums however given to individual paupers, or their families, (or an equal value in meal) may be taken, as near the truth, at from £2 10 to £7 10 per annum: the greater part receiving about £4 10 per annum. |
| 13. What is the number of *Industrious* poor, who, during the last ten years, have received regularly *partial* relief from the Kirk-session, though, in general able to earn a proportion of maintenance for themselves or families? | 13. The number for each year is as follows:—<br>In 1808, 1809, 1810, 1811, 1812,<br>1075 1132 1097 1170 1190<br>1813, 1814, 1815, 1816, 1817,<br>1284 1291 1262 1283 1372 |
| 14. What is the *highest* and *lowest* rate of regular relief allowed to the *Industrious* poor, described as above? | 14. From 1s. 6d. to 4s. 6d. The average per month is 3s. 1¼d. and one-eighth of a farthing.† |
| 15. Is relief given *occasionally* to individuals or families of the *Industrious* poor, from the common poors | 15. Occasional relief is very often given; it varies from 2s. 6d. to 10s. For this purpose the Kirk-sessions re- |

* Individual members of families.

† The Poor are paid by the lunar month, and, of course, receive Thirteen Payments in the Year.

| QUERIES. | ANSWERS. |
|---|---|
| funds, in order to prevent them coming permanently on the poors roll? and if so, to what average amount, in each case, or of the whole, annually, during the last ten years? | ceive part of the Assessment, varying of late years from Five to Thirteen Hundred Pounds, per annum. |
| 16. What is the sum total of allowances distributed by the Kirk-session in each year, for the last ten years, to the *Ordinary* and *Industrious* Poor, who have been regularly on the poors roll? | 16. The sum distributed by individual Kirk-sessions to the Poor on their respective rolls varies according to existing circumstances; the aggregate sum, however, allocated to the poor of the eight Sessions, has not varied for the last ten years; it amounts to £2,437 10. When the sums allowed by the Session have been found insufficient for a pauper's sustenance, it is usual to recommend him for the Hospital allowance. |
| 17. In admitting a pauper on the poors roll and fixing the amount of his allowance, is the moral character, as good or bad, considered? | 17. Character is certainly considered; the worthless, however, have occasionally contrived to get on the Poors Roll. |
| 18. Has any pauper, (and if so, how many?) who had no right from residence to your parish Charity, been removed from your parish by the Kirk-session to another parish, where he or they had such a right; or, has any, on similar grounds, been removed from another parish to yours? | 18. Some few instances of both kinds have occurred. |
| 19. If such removal has taken place, how was the expense of it paid? and what has been the sum total of such expense during the last ten years? | 19. The expense of removal is paid from the general Assessment, and has not exceeded £10 for the whole of the last ten years. |
| 20. Has any litigation taken place between your parish and any other, as to a pauper's residence and right to the parish charity? and what has been the expense of such litigation during the last ten years? | 20. No litigation has taken place relative to this matter. |
| 21. Has your Kirk-session paid or received allowances for such paupers | 21. A few such cases have occurred; the sums were paid according to |

| QUERIES. | ANSWERS. |
|---|---|
| as were permitted to remain in the parish where they happened to reside when they became chargeable? and to what amount during the last ten years? | the rates of the different parishes in which the paupers were resident. |
| 22. Was any stipulation made between the Kirk-sessions concerned, as to the *rate* of allowance to be given to such paupers? and has the Session paying the allowances ever objected, and with what result, to the rate given by the Session where the pauper happened to reside? | 22. No stipulation has been considered necessary, nor has any objection been made. |
| 23. Does the Kirk-session claim a right to the effects of paupers who are on the poors roll at their death? and does this claim seem to have any effect in disinclining the people to come on the poors roll? | 23. The Committee on the Town's Hospital have been in the habit of claiming the effects of paupers, when they went into the House; and this has had some effect in deterring a particular class of paupers from becoming inmates It is not usual, however, for the Kirk-session to claim the effects of those who may be on the Poors Roll. |
| 24. Has there been any instance of a pauper, or of others for his behoof, attempting to enforce by law a higher allowance than the Kirk-session were willing to give? and what was the result? | 24. There is no instance of this kind recollected. On the 16th February 1815, a Superintendant for the Poor was appointed, with a salary of £100 per annum; among other duties, he visits the applicants and pensioners, makes out a statement of their respective cases, assists in the distribution, and takes care that none be admitted on the Funds without having a legal domicile of three years. |
| 25. What are the names (and the numbers, as nearly as you can compute) of the religious Sects in your parish? are there any (and if so, how many) of their poor on the poors roll of the parish? and what is the annual sum total of relief given to them? | 25. In Glasgow, (where the population within the Royalty, exclusive of very populous suburbs, extends to 63,635,) there is a number of religious Societies, unconnected with the establishment. As it is difficult to give a correct idea of the number of persons actually connected with these Societies, the following authentic account, taken from a recent publication, may probably suffice as an answer to this Query:—Within the Royalty |

**QUERIES.**

there are—Two Episcopal Chapels, containing 701 Sitters,—One Roman Catholic Chapel, 2,220—Three Burgher Meeting-Houses, 4,346—One Antiburgher, 1,300—Three Relief, 3,900—Two Independent, 1,400—Three Methodist, 2,500—Four Baptist, 795—One Friends (Quaker) 400—One Glassite, 200—Two Berean, 82—One Universalist, 63—One Unitarian Baptist, 10—Total, 17,917. Of this number 210 persons in 1816,* were partially supported from the funds of the Town's Hospital. The number receiving relief from the Sessions has not been ascertained.

26. What, as nearly as you know or can compute, is the number of paupers belonging to these Sects, who are *not* on the poors roll of the parish, but are supported by these sects themselves respectively?

26. For obvious reasons, the first part of this Query cannot be answered accurately. With regard to the second, it will be near the truth to say that the above Societies in 1816 distributed £840 to their own Poor.

27. Are *Stranger* poor allowed to beg in the parish? do the parish poor beg? and if so, do they wear badges?

27. Although there is no permission given to the Stranger or Parish Poor to beg, there is nevertheless, a number of both classes who beg from door to door, particularly on Saturdays. Arrangements are now making, which will, it is hoped, by the vigilance of the Magistrates, prevent the continuance of this practice.

* On the 20th August 1817, there were 1,501 paupers receiving aliment from the Hospital, as out-door pensioners, who described themselves as belonging to the following religious denominations, viz. —The Eight Established Churches, 943—Gaelic Chapel, Queen Street, 150—Do. Duke Street, 88— Do. Gorbals, 30—*Total connected with the Establishment*, 1,211—Relief, 63—Episcopalians, 50—Methodists, 50—Roman Catholics, 46—Old Light Burghers, 34—Burghers, 21—Tabernacle, 6—Baptists, 6—Antiburghers, 5—Glassites, 5—Reformed Presbyterians, 4.—Total, 1,501.

# QUERIES—Class II.

| QUERIES. | ANSWERS. |
|---|---|
| 1. Are there occasionally *Extraordinary* collections, or contributions, for individual instances of misfortune or distress, among the industrious poor? what may be the amount of these? and do they ever keep a particular person, or family, from coming permaneutly on the poors roll? | 1. No collections for individual instances of misfortune have, it is believed, been made under the authority of the Kirk Session; but no where, it is believed, are voluntary contributions for such purposes more frequent, or more liberal, although, from their nature, it is not easy to specify the amount. |
| 2. What is the number in the parish,<br>1. of persons Blind?<br>2. of persons Deaf and Dumb?<br>3 of persons Deaf and Dumb, and Blind?<br>If any of these three classes are poor, how are they employed and supported? | 2. In a City such as Glasgow it would require much longer time than is given, to answer this Query with any degree of precision. When the parties are poor their wants are supplied as other paupers in a similar situation in life. |
| 3. Can you state the sums raised in 1816—17 for the occasional relief of the industrious poor, the way in which the relief was given, and the number of those relieved? | 3. A very large sum was voluntarily subscribed, and £9,653 6 2 actually distributed to 23,130 persons, by a Committee of the Subscribers, acting gratuitously. |
| 4. Is there a Savings Bank in your parish? when was it established? and what is the number of depositors? | 4. A Savings Bank was established on 19th June, 1815. On the 26th of that month 157 Accounts were opened, and 773 Deposits made, amounting to £1,608 16. From 3d July, 1815, till 26th June, 1816 the Deposits amounted to £7,862 19, and on 21st November, 1816, there were 1,410 Accounts opened in the Bank. |
| 5. If there is no Savings Bank, have the Poor other opportunities afforded them of accumulating their savings safely? and have they been in the practice of so accumulating them as to prevent their coming on the poors roll? | 5. See the preceding answer. |
| 6. Are there difficulties in the way of establishing a Savings Bank, from local circumstances or otherwise? and how could these be obviated? | 6. See the answer to Query 4th. |

| QUERIES. | ANSWERS. |
|---|---|
| 7. Are there any Friendly Societies in the parish? and if so, how many are there? and what is the number of persons belonging to them? | 7. There are 129 Friendly Societies established in the City and Suburbs, but, as the number of Members varies every day, it is difficult to quote the amount. At a moderate calculation they may be taken as averaging 120 Members to each Society, thereby making 15,480 Members in whole. As the Suburbs are completely commixed with particular districts of the Royalty, it is no easy matter to ascertain the number strictly belonging to the City. The amount of population however in the Suburbs being to that in the Royalty as 56,365 to 63,635, it will be near the truth to state the members of Friendly Societies living in the City, as amounting to 8,000. |
| 8. Is there, from local circumstances or otherwise, any comparative want of opportunity or means of *common* or of *religious* Education among the poor? | 8. There is no want of the means of education. |
| 9. Are there any, and if so, what, in your opinion, may be the number who have not been taught to *Read?* | 9. There are very few indeed who have not been taught to read. |
| 10. What are the fees payable by the Poor for the different Branches taught in the *Parish School?* and does the Kirk Session pay from the Parish funds the school fees of any Poor Scholars? and if so, of how many? | 10. The Poor receive their education gratis: the Kirk Session supports six Charity Schools, which contain 450 Children, educated at an annual expense of £320, £288 of which go as salary to the Teachers. Besides being taught to read and write, the children receive shoes, stockings, books, &c. In addition to these Schools, which are exclusively supported from the Session Funds, there are several others in which education is either given gratis, or at a rate within the reach of the industrious Poor. |
| 11. Is there a *Sunday* School in the Parish? how many Scholars at an average attend it? and how is the Expense of it defrayed? | 11. Sunday Schools were first established in Glasgow in 1787. There are now 34 Schools within the Royalty, in which 3,300 children are taught to read, and instructed in the principles of religion. Of |

QUERIES.

ANSWERS.

these Schools 12 are superintended by the Session and supported from its funds, at an expense of £30 to the Teachers exclusive of books and small premiums. The other Schools are supported by voluntary contribution, at an expense of £365 for room rents, books, coals, candles, &c. the Teachers and Monitors doing the whole duty free of expense, under the superintendence of Committees from the Subscribers.

12. Are there in the parish any families, who, to your knowledge or belief, do not possess, from their poverty, a copy of the Bible? and, speaking generally, is there, from poverty, a want of copies of the Bible among any individuals or families in the parish?

12. There are few or no families, except, perhaps, the most worthless, who do not possess a copy of the Bible.

13. Are there any Mortifications, or other Charitable Institutions or Funds, for the benefit of the parish poor, which are not under the management of the Kirk Session?

13. There is a number of such Mortifications and Charitable Institutions.

a. What is their object?

a. Their objects are the relief of the old and indigent, and the clothing and education of youth, &c.

b. What is the amount of their funds, as nearly as you know, or can compute?

b. The amount of their funds distributed in 1816, is as follows:—

*Class 1st.*

The Merchants' and Trades' Houses,—The Fourteen Incorporations — The Faculty of Physicians and Surgeons—The Faculty of Procurators — and the Sons of the Clergy distribute to their own Members or

QUERIES. ANSWERS.

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| those connected with them, - - - | £4,817 | 6 | 11 |
| *Class 2d.* | | | |
| Hutcheson's and St. Nicholas' Hospitals —Wilson's and Millar's Charities —— Mitchell's, Tennant's, Coulter's, and MacAlpine's Mortifications: the Patrons distribute conformable to the deed of Mortification, - - - - - | 3,864 | 11 | 4 |
| *Class 3d.* | | | |
| Societies, viz. Buchanan — Highland—— Graham--Humane-Female--Old Man's Friend—Aged Woman's——Sick and Destitute Stranger's Friend-Benevolent-Stirlingshire--Benevolent for Clothing the Poor--Dumfriesshire—Teacher's—— Grocers'—Badge of Merit——Ayrshire— Brown's--Watson's-Thistle and Rose— Galloway Brotherly: The Managers distribute, conform to regulations and existing circumstances, | 3,111 | 7 | 3 |
| *Class 4th.* | | | |
| Royal Infirmary-Lunatic and Magdalene Asylums--and Lock Hospital -There has been laid out for the cure of diseases of the body and mind, | 4,972 | 17 | 5½ |
| *Carried forward* | £16,266 | 2 | 11½ |

| QUERIES. | ANSWERS. | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *Brought forward*, | £16,266 | 2 | 11½ |
| | *Class 5th.* | | | |
| | British and Foreign Bible Society—Auxiliary Bible Society—Association for translating the Scriptures—and Religious Tract Society, - - - | 2,272 | 11 | 3½ |
| | *Class 6th.* | | | |
| | Lancasterian School Society—Auxiliary for Gaelic Schools—Auxiliary for instructing the Deaf and Dumb—Charity Sewing School. Exclusive of Sums included in some of the Mortifications, there is laid out in support of Schools, | 860 | 19 | 6 |
| | *Class 7th.* | | | |
| | 129 Benefit Societies—the average of which may, on the best information, be taken at £15. - - - | 1,935 | 0 | 0 |
| | | £21,334 | 13 | 9 |
| c. What may be the number of the parish poor benefited by them, as nearly as you know, or can compute? | c. Cannot answer this Query with any degree of accuracy. | | | |

*GLASGOW, 4th September,* 1817

# APPENDIX.

## *GENERAL AND KIRK-SESSIONS.*

The first regular Session in Glasgow was appointed in 1572, twelve years after the Reformation from Popery. Although the Elders, along with the Ministers and Readers, were members of the Session. and of the General Assembly in 1591, they were not members of the Synod, although at this period it seems to have been much wished for. On the 21st July, 1599, the Presbytery, or the Exercise as it was then called, applied to the Magistrates and Council, to divide the Town into two Parishes. The Council replied, that "They thocht gud that the Townships shud be divided into twa parishes, provydit that the Town be not burdenit with seating or bigging of Kirks, nor furnishing nae mae Ministers, nor they hae already."* The whole of the Incorporated Crafts approved of this Act of Council.

On the 13th of April, 1649, the Great Session ordained, (for the first time) "That distinct Sessions should meet weekly, and hae ane clerk, ane Magistrate, and a town officer; so that uniformity of discipline may be attended to, and that things doubtful or likely to breed contest may be referred to the Great Session. The Great Session to meet on the first Thursday of every month, the Ministers to preside in it quarterly, *per vices*, to have the same clerk, to judge of things of a public nature and common interest, to have the election of Deacons and Elders, and to regulate an equal provision for the poor," &c.

## *Abstract from the First Report of the Town's Hospital.*

The House was opened on 15th November, 1773; and on 15th November, 1734, it contained one hundred and forty inmates, who were maintained at the daily expense of one pen-

* In 1599, the Ministers of Glasgow were Mr. David Wemyss and Mr. John Couper in the Hie Kirk, and Mr. John Bell in the Laigh Kirk.

ny and seven-twelfths of a penny sterling each, or nineteen pennies Scots, or £2 8s. 1¾d. sterling, per annum.*

*Hospital Expenses from 15th November, 1733, till 15th November, 1734.*

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| *Provisions.* | | | |
| Oat Meal, 203 bolls 14 pecks, | £107 | 0 | 3 |
| Pease Meal, 11 bolls 6 pecks, | 3 | 17 | 10 |
| Fresh Beef, 2,845½ lb | 21 | 4 | 10 |
| Salt Beef, 49 stones 14 lb | 5 | 12 | 6 |
| Mutton, Veal, &c. | 1 | 19 | 3 |
| Fish, | 4 | 19 | 3 |
| Fresh Butter, 75½ lb | 1 | 5 | 6 |
| Salt Butter, 17 stones, | 4 | 0 | 3 |
| Cheese, 21 stones 11½ lb | 3 | 1 | 7 |
| Barley, 24 cwt | 8 | 6 | 8 |
| Groats, 147 pecks, | 9 | 14 | 0 |
| Pease, 102 pecks, | 3 | 7 | 8 |
| Potatoes, 3 pecks, | 0 | 1 | 6 |
| Herbs and Roots, | 5 | 1 | 6 |
| Eggs, 434 dozen, | 3 | 4 | 3 |
| Salt, 143½ pecks, | 3 | 15 | 0 |
| Ale, 1,198 gallons, | 49 | 18 | 7 |
| Sweet Milk, 985 pints, | 7 | 4 | 11 |
| Butter Milk, 6,018 do. | 13 | 0 | 5 |
| Aquavitæ, 25½ do. | 1 | 11 | 8 |
| Sherry, Sugar, &c. for the Sick, Maintenance of Disorderly Persons sent to the House of Correction, Charges on Provisions, as Cartage, Porterage, Baking of Bread, &c.† | 6 | 19 | 3 |
| Carried forward, - - | £265 | 6 | 8 |

* The Presbytery of Glasgow, (for the first time,) on 17th May, 1643, required the father to provide for his bastard child. In 1802, children of this description were first admitted into the Hospital, on payment of £25. From that period till 1816, 162 children have been admitted and disposed of as follows: viz. dead, 95; put out to apprenticeships or service, 8; remained in the Hospital on 22d November, 1816, 59—Total, 162.

† *The Rate of Prices was nearly as under.*

| | s. | d. |
|---|---|---|
| Oat Meal, per peck, | 0 | 8 |
| Fresh Beef, per lb. | 0 | 2 |
| Fresh Butter, per lb. | 0 | 4 |
| Potatoes, per peck, (at this period they were very rare) | 0 | 6 |
| Eggs, per dozen, | 0 | 1¾ |
| Sweet Milk, per pint, | 0 | 1¾ |
| Aquavitæ, per pint, | 1 | 3 |
| Coals, per cart, (weight unknown,) | 1 | 3 |
| Candles, per lb. | 0 | 4 |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Brought forward,..... | | | | £265 | 6 8 |
| *Clothing.* | | | | | |
| Linens of sundry kinds,..... | £24 | 3 | 6 | | |
| Woolens, do. ..... | 61 | 4 | 11 | | |
| Furniture for Clothing, and Tailors' Accounts,.. | 24 | 4 | 0 | | |
| Shoes,..... | 8 | 14 | 0 | | |
| | | | | £118 | 6 5 |
| *Household Charges.* | | | | | |
| Coal, 336 carts,..... | £21 | 14 | 3 | | |
| Candles, 12 stones,..... | 3 | 5 | 4 | | |
| Soap and Starch, &c..... | 8 | 3 | 4 | | |
| Overseers' and Schoolmasters' Salaries,..... | 31 | 13 | 4 | | |
| Servants' Wages,..... | 5 | 11 | 10 | | |
| Petty Charges,..... | 14 | 14 | 1 | | |
| | | | | £ 85 | 2 2 |
| Total expense in 1733-4,..... | | | | £468 | 15 3 |

*Scheme of Assessment for the Maintenance of the Poor in the Town's Hospital, as laid on by the Assessors, from 9th August, 1803, till 9th August, 1804.*

| *Persons Assessed.* | *Valued at* | *Valuation.* |
|---|---|---|
| 468 | £300 | £140,400 |
| 13 | 400 | 5,200 |
| 340 | 500 | 170,000 |
| 267 | 600 | 160,200 |
| 6 | 700 | 4,200 |
| 31 | 800 | 24,800 |
| 124 | 900 | 111,600 |
| 359 | 1,000 | 359,000 |
| 199 | 2,000 | 398,000 |
| 99 | 3,000 | 297,000 |
| 82 | 4,000 | 328,000 |
| 60 | 5,000 | 300,000 |
| 45 | 6,000 | 270,000 |
| 20 | 7,000 | 140,000 |
| 7 | 8,000 | 56,000 |
| 9 | 9,000 | 81,000 |
| 18 | 10,000 | 180,000 |
| 12 | 12,000 | 144,000 |
| 2,159 | Carried forward, - - - | £3,169,400 |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 2,159 | Brought forward, | £ 3,169,400 |
| 1 | 15,000 | 13,000 |
| 2 | 14,000 | 28,000 |
| 11 | 15,000 | 165,000 |
| 3 | 16,000 | 48,000 |
| 2 | 18,000 | 36,000 |
| 1 | 20,000 | 20,000 |
| 1 | 22,000 | 22,000 |
| 1 | 24,000 | 24,000 |
| 1 | 25,000 | 25,000 |
| 2 | 30,000 | 60,000 |
| 1 | 32,000 | 32,000 |
| 1 | 33,000 | 33,000 |
| 1 | 35,000 | 35,000 |
| 1 | 40,000 | 40,000 |
| 1 | 42,000 | 42,000 |
| 1 | 45,000 | 45,000 |
| 2 | 48,000 | 96,000 |
| 1 | 82,000 | 82,000 |
| 2,193 | Total persons assessed, Total valuation, | £4,015,400 |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Valuation brought down, £4,015,400 at 2/2 ℔ £100, (the rate of Assessment for this year) is | £4350 | 0 | 4 |
| Contribution from the Town Council, | 220 | 0 | 0 |
| Do. from the Merchants' House, | 110 | 0 | 0 |
| Do. from the Trades' House, | 120 | 0 | 0 |
| Do. from the General Session, | 300 | 0 | 0 |
| Do. from a Banking House whose Partners do not reside in the Burgh, | 70 | 0 | 0 |
| Total amount for the maintenance of the Poor, | £5,170 | 0 | 4 |

*Scheme from 9th August, 1815, till 9th August, 1816.*

| *Persons Assessed.* | *Valued at.* | *Valuation.* |
|---|---|---|
| 413 | £300 | £123,900 |
| 1 | 400 | 400 |
| 88 | 500 | 44,000 |
| 413 | 600 | 247,800 |
| 2 | 700 | 1,400 |
| 5 | 800 | 4,000 |
| 7 | 900 | 6,300 |
| 321 | 1,000 | 321,000 |
| 30 | 1,200 | 36,000 |
| 4 | 1,300 | 5,200 |
| 170 | 1,500 | 255,000 |
| 2 | 1,600 | 3,200 |
| 4 | 1,800 | 7,200 |
| 209 | 2,000 | 418,000 |
| 78 | 2,500 | 195,000 |
| 161 | 3,000 | 483,000 |
| 44 | 3,500 | 154,000 |
| 1,952 | Carried forward, | £2,305,400 |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1,952 | Brought forward, | | £2,305,400 |
| 89 | 4,000 | | 356,000 |
| 29 | 4,500 | | 130,500 |
| 64 | 5,000 | | 320,000 |
| 14 | 5,500 | | 77 000 |
| 67 | 6,000 | | 402,000 |
| 1 | 6,500 | | 6,500 |
| 35 | 7,000 | | 245 000 |
| 1 | 7,500 | | 7,500 |
| 48 | 8,000 | | 384,000 |
| 21 | 9,000 | | 189,000 |
| 29 | 10,000 | | 290,000 |
| 7 | 11,000 | | 77,000 |
| 28 | 12,000 | | 336 000 |
| 8 | 13,000 | | 104,000 |
| 5 | 14,000 | | 70,000 |
| 15 | 15,000 | | 225,000 |
| 4 | 16,000 | | 64,000 |
| 1 | 17,000 | | 17,000 |
| 8 | 18,000 | | 144,000 |
| 9 | 20,000 | | 180,000 |
| 2 | 23,000 | | 46,000 |
| 4 | 24,000 | | 96,000 |
| 4 | 25,000 | | 100,000 |
| 1 | 26,000 | | 26,000 |
| 3 | 27,000 | | 81,000 |
| 6 | 30,000 | | 180,000 |
| 1 | 31,000 | | 31,000 |
| 1 | 32,000 | | 32,000 |
| 2 | 37,000 | | 74,000 |
| 2 | 38,000 | | 76,000 |
| 4 | 40,000 | | 160,000 |
| 1 | 50,000 | | 50,000 |
| 1 | 65,000 | | 65,000 |
| 1 | 70,000 | | 70,000 |
| 2,468 | Total persons assessed. | Total valuation, | £7,016,900 |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Valuation brought down, £7,016,900 at 2/7 ℔ £100, (the rate of Assessment for this year,) is..... | £9,063 | 9 | 11 |
| Contribution from the Town Council,..... | 220 | 0 | 0 |
| Do. from the Merchants' House,..... | 110 | 0 | 0 |
| Do. from the Trades' House,..... | 120 | 0 | 0 |
| Do. from the General Session,..... | 300 | 0 | 0 |
| Do. from a Banking House whose Partners do not reside in the Burgh,..... | 70 | 0 | 0 |
| Total amount for the maintenance of the Poor,..... | £9,883 | 9 | 11 |

## No. XIV.

*Mode of Managing the Poor in the Abbey Parish of Paisley.**

Till the year 1785, the poor of the Abbey parish † were, like those of most landward parishes in Scotland, supported entirely by the ordinary funds of the Kirk Session, arising from collections at the church doors, dues for proclamations, the use of mortcloths, interest of money mortified to the session, &c. In the years 1782, 1783, 1784, the sum expended for relief of the poor amounted, on an average, to only £136, 12s. per annum, and was merely an allowance to each pauper of from 2s. to 12s. per quarter. In 1785, when, from the progress of manufactures and other causes, the number of poor began rapidly to increase, it was resolved to adopt the plan of assessment, principally, it would appear, that a stop might be put to vagrant begging, which at that time had become very prevalent. At a public meeting of the heritors, justices of the peace, and commissioners of supply in the county, held in the course of that year, a petition from the farmers, and others, was presented, stating the prevalence and the pernicious effects of vagrant begging, and calling upon the meeting to adopt some plan for remedying the evil. It was resolved, by all interested, that a stop should be put to the prevalence of mendicity; but this, it was found, could not be done, unless the poor were provided for in their respective parishes. In the Abbey, and one or two other parishes, this could not be effected without an assessment; a measure which appeared most reasonable in the Abbey parish, as at that time scarcely one heritor, whose name appeared in the cess-book, resided within its bounds; and, with a single exception, not one, it is believed, paid one farthing to the parish poor. On this, and on other accounts, the proposal of an assessment was willingly

* For the leading facts contained in the following account, I am indebted to the Rev. Dr. Boog, senior minister of the parish; to John Wilson, Esq. of Thornly, author of the Agricultural Survey of Renfrewshire; and to Mr. John Mann, collector of the poor's rate. The references to Mr. Wilson's valuable work are so frequent, that I did not think it necessary to notice them farther than by this general acknowledgement.

† Population about 20,000.

acceded to by the farmers, and by all concerned. The assessment for the first year was only £152; from this, partly in consequence of the high price of meal in 1791, 1792, it rose to £415: and this sum, with about £125 per annum, arising from the collections at church, &c. making a total of about £540, was sufficient for the annual demand for some years. But after the years 1793, 1794, when the effects of the war began to be felt, it became necessary to impose higher assessments. The scanty crops, and consequent high price of provisions, in the years 1799, 1800, and 1801, at once adding to the number of paupers, and rendering their maintenance more expensive, required an assessment of about £1,000. The unfavourable state of trade in some subsequent years, increased the number of claimants for charity, and raised the assessment to £1,500. The following is a view of the progress of the assessment for the last ten years, and of its present rate:—

| | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1808, | £.1,570 | 11 | 10 | 1813, | £.2,082 | 8 | 2 |
| 9, | 1,654 | 7 | 8 | 14, | 1,654 | 7 | 9 |
| 10, | 1,699 | 14 | 8 | 15, | 1,252 | 12 | 5 |
| 11, | 1,699 | 10 | 2 | 16, | 1,286 | 15 | 6 |
| 12, | 2,179 | 15 | 6 | 17, | 1,531 | 7 | 0 |

These are the sums actually *assessed;* the sums actually *raised* fall short of them at an average of about £150 per annum, by reason of the inability of many to pay the rates at which they are assessed.

The uncommon rise in the years 1812-13, was owing to a debt of £700 which had been contracted during previous years, in consequence of the inability of many to pay their share of assessment, and which it was resolved to liquidate.

From the above table we have exhibited to us the very uncommon instance of an assessment actually *decreasing*, while it does not appear that the number of applicants has diminished, but rather increased. This singular exception to the general mass of assessed parishes both in England and Scotland, must be ascribed to the very judicious and frugal manner in which the funds are administered, and particularly to the accurate knowledge which is had, from time to time, of the actual condition of the poor.

The assessment, as above stated, is in addition to the collections at the church doors, and other church funds, which of late years average about £200 annually, and which are thrown into the common stock. The only permanent fund at

the charge of the session is a mortified sum of £190, which is lent out at the interest of 5 per cent.*

With regard to the mode of managing these funds, we have to state as follows:—In the month of June annually, the heritors and kirk-session hold a general meeting, regularly called by citation from the pulpit, when they consider carefully the state of the poor, and endeavour to ascertain, from the expenditure of the preceding year, the rate of wages, and the price of provisions, what sum it will be necessary to provide for the ensuing year. Deducting from that sum the probable amount of the church funds, the remainder is assessed equally upon the heritors and tenants in the parish; and the parish being divided into sixteen districts, and two overseers being named by the meeting for each district, it is left to the whole body of overseers to apportion the assessed sum upon the individuals. The same overseers meet quarterly with the ministers and elders, when they examine the roll of ordinary poor; inspect the quarterly accounts of receipt and expenditure; consider the petitions of persons claiming relief from the funds, and grant them such aid as their circumstances may require, it being understood that the several overseers shall be able to state minutely, to the meeting, the circumstances of every pauper and claimant in their respective districts. These overseers, by the original plan of management, were to have been chosen in equal numbers from the classes of heritors, farmers, and householders; but it being difficult to find heritors who are willing to undertake the troublesome office, the overseers are in general chosen from among the most respectable manufacturers and farmers. The ordinary number of overseers is 32, or two to each district. At present (1818) there are 33, one of the larger districts having three to superintend it. In all matters respecting the poor, the elders possess co-ordinate power with the overseers; and though not required *as elders* to undergo the ordinary labour of attending to the concerns of the paupers on the roll, they have a voice at all meetings, and are empowered to give information and advice in all matters affecting the poor of the parish. Along with the ministers of the par-

* Besides the above, there is under the exclusive administration of the senior minister of the parish, and three trustees nominated by him, by direction of the Court of Chancery, the annual sum of £23, the produce of a principal sum left by the late Lady Grant of Monimusk, and by order of the Court of Chancery vested in the funds. This sum is annually distributed in the month of January to poor householders who are not receiving parochial aid.

ish, and the overseers of the poor, they form the one public and legally constituted body, to whom are committed all matters connected with the administration of the parochial charity. Besides the quarterly meetings of the whole body, a committee of their number meet once every month, or oftener if necessary, for the purpose of distributing *occasional* charity, and consulting in regard to the general interests of the poor. Till of late years, it was customary for the managers, in their several districts, to issue precepts on the treasurer* for behoof of occasional claimants. As this was found to be inexpedient, the plan of a monthly committee was adopted as preferable. At the same time, as the wants of the occasional poor may be so clamant as to require immediate attention, the managers, on their own responsibility, are empowered to advance a small sum, and for this they trust to be reimbursed at the monthly committee. Besides the monthly committee, there is annually appointed by the managers a small *committee of accounts*, whose business it is to examine and docquet the Treasurer's accounts previous to their inspection at the quarterly meetings.

The following table exhibits, in one view, some particulars of importance relative to the present state and management of the poor:—

Number of ordinary poor on the roll at different periods.

| | Old and Infirm. | Poor Children. |
|---|---|---|
| 1785, | 90 to 100 | |
| 1801- 2, | 158 | 41 |
| 1804- 5, | 168 | 45 |
| 1810-11, | 219 | 41 |
| 1811-12, | 245 | 38 |
| 1816-17, | 272 | 15 |

Number of poor children at present educated by the parish, - - - 30
but the numbers of such are very various.

| | Per Quarter. |
|---|---|
| Highest rate allowed to the regular pensioners, except when confined and in a state of derangement, in which case more is given, | £.2 12 0 |
| Lowest rate, | 0 13 0 |
| Average of the whole, | 1 3 1 |

The number of *occasional* poor is very various, but the average expence of this class is about £150 annually.

* The labour of collecting the assessment, keeping the accounts, paying the regular pensioners, and attending to the whole business of the parochial charity, devolves on one individual, nominated at the general meeting, who receives the name of Treasurer, or Collector of the Poor's Rate; and who is allowed at the rate of 5 ℔ cent. on the sum collected.

The following table exhibits, in one view, the amount of expenditure for the different departments, at three distinct periods:—

| | 1801-2. | | | 1804-5. | | | 1810-11. | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | £. | s. | d. | £. | s. | d. | £. | s. | d. |
| Ordinary Roll, - - - - - | 601 | 12 | 0 | 641 | 15 | 0 | 962 | 4 | 0 |
| Occasional Charity, - - | 112 | 7 | 5 | 81 | 14 | 0 | 202 | 8 | 3½ |
| Orphans, &c. - - - - - | 227 | 13 | 10 | 255 | 3 | 0 | 280 | 12 | 5 |
| Clothing, - - - - - - | 114 | 18 | 5 | 153 | 18 | 4 | 204 | 13 | 7½ |
| Coffins, - - - - - - - | 13 | 2 | 6 | 12 | 3 | 10 | 22 | 1 | 0 |
| Education, - - - - - - | 21 | 7 | 8 | 30 | 5 | 4 | 102 | 12 | 0½ |
| Collector's Salary, - - - | 26 | 5 | | 26 | 5 | 0 | 26 | 5 | 0 |
| Interest of borrowed money, law business, printing, &c. | 30 | 11 | 5 | 67 | 13 | 7 | 41 | 15 | 11 |
| New Mortcloth, - - - | | | | | | | 18 | 16 | 3 |
| | 1,141 | 10 | 7 | 1,268 | 18 | 1 | 1,861 | 8 | 6½ |

The following is the state of accounts for the year ending June 1st, 1818:—

| Quarter ending | Poor's Roll. | | | Occasional. | | | Foundlings. | | | Clothing. | | | Education. | | | Burying | | | Totals. | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Sept. 1. | £.271 | 15 | 0 | 46 | 12 | 7 | 15 | 14 | 6 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 15 | 8 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 340 | 18 | 9 |
| Dec. 1. | 309 | 11 | 0 | 25 | 9 | 3 | 21 | 16 | 0 | 16 | 15 | 11 | 6 | 6 | 9 | 5 | 18 | 0 | 385 | 16 | 11 |
| March 1. | 302 | 17 | 3 | 38 | 14 | 6 | 24 | 13 | 0 | 36 | 7 | 10 | 6 | 5 | 0 | 9 | 13 | 0 | 418 | 10 | 7 |
| June 1. | 328 | 6 | 6 | 22 | 14 | 5 | 22 | 8 | 6 | 8 | 5 | 9 | 8 | 4 | 9 | 10 | 13 | 0 | 400 | 12 | 11 |
| | £.1,212 | 9 | 9 | 133 | 10 | 9 | 84 | 12 | 0 | 61 | 9 | 6 | 25 | 12 | 2 | 28 | 5 | 0 | 1545 | 19 | 2 |
| Incidental Expences, Law Charges, and Collector's Salary, | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 120 | 5 | 6 |
| Total Expenditure for the Year ending 1st June 1818, | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | £.1,666 | 4 | 8 |

Different plans have at different times been adopted at meetings of the landholders and kirk-session, for fixing the rule of assessment. The plan originally adopted at meetings held in 1785, as most suitable to the circumstances of the parish, and somewhat analogous to the mode prescribed in the old Scots statutes, was to "proportion the sum upon the heritors, householders, and tenants in the parish, regulating the contribution to be paid by each individual, by his property in the parish, his trade, his means and substance, and having regard to every circumstance that may render the contribution as equitable as possible.* But the spirit and meaning of this regulation were

* M.S. Minutes of parish meeting, 4th Aug. 1785.

in many instances departed from, by recurring to the valued rent as the rule for assessing landed property. This rule is extremely unequal; lands of the same *valued rent* being, from various circumstances, in many instances, of very different *real* value, and it is certainly unreasonable, when that is the case, that they should be assessed to the same amount. Accordingly, the representatives of the parish have now adopted the plan of assessing according to the real rent, making an allowance of one-fourth in the case of houses for repair.* The rate of assessment for the present year, as for the last, is $2\frac{1}{4}$ per cent. or about $4\frac{1}{2}$d. per £. of real rent.

Some years ago, the expediency of erecting an hospital, or charity workhouse, in this parish, was seriously considered. After due deliberation, it was finally resolved that the more advisable mode was that actually adopted, of supporting the poor at their own houses. In a few particular cases, the overseers have obtained admission for their paupers to the Town Hospital of Paisley on paying a reasonable board. In coming to the resolution not to erect an hospital, I have little doubt that the managers acted wisely. In the circumstances in which things now stand, indeed, I do not see how the town of Paisley could do without the aid of such a receptacle for age and poverty as that which our Hospital affords. But on the supposition that there never had been a building of that nature erected, and that we had remained precisely in the same state as the Abbey parish, it seems extremely questionable whether the general voice of the community would have favoured such an establishment.

In the village of Johnstone, which is situated in the west part of the parish of Paisley, the inhabitants, by agreement with the heritors of the parish, which is renewed every year at the meeting in June, bind themselves to support their own poor, in consideration of their being allowed to retain the collections made at the chapel of ease which was erected there in 1792. In support of the regular and occasional poor of the district, an assessment is annually made, nearly on the same principles with that for the parish; and it is applied by a committee of overseers, who compose the managers of the parochial fund. The collections made at the chapel are applied not to the relief of the poor, but to the general purposes of the chapel, and they are placed under the exclusive charge of the

* M.S. Meeting of Abbey parish, 4th June 1812.

elders, who are ordained by the ministers of the parish, and who, from local convenience, attach themselves to the chapel. The following are the principal facts with regard to the present state of the poor in this district :—

Number of inhabitants within the limits of the chapel, - - - - - 4,300
Amount of assessment for year ending May 1818, - - - £180 19 8
Rate of assessment on house rents, 3d. ℔ pound,
Do. do. on labourers, 2s.
Do. do. on weavers and operatives, 2s. 6d.
Do. do. on cotton spinners and mechanics, 3s. 6d.
Do. do. on grocers and innkeepers, according to the extent of their business, from 4s. to 12s.
Do. do. on cotton mills, according to their extent, at the rate of 20s. for every 1000 spindles,
} ℔ annum.
Number of regular pensioners at present on the roll, - - - - - - - 29
Highest rate, 5s. 3d.
Lowest do. 9d.
Amount at present distributed, £2 9 9
} ℔ week.
Sum expended on occasional poor, in 1816, £51 16 4½.
Education and clothing for poor children, at an average, £8 or £10 annually.

The following is the view given of the "duties of overseers" in the plan and regulations adopted at the first meeting of heritors, householders, and session, to assess the parish, 4th Aug. 1785, and which, with a few modifications, has been acted on till now :—

"Each of the overseers elected by the meeting shall take from the poor's roll a note of the poor that lie most convenient for his inspection, but so that every poor person shall be under the inspection of some one of the overseers, and the overseers shall, before the ensuing meeting, inform himself minutely of the character, the age, and circumstances of said poor, what relatives they have to assist them, and what work they are able to do, so that the overseers may know as accurately as possible what sum may be necessary for their support, and that thus no more may be given than what is absolutely so; and, as the prevention of any unnecessary rise in the assessment will greatly depend upon the attention of overseers, to this part of their duty, it is unanimously agreed that every overseer shall, for every poor person whose circumstances he has neglected to inquire into, forfeit the sum of five shillings Sterling, to be applied to the use of the poor." *

* M. S. Meetings of Abbey parish, 4th May 1785.

## No. XV.

*Queries and Replies respecting the State of the Poor in the three Parishes of the Burgh of Paisley. Nov.* 1817.

(This Report was drawn up in compliance with the order of the General Assembly, 1817, by the three ministers of the Burgh, assisted by Mr. Thomas Crichton, Master of the Hospital.)

As introductory to answering the Queries, we consider it necessary to state, that the ministers and elders of the three parishes in the town of Paisley, compose what has been constituted by the Lords of Erection in the deed of Settlement, the General Session, and that the collections at the three churches, and a stipulated sum of £21* in name of collections given annually by the managers of the Gælic Chapel, and all monies arising from proclamations, mortcloths, donations, or legacies, are thrown into one general fund for the maintenance of the poor, under the management of said General Session, over which the ministers preside as moderator in annual rotation. We would beg leave further to remark, that, as a considerable part of the suburbs belongs to the Abbey parish, it is extremely difficult in many cases to give specific answers to some of the queries, particularly as to those which respect friendly societies, the number of sectaries, and the number of children in the town who attend Sabbath schools.

### QUERIES—Class I.

| QUERIES. | ANSWERS. |
|---|---|
| 1. What is the average amount annually of the collections at the church doors for the last ten years? | 1. £754 15. |
| 2. Are any voluntary contributions (independent of the collections) made | 2. In the years 1808, 10, and 11, there were considerable sums raised by |

* Now reduced to £15 15.

| QUERIES. | ANSWERS. |
| --- | --- |
| annually or occasionally by *resident* heritors or others, and to what amount, for the last ten years? | voluntary contribution for the support of the poor belonging to the town and suburbs, by a number of respectable inhabitants, who denominated themselves the "Destitute Poor Society," and during these years, when the ordinary funds for the maintenance of the poor were found inadequate, they came forward, and, after strict enquiry into the circumstances of the poor, distributed to the amount of £1,865 19; but as the above sum was contributed by the inhabitants both of the burgh and also of that part of the suburbs which belongs to the Abbey parish, and distributed accordingly, we cannot say as to the sum appropriated to the poor residing in the three town-parishes. In the year 1811 was instituted the "Female Benevolent Society," which has distributed to poor distressed females in the town and suburbs, since that period, to the yearly amount of £420. This sum has been expended in bestowing on the objects of the Society's benevolence small sums of money, and in supplying them, (particularly during the winter months) with flannels, and other articles of comfortable clothing, with coals, &c. The funds arise from subscriptions, donations, and occasional collections at the church doors of all the religious societies in the town and suburbs. |
| 3. Do *non-resident* heritors give such voluntary contributions, and to what amount, for the last ten years? | 3. There has no voluntary contribution been given by non-resident heritors for the last ten years. |
| 4. What is the annual average amount, during the last ten years, of poor's funds, (*exclusive* of the collections and voluntary contributions) which have been under the management of the Kirk-session, and of what *items* are they made up? | 4. The annual average amount for the last ten years of poor's funds, exclusive of collections, has been £145 16, and the items are, monies arising from proclamations, mortcloths, donations, and legacies, interest of money, &c. Besides the above items,—owing to the increasing demands of the poor,—the General Session has, for the last |

| QUERIES. | ANSWERS. |
|---|---|
| | eight years, received from the assessment for the Town's Hospital, in aid of these funds, the average yearly sum of £75. |
| 5. What has been the average annual expense of managing the poors funds under the charge of the Kirk-session, during the last ten years? | 5. £15 yearly for the last ten years has been paid to the clerk of the standing committee of General Session, who attends the meetings of the committee, keeps their books, gathers in the collections, pays the weekly poor, &c. The whole funds are, however, under the charge of a treasurer appointed by the General Session who bestows his labours gratis. |
| 6. Is there a regular and legal Assessment for the support of the poor? | 6. There is an assessment for the support of the poor in the Towns' Hospital, and for the support of foundlings, and other destitute children nursed out of the house; and from this assessment, as mentioned in answer to query 4th, assistance has, for some time past, been given to the funds of the General Session. |
| a. What is its amount? | a. The amount of the assessment for the Hospital, for the year ending 31st May 1817, was £1,344 9 8, which, with an additional levy of £544, for the support of the industrious poor, as stated in answer to query 3d, 2d class, made in whole during the year £1,888 9 3. |
| b. By what rule, or what rate is it proportioned and levied? and in particular, is it levied in proportion to *personal* as well as *heritable* property? | b. The assessment is levied according to what is supposed to be the fortune or wealth of individuals, either as it respects personal property, or heritable property within the Burgh, or profit supposed to arise from trade, and besides, every male householder of the labouring classes who is not exempted by an Elder's line, is assessed to the yearly amount of 3s. |
| c. By what authority is the amount paid and the levying enforced? | c. Under the authority of the general act of the Scotch Parliament of |

QUERIES.

ANSWERS.

1579, and of the act of 1663, the levying of the assessment is enforced, and the tax is proportioned and fixed by thirteen assessors nominated and appointed by the magistrates and Town Council.

d. When did it commence?

d. It commenced in 1752, when an hospital was erected for the accommodation of the poor, and from that time till 1779, the institution was supported partly by an assessment, and partly by annual stipulated contributions from the Town Council, Kirk-session, and from the different corporations or trades in the burgh; but ever since 1779, it has been supported wholly by an assessment, and the Hospital, as above stated, in answer to query 4th, has of late assisted the General Session, and has paid for nursing foundlings, and other destitute children out of the House during the last year to the amount of £373 0 9.

e. What has been its progressive annual rise, for the last ten years?

e. The progressive rise of the assessment for the last ten years has been as follows:—

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1807,..... | £1,237 | 3 | 9 |
| 8,..... | 1,388 | 16 | 10 |
| 9,..... | 1,628 | 3 | 2 |
| 10,..... | 1,496 | 14 | 1 |
| 11,..... | 1,338 | 14 | 7 |
| 12,..... | 1,680 | 7 | 11 |
| 13,..... | 1,818 | 9 | 9 |
| 14,..... | 1,782 | 12 | 4 |
| 15,..... | 1,468 | 6 | 4 |
| 16,..... | 1,888 | 9 | 8* |

7. What is the annual expense of collecting and applying the Assessment, if it is collected and applied by others than the Kirk-session?

7. The collector is allowed 3 ℔ cent. on the sum he collects and the average annual expence for collecting, for the last ten years, will have been about £.45 10. The application is conducted free of expence by a committee of fifteen directors.

* It is proper to state, that the *real* assessment for the Hospital, in 1816, was only £.1,344 9 8. The additional £.544 was wholly appropriated to the relief of the industrious poor, as stated above.

| QUERIES. | ANSWERS. |
|---|---|
| 8 & 9. Is dependence on the assessment lessening, in your opinion, the reluctance to apply for aid from the parochial charity? 9. Although there may, &c. | 8 & 9. As the assessment has hitherto been almost exclusively applied for the support of the people in the Hospital, dependence upon it does not appear to have had much influence in lessening the reluctance of the people to apply for parochial charity; but we are firmly convinced, that of late years reluctance to apply for parochial aid is decreasing, partly from the growing disposition in parishes to have recourse to assessment, and partly from the great influx of strangers from Ireland and other places. |
| 10. Have you reason to believe, from instances falling under your own observation, that the reluctance to apply for parochial supply has been diminished by the practice of drawing allowances under the *Militia* Act? | 10. We have no doubt but that the practice of drawing allowances under the militia act has a tendency in some degree to diminish the reluctance to apply for parochial charity, but cannot say that particular cases have come under our own observation, such as will warrant us to give any very decisive opinion. |
| 11 & 12. What is the number on the poor roll of the *Ordinary* poor, (specifying *males* and *females* respectively) who can earn nothing for their own maintenance, butare supported from the poor's funds? 12. What is the *highest* and *lowest* rate, &c. | 11 & 12. The aged and infirm, who can do little or nothing for themselves, and who have no relations or friends to assist them, and who cannot subsist on the small allowance of the Session, are admitted into the Hospital, as are also orphans, and all these inmates, both old and young, receive a full maintenance, doing any little work of which they are capable, out of the profits of which they are allowed a small sum for their own private use, by way of encouragement. There are at present in the Hospital, |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Men, ..... | 41 | |
| Boys, ..... | 31 | |
| | | 72 |
| Women, ..... | 64 | |
| Girls, ..... | 20 | |
| | | 84 |
| | | 156 |

| QUERIES. | ANSWERS. |
|---|---|
| | The expence of the people in the House varies according to the rise and fall of provisions, but during last year the average annual expence for adults and children, was £.8 10 10½. |
| 13. What is the number of the *Industrious* poor, who, during the last ten years, have been on the poor's roll, and who have received *partial* relief from the Kirk-session, though, in general, able to earn a proportion of maintenance for themselves or families? | 13. About 190 have been regularly on the poor's roll or weekly list for the last ten years. Many of these can do a little work, while a considerable number are unable to do any thing for their support, but receive assistance from their friends and relatives; and it may be proper to remark, that the far greater proportion of the poor on the regular list are aged and widowed females in a state of bodily frailty. The number at present on the list is 263. |
| 14. What is the *highest* and *lowest* rate of regular relief allowed to the *Industrious* poor, described as above? | 14. The highest allowance is 3s. per week, and the lowest 6d. and the following is the state of the list:— |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 2 | paupers | at 3s. ℔ | week, |
| 12 | do. | at 2s. | do. |
| 37 | do. | at 1s. 6d. | do. |
| 7 | do. | at 1s. 3d. | do. |
| 178 | do. | at 1s. | do. |
| 16 | do. | at 9d. | do. |
| 11 | do. | at 6d. | do. |

The whole will be found to average about 1s. 1d. ℔ week.

| | |
|---|---|
| 15. Is relief given *occasionally* to individuals or families of the *Industrious* poor, from the common poor's funds, in order to prevent them coming permanently on the poor's roll? and if so, to what average amount, in each case, or of the whole, annually, during the last ten years? | 15. We cannot precisely answer this query, but would in general observe, that the elders in their several proportions are allowed a discretionary power to bestow small sums of money, in order to relieve cases of urgent occasional distress, and also to supply the poor with shoes, flannel, and various articles of clothing as they shall see necessary; and they are expected to consult with a standing committee of General Session, consisting of four Elders from each of the three Sessions, who meet regularly on the |

| QUERIES. | ANSWERS. |
| --- | --- |
| | last Friday of every month, and who give their advice to the other members of session in cases of difficulty. Perhaps, about £300, or upwards, of the session's funds, is annually expended in this manner, and we have no doubt that the occasional aid thus afforded is the means of keeping many from becoming permanently a burden. The relief granted to individuals, or families, may vary from 3s. to 20s. yearly. |
| 16. What is the sum total of allowances distributed by the Kirk-session in each year, for the last ten years, to the *Ordinary* and *Industrious* Poor, who have been regularly on the poors roll? | 16. £.523. |
| 17. In admitting a pauper on the poor's roll and fixing the amount of his allowance, is the moral character, as good or bad, considered? | 17. Persons who, by residence, have obtained a right to parochial charity, though they may have reduced themselves to poverty by irregular conduct, when brought into circumstances of distress, are admitted into the Hospital, or are occasionally assisted from the Session funds; but the elders in such cases are accustomed to observe a great deal of prudent caution in the manner of bestowing, by giving only a very small sum of money at one time, or by giving them relief in articles of provisions, and by putting the relief granted under the care of respectable neighbours or relatives. In general, when the moral character is notoriously bad, occasional relief is rather resorted to than putting the pauper on the regular weekly list. |
| 18& 19. Has any pauper, (and if so, how many?) who had no right from residence to your parish Charity, been removed from your parish by the Kirk-session to another parish, where he or she had such a right; or, has any, on similar grounds, been removed from another parish to yours? | 18 & 19. There have been several such removals, but we cannot say precisely as to the number. |

| QUERIES. | ANSWERS. |
|---|---|
| 20. Has any litigation taken place between your parish and any other, as to a pauper's residence and right to the parish charity? and what has been the expense of such litigation during the last ten years? | 20. No litigation of this kind has taken place during the last ten years. |
| 21 & 22. Has your Kirk-session paid or received allowance for such paupers as were permitted to remain in the parish where they happened to reside when they became chargeable? and to what amount during the last ten years? 22. Was any stipulation made? | 21 & 22. In a few cases allowances have been paid and received, but we cannot ascertain the number nor the amount.—In general a stipulation is made as to the rate, but in some cases where, from particular circumstances, no stipulation has been made, the Session has taken upon itself to fix the allowance according to the rates allowed to their own poor; and, excepting in two or three cases, there have no objections been made, and in these cases the negociation betwixt the parishes terminated amicably. |
| 23. Does the Kirk-session claim a right to the effects of paupers at their death? and does this claim seem to have any effect in disinclining the people to come on the poor's roll? | 23. The Session claims a right to the effects of paupers on their roll at their death, but as their surviving relations are generally poor, and have been at considerable expence in waiting upon them in their illness, and as expence must be incurred in conducting their funerals, it is only in a few instances that any thing can be obtained: and, with respect to the effects of this claim in disinclining the poor to come on the parish funds, so far as we can judge they have not in any cases been very obvious. When a pauper is admitted into the Town's Hospital, his effects are claimed by the directors, but as the pauper's effects are commonly exhausted before he asks admission, and house rent often owing, it is seldom that any thing is taken. |
| 24. Has there been any instance of a pauper, or of others for his behoof, attempting to enforce by law a higher allowance than the Kirk-session were willing to give? | 24. No attempt of this kind has been made during the last ten years, and indeed can seldom or never occur, as when the pauper cannot subsist on the small allowance of the session, he is recommended by his |

| QUERIES. | ANSWERS. |
| --- | --- |
| | elder for admission to the Hospital. |
| 25. What are the names (and the numbers, as nearly as you can compute) of the religious sects in your parish? are there any (and if so, how many) of their poor are on the poors roll of the parish? and what is the annual sum total of relief given to them? | 25. The religious sects in the town and suburbs are the following:—One Antiburgher Congregation, one Burgher, one Old Burgher, two Relief, one Reformed Presbyterian, one Methodist, one Roman Catholic, one Episcopal, newly opened, and 8 small congregational churches; and there are only two or three cases of any of the paupers belonging to these sects being on the regular poors roll of session. Several of them, however, receive a small occasional relief, and all of them have a claim with the other inhabitants to admission to the Hospital, as a residence of three years in the town gives that claim. The members of the above mentioned congregations, are so scattered over the town and Abbey Parish, that the numbers residing in the burgh cannot be easily ascertained. |
| 26. What, as nearly as you can compute, is the number of paupers belonging to these sects, who are *not* on the poors roll of the parish, but are supported by these sects themselves respectively? | 26. Several of the above congregations are large, and have been long established, and some of them are very liberal in supplying the wants of their poor; but we have no means of ascertaining the number of their paupers. |
| 27. Are *Stranger* poor allowed to beg in your parish? do the parish poor beg? and if so, do they wear badges? | 27. Stranger poor, though prohibited, beg, and a few belonging to the town beg, though not allowed, but wear no badges. |

# QUERIES—Class II.

| QUERIES. | ANSWERS. |
|---|---|
| 1. Are there occasionally *Extraordinary* collections for individual instances of misfortune or distress, among the industrious poor? what may be the amount of these? and do they ever keep a particular person, or family, from coming permanently on the poors roll? | 1. There are no collections of this kind made under the authority of session, but in particular cases of distress or misfortune, contributions are called for and readily obtained among the inhabitants of the town; but we have no means of ascertaining to what amount. We have no doubt, however, that such contributions have been often the means of keeping particular persons or families from coming permanently on the poors funds. |
| 2. What is the number of persons in the parish,<br>1. who are Blind?<br>2. Deaf and Dumb?<br>3. Deaf, Dumb, and Blind? | 2. We cannot ascertain the number of persons specified in this query, but can say, that several persons labouring under one or other of these deprivations are relieved from the funds of the session; and that a number of such persons receive full maintenance in the Town's Hospital, and that others are supported by their friends. |
| 3. Can you state the sums raised in 1816—17 for the occasional relief of the industrious poor, the way in which the relief was granted, and the number of those relieved? | 3. Owing to the great and increasing demands of the poor on account of the low state of trade, and the high price of provisions in November 1816, the Magistrates and Town Council found themselves under the necessity of authorizing the assessors of the town for the support of the Town's Hospital, to lay on the inhabitants 50 per cent. additional on the year's assessment for the Hospital, in order to assist the industrious poor who were in distress. This additional assessment produced £544, but as the distress from the above causes still continued to increase, after this assessed fund was expended, in the following month a subscription was resorted to by the respectable inhabitants, under the patronage of the magistrates, which produced £954, which, with the additional assessment, amounted in whole to |

QUERIES.

ANSWERS.

£1,498. Great care was taken in the distribution of the above assessment and subscription fund, by selecting, with as much discrimination as possible, the proper objects of the public charity. The distribution was committed to the elders in the town, along with a number of the respectable inhabitants appointed to assist them, amounting to 88 in number, and from these was chosen a small committee, selected from each of the three parishes, for general inspection. In the distribution, it was generally understood that no person earning to the amount of 3s. per week was to receive assistance, but that whatever was deficient of that sum was to be given them weekly, so that if a husband and wife earned 6s. weekly, they were excluded, but if their earnings produced only that sum, and if they had children young or unemployed, they were to be allowed 1s. 6d. weekly for each. Although from this plan there might be, on account of particular circumstances, many variations, yet this is the outline of the arrangements that were made by the committee for distribution, and generally adopted. For each elder's proportion a book or schedule was kept, with proper columns for the insertion of a particular statement of each case, and the amount of the sum expended on each family or individual, and these were laid before the select committee of inspection at the end of every month. It may be proper further to remark, that it was judged expedient, in many cases, instead of giving a weekly allowance, to bestow, once for all, on families or individuals of modest disposition, and who were struggling hard for independence, a sum of 5s. or 10s. in as silent a way as possible. In several cases it was considered expedient to give articles of provisions weekly, instead of bestow-

| QUERIES. | ANSWERS. |
|---|---|
| | ing money. The following is a statement of the expenditure :— |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| To cash in Nov. 1816, to the elders to support the poor till the plan of distribution was fixed,..... | £100 | 0 | 0 |
| Cash paid in December to 896 families, 2,052 individuals,... | 243 | 1 | 3 |
| Do. paid in Jan. 1817, to 1,006 do. 2,083 do. | 253 | 10 | 4 |
| Do. paid Feb. 1817, 1,052 do. 2,932 do. | 300 | 15 | 4 |
| Do paid March, 1817, 972 do. 2,698 do.... | 269 | 18 | 6 |
| Do. paid from 1st April to August,... | 170 | 14 | 7 |
| Cash in hand,..... | 160 | 0 | 0 |
| | £1,498 | 0 | 0 |

The number of individuals in the course of the winter relieved, was about 3,000. The balance of £160 has been since placed at the disposal of a society lately formed for clothing the industrious poor.

4. Is there a Savings Bank in your parish? when was it established? and what is the number of depositors?

4. A provident bank was instituted in the town and neighbourhood, and commenced its operations 13th Nov. 1815, and 6th May last, the date of the last quarterly report, the number of deposits was 107, of whom males 46, and females 41, and the amount of their credit £791 14s. 11d. In Nov. last, (1817) the amount of credit was nearly £1,000.

5. & 6. If there is no Savings Bank, &c.

5. & 6. We consider that the information above given, that a provident bank has been instituted, will be a sufficient answer to queries 5th and 6th.

7. Are there any Friendly Societies in the parish? and if so, how many are there? and what is the number belonging to them?

7. There are in the town and suburbs 67 friendly societies, variously constituted, but as their members reside partly in the town and Abbey

| QUERIES. | ANSWERS. |
| --- | --- |
| | parish, the number residing within the liberties of the town cannot be easily ascertained. These societies have been found by the inhabitants to be very beneficial, in affording comfortable assistance to many of their old and decayed members who have fallen into poverty, by preventing them from becoming a burden on the parish funds. It is, however, rather to be regretted that some of the societies are in a declining state, owing, in a great measure, to a defect in their constitution, the sums given in by the members not being in such proportion to the outgiving, as to give promise of their permanence. |
| 8. Is there, from local circumstances or otherwise, any comparative want of opportunity or means of *religious* Education among the poor? | 8. We are not aware of any want of opportunity or means of common, or religious education among the poor. |
| 9. Are there any, and if so, what, in your opinion, may be the number who have not been taught to *Read?* | 9. Among the natives of the town we believe there are scarcely any to be found who have not been taught to read, but we believe that there are many strangers from Ireland and from the Highlands who cannot read, but we cannot, upon any sure ground, make any calculation as to the number. |
| 10. What are the fees payable by the Poor for the different Branches taught in the *Parish School?* and does the Kirk-session pay, from the Parish funds, the school fees of any Poor Scholars? and if so, how many? | 10. The session pays for the education of a few poor children, to private teachers, in the extremities of the town, at the rate of 3s. per quarter. A considerable number of orphan children belonging to the Hospital are taught by the master, who, along with the matron, has the entire charge of the house. There is, besides, a charity school, placed in a central situation of the town, endowed by the late Mrs. Hutcheson and others, where about 200 poor children are constantly receiving education, including those who, on account of their being employed through the day, |

| QUERIES. | ANSWERS. |
| --- | --- |
| | are taught in the evening. There are also three week day evening schools, supported by subscriptions and collections, under the patronage and inspection of the "Sabbath and Week Day Evening School Society," where about 200 poor children have been taught to read, and a school has been lately opened for the education of the children of Roman Catholics, conducted by a teacher belonging to the Romish church, and chiefly supported by a number of Protestant gentlemen in the town. The number of children taught in this school will average about 100, and the Scriptures in the common translation, and the usual elementary school books are read. Besides these, the children belonging to some of the public works in the town are taught gratis, by teachers appointed by the proprietors. |
| 11. Is there a *Sunday* School in the Parish? how many Scholars at an average attend it? and how is the Expense of it defrayed? | 11. There are in the town and suburbs 37 Sabbath evening schools for improvement in reading, and for religious instruction, attended by about 2,000 scholars, and supported by subscriptions and collections, under the superintendence of the Sabbath and Week Day Evening School Society. |
| 12. Are there in the parish any families, who, to your knowledge or belief, do not, from their poverty, possess a copy of the Bible? and speaking generally, is there, from poverty, a want of copies of the Bible among any individuals or families in the parish? | 12. Of late, upon inquiry, there was found to be rather a deficiency of Bibles among the labouring poor, but this deficiency, we believe, has been amply supplied by the kind attention of the different Bible Societies in the town. |
| 13. Are there any Mortifications, or other Charitable Institutions or Funds, for the benefit of the poor, which are not under the management of the Kirk session? *A.* What is their object? *B* What is the amount of their funds, as nearly as you know, or can compute? *C.* What may be the num- | 13. The following mortifications are lodged in the hands of the Magistrates and Town Council for the benefit of the poor, and the interest of the same disposed of by them |

QUERIES. ANSWERS.

ber of the parish poor benefited by them, as nearly as you know, or can compute?

under the specifications and restrictions of the testamentary deeds of the respective donors.

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Alms House Mortification, | £259 | 6 | 8 | for the benefit of 3 persons. | | |
| Mrs. Armour's do. | 55 | 11 | 1 | do. | 2 | do. |
| Robt. Alexander's do. | 111 | 2 | 2 | do. | 2 | do. |
| Robert Peters' do. | 166 | 13 | 4 | do. | 3 | do. |
| James Maxwell's do. | 100 | 0 | 0 | do. | 4 | do. |
| Park & Hutcheson's do. | 200 | 0 | 0 | do. | 4 | do. |
| Baillie Reid's, a grant of land producing at present a yearly rent of..... | 51 | 11 | 3 | do. | 4 | do. |
| | | | | | 22 * | |

Besides the above, considerable sums are given annually by the corporations, or trades, to their poor members, such as the Weavers, Merchants, Tailors, Shoemakers, Maltmen, &c, The precise annual amount, however, of their distribution cannot be ascertained, nor that of the friendly societies mentioned in answer to query 7th.

## No. XVI.

*Letter to the Author, from Mr. Crichton, Master of the Hospital, on the state of the Hospital and Poor of Paisley.*

Rev. Sir,

In compliance with your request, I have again looked over the Report lately drawn up for the information of the General Assembly respecting the state of the poor, but do not find that, after my review, I have much more information to give on the subject; but, as you lately expressed a wish that I would communicate to you some more information respecting the Town's Hospital than is contained in that Report, I now beg leave to put into your hands a brief narrative of the rise and progress of that institution, accompanied with a few remarks on the mode of management of the concerns of the poor

* Besides the foregoing mortifications, the late Miss Maxwell of Williamwood, by deed of settlement, executed in 1814, bequeathed £600 sterling to the Magistrates and Town Council of Paisley, the interest whereof was directed to be applied "for the relief of three families residing in the town parish of Paisley in reduced circumstances, but who have not applied for any assistance from the Kirk-session; which families are to be fixed upon by the Magistrates and Council, from time to time, and to be such as they shall consider the most deserving of such relief, but to be withdrawn on their taking any assistance from the Kirk session, or on the death of the person to whom as head of the family the said relief was given, or on his or her being guilty of any conduct which, in the opinion of the Magistrates and Council, shall make them cease to deserve it; after which, the Magistrates and Council shall name other families in their place."

within the burgh, by the co-operation of the directors of the Hospital and the members of General Session.

It would appear that about the year 1750, when the manufactures of the town came to be carried on to an increasing extent, and when consequently the population must have been making rapid progress, the difficulty of getting the poor comfortably supported became an object of particular attention. From the period of the separation of the town from the Abbey parish, in 1736, when the Low Church was first opened, till 1750, there is reason to suppose that the funds of the session, along with the benefactions of private benevolence, were found adequate to supply the wants of the indigent. It appears, however, that about this time, when the manufacturing population began so rapidly to increase, those who had the management of the public concerns of the town finding difficulty in getting proper accommodation for many poor orphans, for many of the destitute aged and infirm, and for persons in various degrees of mental derangement or imbecility, devised a plan for the more comfortable accommodation of these several descriptions of persons, by erecting an Hospital. About twenty years preceding this period, the citizens of Glasgow had presented to the view of the inhabitants of Paisley, a striking example of their particular attention to the more comfortable accommodation of the poor, by erecting an Hospital; and the benevolent objects of this institution, about eleven years after its commencement, are thus detailed in a public document, dated 3d January 1744. The managers at that period informed the public, that the erection of the Hospital "contributes "much to the advancement of religion, virtue, and goodness, "and the public utility, honour, and advantage of the coun- "try, by provision being made for the necessities of poor in- "digent children, old decayed men and women, and of others "rendered unable to provide for themselves, and that idle, "dissolute, irregular, and disorderly persons, are thereby re- "strained from begging, wandering, and vaguing, while they "are provided for and usefully employed for the service of the "country towards their own maintenance." Such was the auspicious commencement, and such were the high expectations of utility formed respecting this infant institution by the citizens of Glasgow. At the time of the erection of this Hospital, 1733, the Rev. Mr. John M'Laurin, distinguished for his public spirit, and well known to the religious world by his excellent posthumous publications, was in the midst of his usefulness as

minister of the North-West Church, It is remarked concerning him by his affectionate relative and biographer, Dr. Gillies, that "he assisted in concerting measures for the regular main- "tenance of the poor in the city of Glasgow, and particularly "when the Hospital at its first erection met with considerable "obstacles, he promoted it with great diligence, and had a "chief hand in composing the printed account of that excellent "foundation." From the epithet *excellent*, thus so freely bestowed on the establishment by Dr. Gillies, who, from his pastoral inspection, had opportunities of knowing its management, it appears that, in 1755, when he drew up his biographical sketch, he considered that it was still continuing to answer the sanguine expectations formed concerning it by its projectors at an earlier period. Encouraged, no doubt, by the example of the citizens of Glasgow, who had given so favourable an account of the auspicious commencement of their Hospital, and who had held out to the community such encouraging prospects of its continued and increasing utility, as well as by the erection of the Orphan Hospital and Charity Workhouse of Edinburgh nearly about the same time, the inhabitants of Paisley commenced the Building of the Town's Hospital in 1750, and by the active exertions of some public spirited gentlemen, who had then the management of the concerns of the community, it was opened for the reception of the poor in May 1752. That you may have an opportunity of knowing the amount of the expence of the original building, and the mode of contribution towards defraying that expence, I beg leave to put into your hand the following abstract account, as extracted from the accounts of Mr. John Smith, Treasurer:—

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| To cash from sundry contributions of the inhabitants, | £.170 | 14 | 6 |
| To do. from the Town Session of Paisley, ..... | 25 | 0 | 0 |
| To do. from an unknown hand,* ..... | 20 | 0 | 0 |
| To do. from materials sold after building the House, | 31 | 6 | 3 |
| To do from Town Council, ..... | 40 | 0 | 0 |
| To do. from Society of Merchants, ..... | 30 | 0 | 0 |
| To do. from Society of Weavers, ..... ..... | 30 | 0 | 0 |
| To do from Society of Maltmen, ..... | 10 | 0 | 0 |
| To do. from Society of Tailors, ..... | 15 | 0 | 0 |
| To do. from Society of Wrights, ..... ..... | 10 | 0 | 0 |
| To do. from Society of Shoemakers, ..... | 10 | 0 | 0 |
| To do. advanced by the Town Council to complete the building, over and above the £40 contracted for by the Town Council, ..... | 192 | 4 | 0¾ |
| | £.584 | 4 | 9¾ |

* I have endeavoured to find out who this benevolent individual was, but without success.

During the first year of the Hospital, a few people were admitted, and in 1759, the following was the number of persons in the House:—

| | |
|---|---|
| Men, | 4 |
| Women, | 6 |
| Boys, | 24 |
| Girls, | 12 |
| Total, | 46 |

As the Town Council, the Kirk Session, and the several trades contributed to the erection of the building, as stated in the above abstract, so according to stipulation, they, from the commencement of the institution, contributed annually to its support in the following proportions, and continued to do so till 1779, when a different plan of management was adopted:—

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Town Council, | £10 | 0 | 0 |
| | Kirk Session, | 30 | 0 | 0 |
| | Merchants, | 7 | 10 | 0 |
| | Weavers, | 15 | 0 | 0 |
| | Maltmen, | 1 | 10 | 0 |
| | Shoemakers, | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| | Tailors, | 6 | 0 | 0 |
| | Wrights, | 1 | 10 | 0 |
| | | £73 | 10 | 0 |
| From 1770, | Masons, | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| From do. | Fleshers, | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| | | £77 | 10 | 0 |

What was necessary for the support of the House over and above the said annual contributions, was supplied from an assessment on the inhabitants, the profits arising from the labour of the paupers, and occasional donations. The amount of sums bequeathed by benevolent individuals to the institution, exclusive of small sums occasionally received from fines, &c. has, from its commencement, been £401 18 10. With such sources of supply did the institution go on for a considerable time, without much increase of number, and with funds sufficient for its support.

In 1768, the town still increasing in population, the inhabitants began particularly to find difficulty in getting lunatics secured from doing injury to themselves or others, and therefore those who had at that time the management of public

concerns, concerted a plan for erecting a small appendage to the original building, for the more comfortable accommodation and security of such unfortunate persons. This erection was on a small scale, consisting of four apartments, and the contributions towards defraying the expence were as follows:—

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Kirk Session, | £10 | 0 | 0 |
| Tailors, | 4 | 0 | 0 |
| Merchants, | 7 | 0 | 0 |
| Wrights, | 2 | 2 | 0 |
| Maltmen, | 1 | 10 | 0 |
| Weavers, | 7 | 0 | 0 |
| Shoemakers, | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| | £33 | 12 | 0 |

An additional sum of £8 was found necessary to complete the building, which was supplied from the general funds of the Hospital, This small erection has lately undergone some very important and necessary repairs, and is still used for the original purpose. It must, however, be obvious to all who are fully acquainted with the state of the House, so much crowded, and without private walking grounds, that lunatics cannot enjoy that quiet which is necessary for persons in a disturbed state of intellect, nor can such attention be paid to the peculiarities of their several cases as may be bestowed in a lunatic asylum particularly fitted for their accommodation, and where there are persons appointed to superintend the patients, qualified by experience for the difficult task. Notwithstanding, however, of these deficiencies in respect of accommodation, many persons have been recovered in the hospital from a state of mental derangement, and restored to their friends and society.

From the period of the erection of the Hospital in 1752 till 1779, the house was managed by a yearly delegation of members from the Town Council, Kirk Session, and the above mentioned trades, each sending three of their number, and making in whole 24 directors. It appears from the records of the Hospital that an out-pension system had been adopted, from nearly the time of the commencement of the institution, and continued in uninterrupted operation till 1779, at which period the greatly increasing demands of the poor out of the House, became to the managers rather alarming. This was during the hottest period of the American revoluntionary war, when a great number of new regiments were hastily raised,

and when the mode of recruiting the army at that time, by offering high bounties, and affording ample means of intoxication, induced many married persons to enter the service, and to leave their families dependent on the community for support. About this time the directors of the Hospital had frequent meetings, for the special purpose of deliberating respecting the best mode of conducting the business of the institution, and the most economical method of supplying the wants of the poor. At one of these meetings, dated 2d March 1779, the directors express their regret, that the late great expence of the institution had given occasion to several complaints against the directors and stent-masters, and after much deliberation on the subject, they gave it as their opinion, "That the extraordinary charges incurred of late arise from out-pensions, incidental and quarterly, clothing and medicines furnished to poor people out of the House, the amount of which for the last year, is above £100—(and if the same mode of out-pensions is continued, will be much more the present year)—and by the settling and regulating of these the whole attention of the directors is generally taken up, to the great neglect of the internal affairs of the House, which it is apprehended ought to be the first and principal object with the managers, and therefore it is proposed that, for the future, no out-pensions shall be given."

This proposal of the directors, after due deliberation, was ultimately adopted and all the out pensioners were struck off their list, and arrangements were made for their being taken up and supplied from the funds of the Kirk Session, or from the funds of the several societies or trades who had contributed annually to the support of the institution, and on whose funds any of the pensioners had a claim, and those paupers who were considered as proper objects were ordered to be admitted into the Hospital. As may be easily supposed, some of the societies dissented from this resolution of the directors, and the consequence ultimately was, that they all withdrew their annual contributions, and relinquished their claim of having any farther share in the management of the House. The Town Council continued to contribute annually for a few years longer, and also the sessions, till their (i. e. the session's) funds were so reduced, that they found themselves under the necessity of withdrawing the support they had been accustomed to afford, and at this time the directors of the Hospital gave up in favour of the Session all the profits arising from the hire of mortcloths,

which formerly were appropriated to the support of the House. Since 1779, when the above mentioned arrangements respecting out pensions were made, the magistrates and Town Council have taken the business of appointing the directors wholly into their own hand, and therefore delegate annually three members of council, and nominate nine gentlemen from the town at large, and each of the three Kirk Sessions delegate one of their number, making in whole fifteen directors.

From 1779 to 1802, the Hospital, excepting to a few persons in peculiar circumstances of disease, paid no out-pensions, the funds of the General Session, along with the charitable funds of other religious denominations, and of friendly societies, having been found nearly adequote to support the poor out of the House. It must, however, be stated, that on some particular occasions of failure in trade, as in 1793, or dearth of provisions, such as took place in 1800, 1801, as well as in some cases of more recent date, recourse has been had by the benevolent inhabitants to a voluntary subscription for the relief of the temporary pressure, and the liberal assistance afforded on these occasions to the distressed part of the community, has been highly creditable to the charitable feelings of many of the more affluent class of the inhabitants, and gives us reason to expect, that, on future occasions of temporary calamity, there will not be wanting a spirit of Christian benevolence, in this the place of our residence, to relieve the distresses of the poor.

About the year 1802, owing greatly to the effects of the scarcity and dearth of 1800, 1801, above referred to, as well as to other causes, the demands upon the funds of the General Session came to be greatly on the increase, and indeed so pressing were these demands, that the Session found it necessary, with the concurrence of the Town Council, to apply to the directors of the Hospital, requesting them to take a large class of out-pensioners under their care, with which the Session was greatly burdened, namely foundlings, and other destitute children at nursing. However reluctant the directors of the Hospital were at the first application to revert to the old system of out-pensions, yet at length, convinced of the exhausted state of the session fund, and considering the great and increasing population of this large manufacturing town, the depreciation of money, &c. the mode of paying a nursing list was adopted, and still continues in operation. This class of pensioners is composed of foundlings, and other deserted children, and the infant children of poor widows of good character, who have been left with

numerous families, but whose virtuous and maternal feeling prompts them industriously and frugally to struggle to preserve, as far as possible, their independence, and rather to ask a small pecuniary aid in name of their infant child, than to break the tenderest of domestic ties, by sending some of the children to the Hospital. Persons of this description receive weekly from 1s to 3s 6d. and the whole children on the nursing list will average, weekly, about 2s. 6d.; and many of them, besides this weekly allowance, receive various articles of clothing. The amount of this branch of the Hospital expenditure, for the year ending 21st May 1818, was £391 1. In the payment of this list a great expence is necessarily incurred, which falls heavy on the institution, but when it is considered that the assistance thus afforded for a time to poor widows, is the means of preventing many children from being admitted to the Hospital, and remaining there for a number of years at a considerable expence, it will appear upon consideration to be a measure of prudential economy.

Though the General Session was relieved of this burden of maintaining destitute infants, yet, owing to the continued pressure of the times, the demands on their funds, instead of diminishing, continued to increase. For some years during the latter period of the French revolutionary war, the manufacturing interests of the town, as is well known, suffered greatly, and particularly the thread manufacture almost ceased to exist. The consequence was, that a great number of aged and widowed females, employed in various branches of this manufacture, were thrown idle, and were obliged to apply to the Session for relief, and the Session, unable to resist the many urgent applications made to them for assistance, were again under the necessity of applying to the Magistrates and Council, that some means might be devised for increasing their funds, as the collections at the church doors, even after the most serious appeals had been made to the several congregations, had been found totally inadequate to supply the wants of the poor. The Magistrates and Council, after frequent consultations on the subject, were induced, in 1809, to recommend it to the directors of the Hospital to grant to the General Session, in aid of their funds, the sum of £50. Ever since that period a yearly application has been made by the Session to the Magistrates and Council for assistance from the assessment, and for each of the last four years immediately preceding 1st June 1817, the sum of £100 has been received; and,

during the year ending 31st May 1818, they have received £200. As the Session cannot, from their limited funds support the great body of poor out of the Hospital, it has been considered by many who have had opportunities, from their official situations, of judging respecting the state of the poor, that granting aid from the assessment is also a measure of economy, as it is the mean of preventing many aged persons from going reluctantly to the Hospital, the Session having it in their power, by these grants, to assist them in their own houses with small weekly pensions, or occasional aid. Indeed it is the principle upon which the members of General Session uniformly act, that if a little pecuniary assistance will prevent a virtuous necessitous person from asking admission to the Hospital, readily to grant that assistance. From what has been thus stated, you will see that such are the demands of the poor in this extensive manufacturing population, that the directors of the Town's Hospital are not only under the necessity of supporting a large and expensive establishment within doors, consisting, as at present, of 164 paupers, but also to pay for the maintenance of nearly 60 children at nursing, and, besides, from time to time to make considerable grants of money in aid of the funds of the General Session.

The printed regulations of the Hospital I have already put into your hand, from which you will see that it is enjoined on the managers, by sub-committees and visitors, to take a very minute inspection of the various concerns of the House, and that a number of arduous and important duties necessarily devolve on their servants who are entrusted with its more immediate superintendence; and when you consider that many of the inmates are in a state of dotage, some in a state of idiotism or weak intellect, and that there are others of peculiarly depraved habits, you can easily conceive that much wisdom, patience, and fortitude, are necessary, in order to carry on its government with due effect. The founders of the institution, with a laudable zeal for the interests of religion, by its constitution have made provision for the education of youth, and for the moral and religious superintendence and instruction of all within its walls. Making allowance for many defects in the management, I believe the remark made by the late Dr. Snodgrass, in the statistical account he drew up of the town in 1790, may still be applied with justice to the establishment. That sagacious observer, who had peculiar opportunities of pastoral inspection, thus expresses himself—" The Town's Hospital of

Paisley is conducted on the strictest principles of economy, and with great attention to health, cleanliness, and good order, and has hitherto answered the end of its institution as much perhaps as any of the kind."

Attention has always been paid by the managers, and more immediate overseers of the Hospital, that the people, as far as it could be found practicable, should be employed in some kind of useful industry. The particular kind of work in which they have been employed, has varied, from time to time, according to the state of manufacture carried on in the town. At an early period of the institution, the principal work, for both old and young, was spinning of cotton yarn on the wheel, but since the invention of machinery, this kind of employment has been entirely given up. For a time, when the children were more numerous than they are at present, they were partly employed as piecers in cotton mills, and at tambouring within doors. As you have wished me to be particular in giving you information on this subject, I beg leave to state that the paupers in the Hospital are at present employed in the following manner. A few of the men are employed at the loom; the boys who are in any degree forwarded in their education, are engaged with weavers in the neighbourhood as drawboys; the girls, who are at present few in number, assist in the work of the House; a few of the women are employed in washing and attending the kitchen, some in winding yarn, others in sewing and knitting, but the far greater part are employed in spinning wool and flax, as the most part of both bed and body clothes are manufactured in the house from the raw materials. The produce of labour, exclusive of manufacture carried on in the House, as you will see from the statement of income and expenditure lately circulated, has, for the last year, been £135 16 11.

I believe you will be convinced that considerable attention still continues to be paid to "health, cleanliness, and good order," by those who have the management of the concerns of the institution, when I inform you that the typhus fever, which for some time past has been making such alarming progress in the town and neighbourhood, has not yet made its appearance amongst us. This is indeed the more to be wondered at, when it is considered that there is the highest probability that the people, in making their weekly visits to the houses of their friends and relations, will sometimes approach to the melancholy abodes of poverty, where this disease has

been making its fatal ravages, and where the infection must be supposed as still continuing to lurk. Regular supplies of plain and wholesome food are considered as greatly tending to promote health, and those supplies being afforded to both old and young in the Hospital, it is an undoubted fact, that, making allowance for the infirmities of old age, the inmates are remarkably healthy.

In corroboration of these remarks respecting the healthy state of the people in the Hospital, allow me to add the testimony of Mr. Wilson, the well informed author of the "General View of the Agriculture, &c. of Renfrewshire," published in 1812. After having made the minutest inquiries into the state of the Hospital, he thus observes, "The immediate care and superintendence of children and aged persons admitted, are entrusted to a mistress, with one or two housemaids, and a master, who acts as teacher and clerk, and from whom both old and young have the benefit of moral and religious instruction. A physician or surgeon also regularly attends the House. As a proof of healthiness, the small number of deaths among the children may be here stated. The average of young persons is about sixty, and no death has occurred among them for nearly two years. The total bill of mortality of these children, for ten years, is only nine, and the *nine* who died were of weak constitution. Their diet is oatmeal, made into porridge and bread, butter-milk, barley broth, potatoes, and a proportion of butcher meat, the leading article being oatmeal."

As you wish to be informed respecting the moral character of the inmates, and the vices that seem to prevail most, I beg leave to remark, in connexion with the order and government of the House, that the directors, along with the more immediate superintendents, use their utmost endeavours to follow out the spirit of the printed regulations in checking such irregularities as are apt to prevail in institutions of this kind. Many of the people, before admission have been accustomed to indulge in the intemperate use of spirituous liquors, and it requires all the authority that can be humanely exerted to check the indulgence of this pernicious propensity, which, particularly among the female paupers, produces pilfering, quarrelling, clamour, and innumerable evils. It is pleasant, however, to observe, that a great proportion of the people submit quietly to necessary restraints, and are honest, sober, and exemplary in their deportment.

With respect to the behaviour of the children, they are

like others of the same age, too easily contaminated by the example with which they are surrounded; but by the salutary discipline of correction, instruction, and advice, they are in general rendered submissive and obedient. You know that it is the custom for the master to take the children along with him to church on Sabbath, and that immediately after they return from the afternoon service, they are taken into the school, and are employed in reading the Scriptures or religious tracts, repeating hymns and catechisms, and in other religious exercises, till the time of supper and family worship, when they are brought into the public hall. With the form of the annual examination you are already acquainted, when the ministers of the town, the magistrates and directors, are invited to attend. On this occasion it has been the laudable custom for the ministers to pray with, and to exhort the people, both old and young. This annual examination is not only useful to the teacher and children, as a stimulus to diligence and exertion, but it may be also considered as a seasonable pastoral visitation to the aged, many of whom are bowed down beneath a load of sorrows and infirmities, and stand in need of consolation, and others whose habits are depraved require serious remonstrance and grave rebuke.

The following is the number of people at present in the Hospital:—

| | |
|---|---|
| Men, | 45 |
| Women, | 69 |
| Boys, | 35 |
| Girls, | 15 |
| Total | 164 |

In connexion with these remarks on the management of the Hospital, it may perhaps be proper to mention, that, at an early period of the institution, the directors, along with the magistrates, used strong measures for suppressing mendicity, and for that purpose a public officer, denominated a "*staffsman*," was appointed and paid at the expence of the Hospital, whose business it was to walk constantly about the streets with a long pole in his hand, as a badge of office, for the purpose of expelling from the town all persous who were found publicly begging. I find that the directors of the Hospital retained in office a staffsman so late as 1790, but since that period the appointment of this officer was discontinued, as the scheme

was found to be inefficient. The person appointed, as was to be supposed, was selected from the lowest class of society, and suspicions were commonly entertained, by the inhabitants, that there was often a connivance on the part of the staffsman toward the greater part of the mendicants. For the suppression of public begging I believe the police establishment is invested with considerable powers, but in the present state of society a great deal of vigilance would be necessary to carry the powers, with which it is invested, into efficient operation.

As to the mode of conducting the affairs of the General Session you are in some measure acquainted, from what has fallen under your own observation, during the last seven years. As was observed, in answering the queries of the General Assembly, the ministers and elders of the three parishes constitute what is called the General Session, and whose business principally is to look after the concerns of the poor, and their funds consist of the collections at the church doors, profits arising from the hire of mortcloths, proclamation of banns, legacies and donations. Each of the three ministers act in annual rotation as moderator of the General Session, and call meetings quarterly, or oftener, as they find it necessary, for considering the state of the poor, and distributing to their necessities so far as their funds will allow. The poor who are assisted from the funds of the Session, receive occasional supply, or a stated weekly allowance, as is deemed most expedient. The far greater part of the Session poor are of the former description, and receive, occasionally, small supplies from their respective elders, particularly during the winter season, when cases of extreme distress most frequently occur, and sometimes strangers, who have not obtained parochial residence, are in this way assisted. Many strangers, from Ireland and other places, come to reside in the town, who are employed, as labourers, and who, during the winter season, are out of employment, owing to the inclemency of the weather, and these persons often falling into disease, the elders are applied to, in cases of extreme urgency, to grant relief, which they are under the necessity of immediately affording; and when any of these poor strangers die, the Session is under the necessity of furnishing a coffin, and in this way a considerable expence is unavoidably incurred.* Although the elders bestow the greatest part of

* The expence of coffins used for the resident poor out of the House, has of late been defrayed by the Directors of the Hospital, while the Session continues to pay for coffins to strangers.

occasional charity on the sober and industrious of the resident poor, and are as cautious as possible in selecting the objects of the public bounty, yet it must be acknowledged that they are often obliged, in cases of extreme distress, to administer relief to the most profligate of the community, by granting necessary articles of clothing, provisions, or small sums of money, as shall be considered most prudent. It may be proper further to remark, that though strangers in urgent cases receive occasional assistance, yet a very small proportion of the funds is expended in this way, as such persons are never put on the regular weekly list, and perhaps you will be surprised when I inform you that of the 263 persons on that list, as mentioned in answer to query 13th, there are only six persons who are natives of Ireland, and that some of these have resided in the town upwards of sixty years.

With respect to the general character of the poor on the regular weekly list, allow me, from opportunities of considerable personal knowledge, arising from my official situation, to remark, that they, for the most part, are a decent and respectable class of people, who, in their better days, were sober and industrious, but who, by reason of the frailties of old age, disease, failure in trade, loss of friends, and other adverse circumstances, are now reduced to a state of poverty and dependence. Upon the higher lists are some persons who are blind, some who are afflicted with epilepsy, palsy, and consequent mental imbecility, and some in a state of idiotism. Among those particularly who receive 1s. 6d. weekly, it may be remarked, that there are a number of respectable old men who are prevented by bodily infirmity from earning a subsistence, and therefore stand in need of a little help beyond what their poor relations or friends can afford. That class of paupers who receive 1s. per week and downward, is mostly composed of aged and widowed females who are unable to do much work, and many of them confined to their houses or beds, and depend partly on their relations and neighbours for support; and on this list are a few widows, burdened with children.

Before concluding this letter, I beg leave to inform you, that, in the year 1809, the General Session were induced to make some alterations in the mode of conducting their business, that it might be carried on with more beneficial effect to the interests of the poor. It had been often found that at the meetings of General Session, the number of members present was so great, and all so busily employed in settling their ac-

counts with the treasurer, that little leisure was left for discussing or deliberating on matters connected with the state of the funds, or the general interests of the poor, and it, therefore, occurred to some of the members of Session, that, in order to carry on their business with more order and regularity, it would be expedient to appoint a standing committee, to consist of four elders from each of the three Kirk Sessions; that this Committee should appoint a convener who should act as preses, and meet regularly on the evening of the last Friday of every month, or oftener, as the convener shall find necessary; that the General Session should appoint a steady and active person, with an adequate salary, for the purpose of paying the weekly poor, and who should act as clerk to the standing committee, keeping regular minutes of their proceedings, and presenting his books and accounts monthly for their inspection; that every person put on the weekly list should be with the approbation of a majority of the committee; and that, in general, this committee should deliberate and give their advice to the other elders, in cases of difficulty, respecting giving aid to the occasional poor. This plan, of which I have given you the outlines, was unanimously adopted by a meeting of the General Session in August 1809, and has been acted upon ever since that time; and upon the whole, I believe, has been considered by the Session as beneficial to the funds, and conducive to the interests of the poor.

Upon making proper inquiry into the subject, it must appear evident that the collections at the three churches cannot be adequate to supply the wants of the great body of the poor who are living in houses of their own. In 1782, there were three established churches; and, after a lapse of 36 years, when at least there must have been a third added to the population, there is only the same number; and when it is considered what is the character of that increase of population, it must appear obvious that the Session must obtain aid from some other quarter, in order to enable them to supply the wants of the poor. This assistance, as formerly stated, has been granted for several years past, from the assessment for the Town's Hospital, and there is reason to expect, from the present increasing state of the population, that the Session must still have recourse to the same quarter, from time to time, for partial aid to their limited funds. Many plans have been proposed during the late years of difficulty, respecting the management of the poor; but, when all local circumstances are taken into consideration,

I do not know how the concerns of the poor in Paisley can be managed to more advantage than by the directors of the Hospital and the General Session going hand in hand with harmonious co-operation, as they have hitherto done, and consulting together for the general good. In this way it will be the business of the directors to receive within their walls the destitute and impotent poor, who are proper objects for admission, and to grant assistance to the Session, from time to time, that they may have it in their power to assist poor house-keepers, who rather wish to receive a small pittance from the Session funds, than to go into the Hospital where they must be maintained at a far greater expence.

While the directors of the Hospital are thus usefully employed in the discharge of their official duties, it ought, and I trust ever will be the endeavour of the members of General Session, to manage their funds with the utmost prudence and economy, that as little encroachment as possible may be made on the sum assessed for the support of the Hospital. As the elders feel the pressure of the assessment equally heavy with their fellow-citizens, their interest is equally concerned in using every humane endeavour in order to prevent its increase; but they have the poor always in their eye, and their feelings of Christian sympathy will prompt them to stretch out the hand to the relief of the distressed. Although it must be allowed that some men of keen sensibility, from an amiable excess of constitutional sympathetic feeling, in their distribution of the charitable offerings of the religious community, may, in some instances, overstep the bounds of prudence, and not sufficiently discriminate in selecting the objects of their attention, yet I do not think that this is the leading feature in the character of the eldership. Many of them are not only influenced by principles of Christian benevolence, but are men of cautious policy, and not easily to be imposed upon by the artful and designing, and yet with all their caution, they may be sometimes accused, by those unacquainted with the business of dispensing the public almsgiving, with profusion, when perhaps they are only bestowing the small pittance which is absolutely necessary to keep a wretched fellow-creature from perishing.

Assessments have long been considered by reflecting men in this country as an alarming and growing evil, and calculated to break down that spirit of independence for which the labouring class of the population in Scotland have been long so eminently distinguished; and ought, if possible, to be avoided;

but, when the voluntary offerings at the church doors are found altogether insufficient to supply the wants of the indigent, what can be done in a large and populous manufacturing town, but to resort to what must be considered as an unavoidable evil. This evil, so much to be dreaded, will, however, produce some very important effects. It will open the purses of those who are deficient in their voluntary contributions and of those who do not attend any place of public worship, to supply the wants of their poor brethren; and as the great mass of pauperism, though totally unconnected with religious society, must be supplied through the medium of the General Session, an assessment calls forth from our dissenting brethren their share of contribution towards the support of a numerous class of the poor, who must be supplied from some quarter, or otherwise perish.

It must still, however, be allowed, that when the necessities of the poor have induced the managers of their concerns to have recourse to an assessment, every prudent mean ought to be used to prevent its increase, as it is an acknowledged evil, which ought, if possible, to be avoided. It would indeed be highly desirable and gratifying to the members of General Session, would the times so much improve that they could return to their old way of maintaining their own poor independent of assistance from the Hospital. Would the people who attend the three established churches be persuaded to add one third to their collections for the poor, this could be effected; but after so many distinct statements of the state of the funds have been so lately, from time to time, laid before them, and so many serious appeals made by the ministers to both their interest and feelings, this is scarcely to be expected. On the subject of assessments and of voluntary contributions for the support of the poor, many sensible people have formed very different opinions, and therefore in the proportion of almsgiving they will take their own way.

It appears from a former part of my statement respecting an early period of the Hospital that the Session, for nearly thirty years, assisted that institution by an annual grant of £30, and that now the case is so entirely reversed, that the Hospital has paid to the Session, as above-stated, during the last year, to the amount of £200. In the same way, it is obvious to remark, has the case been reversed in the city of Glasgow. At the original foundation of Glasgow Town's Hospital, the General Session agreed to pay for the support of the institu-

tion the sum of £250, and this allowance was afterwards raised to £300; but it appears from a statement in the lately published "Report for the Directors for the Town's Hospital of Glasgow on the Management of the City Poor," &c. that after the severe effects of the failure of two successive harvests, in 1801, the number of the poor was greatly augmented, and the assessment was more than doubled, and that it was judged expedient by the Magistrates and directors of the Hospital to assist the funds of the Kirk Session, in order that they might be enabled to distribute a little more money in their respective parishes, that it might prevent many recommendations to the Hospital, and ultimately prove a considerable saving to the funds. After due deliberation, it was agreed to advance from the assessment, to the funds of the General Session, to be by them distributed to the particular Sessions, from time to time, in the usual way, the sum of £300. This application of the funds, once introduced, was regularly continued, and the annual allowance to the General Session has gradually increased, till it has amounted, as during the last year, to £1,500. These are strong and rather alarming facts, and show how the increasing demands of the poor, for a considerable time past, have caused a rapid progressive rise in the assessment, and how the distresses of the times have led to important changes in the mode of managing the concerns of the indigent in two places of great manufacturing extent and growing population in the west of Scotland. From what you already know concerning the manner of managing the concerns of the poor in Paisley, you will perhaps consider it worthy of remark how very nearly the way in which the Hospital and General Session of Glasgow correspond with our own in their co-operation for the maintenance of the poor. There are, no doubt, some shades of difference, as the General Session of Glasgow dispenses from a general fund, proportions to the particular Sessions; whereas, in Paisley, the General Session is the alone organ of management, and no particular Session is recognized as at all taking a part in the concerns of the poor. In Glasgow, the Directors of the Hospital not only make large annual grants of money to the General Session, pay for children at nursing, defray the expence of coffins to the poor, and pay for the board of insane and fatuous persons in the Lunatic Asylum, to a considerable extent; but also expend a great proportion of their funds in bestowing weekly pensions in meal

or money, and in dispensing occasional charity to the numerous poor scattered over the city.

The proportion of the expenditure within and without doors of the Hospital Establishments in Glasgow and Paisley, will appear from the following statement taken from lately published documents:—

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Maintenance of people in Glasgow Hospital, during 15 months preceding 30th August 1817,..... £ | 4,508 | 9 | 8½ |
| Grant to Session, out pensioners, nursing children, coffins, &c..... | 10,244 | 14 | 1½ |
| | £14,753 | 3 | 10 |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Maintenance of people in Paisley Hospital, during 12 months preceding 1st June 1818,..... £ | 1,424 | 3 | 6½ |
| To Grant to Session, nursing children, and coffins,..... | 618 | 6 | 0 |
| | £2,042 | 9 | 6½ |

Notwithstanding, however, of these points of difference, the general features of similarity will appear evident from the following quotation from the report above referred to. "Such, "(says the reporter,) is the present practice which has been "adapted to the circumstances of the times. It thus appears "that there are two different boards of direction for the affairs "of the poor, the Sessions and the weekly committee of the "Hospital, possessing separate funds, and exercising independ-"ent powers, but intimately connected with each other; the "Sessions being the sole distributors of the supply under their "own charge, and in most instances, the original jurisdiction, "with respect to the cases ultimately transferred to the Hos-"pital."

Thus have I given you an account of the mode of managing the poor in this town, by the joint operations of the directors of Hospital and General Session, and have extended my narrative and remarks to greater length than I at first intended, and have necessarily gone over some of the same ground as in answering the queries. The subject of the poor laws has of late employed some of the ablest pens in the nation, and it must be allowed to be a subject of difficult and delicate discus-

sion. Political economists have greatly differed in their opinions respecting the best mode of providing for the wants of the poor. As extremes are often found dangerous, it may perhaps be safest to observe moderation, and to hesitate before we begin to act on plausible theories which have not yet received the sanction of experience. Could we fall upon means to supply the wants of the really indigent, and, at the same time, foster, in the breasts of the labouring population, a spirit of industry, frugality, and independence, the great end of Christian charity would be gained. That the legislature of our country, who have for some time past been engaged in important deliberation on the subject of the poor laws, may be directed in their decisions by the wisdom that cometh from above, is the sincere wish of,

Reverend Sir,

Your obedient servant,

THOMAS CRICHTON.

*Paisley, Sept. 1st,* 1818.

## No. XVII.

*Expense of Managing the Session Funds.*

The clerk of St. Mary's, Islington, London, a parish whose population does not exceed 15,000, enjoys a salary of £350 per annum. Each of the governors of the Charity Workhouse, Dublin, enjoys the salary of £500 per annum. What the clerk of St. Mary's, or the governors of the Dublin Charity Workhouse have to do, I cannot precisely say; but the following is but a faint and imperfect sketch of what the *clerk to the General Session of the town of Paisley,* comprising about 25,000 inhabitants, has to do, for the *sum of fifteen pounds a-year:*—

1. He must attend every meeting of the whole body and of the standing committee, regular and occasional, and keep correct minutes of all their transactions, from which he has to give copious extracts, from time to time, to the magistrates, ministers, &c. for the purpose of public intimation.

2. He receives the collections from the three churches weekly, counts them over, and transmits a notification of the amount from each church, to the kirk treasurer.

3. He pays between 2 and 300 pensioners weekly or monthly, as occasion requires, in small sums, varying from 6d. to 3s. each; and he is incessantly exposed to the occasional applications of each, in every case of emergence.

4. He keeps a regular account of all pecuniary transactions for behoof of the poor, to the extent of about £1000 annually; and for losses or mistakes on this sum, he is allowed no consideration.

5. It belongs to him to take a general charge of the whole concerns of the regular poor, and to attend without intermission to every business that comes before the General Session.

It belongs to the treasurer to pay the elders, at an average of about three times a-year, the sums which they severally distribute to the occasional poor, whose names and places of residence, &c. are all duly registered. It also belongs to him, to take a general charge of all the funds under the cognisance of the General Session. The following is the state of accompts between the treasurer and session for the years 1806, 1818:—

# SESSION ACCOUNTS.

*Income and Expenditure of the General Session of Paisley for* 1806.

| Dr. | | | | Cr. | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| To amount of ordinary Collections, | 398 | 15 | 4 | By Cash paid occasional poor at three quarterly meetings, | 197 | 5 | 0 |
| To amount of extraordinary Collection in Jan. | 109 | 4 | 11 | By Cash paid to poor on weekly list, | 506 | 16 | 10 |
| To amount of extraordinary Collections at four Sacraments, | 184 | 14 | 1 | By Cash paid for Cloth and Shoes, | 72 | 11 | 0 |
| Interest on money lent, | 13 | 10 | 0 | Sundry occasional poor, officers' salaries, teaching children, &c. &c. | 51 | 17 | 2 |
| Money lent uplifted, | 53 | 16 | 0 | Cash for elements at two Sacraments, | 39 | 11 | 6 |
| Donation from William Rae Wilson, Esq | 21 | 0 | 0 | Law Expences, | 13 | 13 | 0 |
| Cash for hire of Mortcloths, | 20 | 14 | 2 | | | | |
| Do. for Proclamations, | 62 | 10 | 0 | | | | |
| Do. advanced by Treasurer, | 17 | 10 | 0 | | | | |
| £ | 881 | 14 | 6 | £ | 881 | 14 | 6 |

## Paisley,

Dr. *The General Session, in Account with* Mr. William Stow, *Treasurer.* Cr.

From the 1st January 1818, to 1st January 1819.

| | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| To Collections, | 912 | 11 | 6 | By Balance for Cash in hand, | | 2 | 10¼ |
| " Proclamations, | 74 | 19 | | " Occasional Poor, | 300 | 5 | 2¾ |
| " Mortcloths, | 30 | 8 | | " Weekly do. | 754 | 14 | 2 |
| " Seat, rent of, in church, | 2 | 8 | | " Clothing, | 55 | 2 | |
| " Cash, for Poor belonging to other Parishes, | 6 | 19 | 1½ | " Shoes, | 23 | 12 | |
| " Gælic Chapel, | 21 | | | " Coffins, | 43 | | |
| " Fines, | 1 | 11 | | " Grave Digging, | 9 | 3 | 6 |
| " Greenlees' Mortification | 10 | | | " Salary to Clerk, | 15 | | |
| " Legacies, | 59 | 8 | 3 | " Gratuity to do. for extra services, | 6 | | |
| " Town Hospital, | 200 | | | " Church Officers, | 12 | 12 | |
| " Borrowed Money, | 70 | | | " Teaching, | 3 | 16 | |
| | | | | " Law Expences, | 8 | | 1 |
| | | | | " Incidents, | 7 | 17 | 4 |
| | | | | " Communion Elements, | 36 | 15 | 6 |
| | | | | " Greenlees' Annuitants, | 10 | | |
| | | | | " Borrowed Money, | 101 | 1 | 7 |
| | | | | " Balance in Treasurer's hands, | 2 | 2 | 7½ |
| £. | 1389 | 4 | 10½ | £. | 1389 | 4 | 10½ |

# No. XVIII.

*Of the Hospitals of Paisley, Edinburgh and Glasgow, with remarks on Hospitals in general.*

THE following is a statement of the number of people, old and young, in the Hospital of Paisley for the last sixty-one years. During the first years of the Institution, the register was not regularly kept:—

| Year. | Number of People. | Year. | Number of People | Year. | Number of People. | Year. | Number of People. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1758 | 44 | 1774 | 52 | 1790 | 107 | 1806 | 119 |
| 1759 | 46 | 75 | 41 | 91 | 112 | 7 | 118 |
| 60 | 39 | 76 | 52 | 92 | 104 | 8 | 126 |
| 61 | 32 | 77 | 49 | 93 | 105 | 9 | 135 |
| 62 | 45 | 78 | 61 | 94 | 140 | 10 | 134 |
| 63 | 30 | 79 | 71 | 95 | 134 | 11 | 144 |
| 64 | 32 | 80 | 57 | 96 | 127 | 12 | 149 |
| 65 | 27 | 81 | 63 | 97 | 117 | 13 | 151 |
| 66 | 27 | 82 | 66 | 98 | 116 | 14 | 136 |
| 67 | 46 | 83 | 72 | 99 | 104 | 15 | 134 |
| 68 | 35 | 84 | 78 | 1800 | 124 | 16 | 132 |
| 69 | 31 | 85 | 82 | 1 | 139 | 17 | 155 |
| 70 | 39 | 86 | 98 | 2 | 111 | 18 | 164 |
| 71 | 37 | 87 | 98 | 3 | 115 | | |
| 72 | 47 | 88 | 111 | 4 | 130 | | |
| 73 | 44 | 89 | 115 | 5 | 120 | | |

Average of the first ten years, from 1758—1768, 36 4-5ths.

Average of the last ten years, from 1808—1818, 143 2-5ths.

Thus the number is nearly quadrupled; but so is the population of the town.

*Amount of Expenditure of the Town's Hospital of Paisley, during the following years.*

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| From May | 1752, to November, first 6 months, | | £41 | 15 5¾ |
| | 1753, | | 117 | 5 7 |
| | 1755, | | 160 | 17 1 |
| | 1759, | | 200 | 19 2½ |
| | 1764, | | 183 | 16 4½ |
| | 1769, | | 235 | 14 3½ |
| | 1773, | | 313 | 6 7½ |
| | 1778, | | 464 | 13 9 |
| | 1789, | | 580 | 16 2 |
| | 1795, | | 688 | 4 0 |
| | 1800, | | 1,133 | 19 9 |
| | 1810, Expense of people in Hospital, | £1,349 19 11½ | | |
| | Nursing list, | 220 15 8 | | |
| | Granted to General Session, | 50 0 0 | | |
| | | | £1,620 | 15 7½ |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1817, | Expense of people in Hospital, | £1,424 | 3 | 6½ | |
| | Nursing list, - - | 391 | 1 | 0 | |
| | Granted to General Session, - - | 200 | 0 | 0 | |
| | Coffins, - - - | 27 | 5 | 0 | |
| | | | | | £2,042 9 6½ |

Payment of Nursing list commenced 1802,
Grants to General Session, - - - 1809,
Payments for coffins used out of Hospital 1817,

## *Edinburgh Charity Workhouse.*

Progressive view of

| Receipts from Assessment. | | | | Number of Inmates and Out Pensioners. | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1812, ..... | £1,598 | 3 | 4 | 1805, ..... | 500 |
| 13, ..... | 1,778 | 13 | 11 | 6, ..... | 712 |
| 14, ..... | 3,078 | 15 | 2 | 7, ..... | 782 |
| 15, ..... | 3,807 | 19 | 7 | 8, ..... | 1,000 |
| 16, ..... | 4,812 | 19 | 8 | 9, ..... | 1,194 |
| 17, ..... | 4,965 | 4 | 4 | 10, ..... | 1,340 |
| | | | | 11, ..... | 1,284 |
| | | | | 12, ..... | 1,402 |
| | | | | 13, ..... | 1,501 |
| | | | | 14, ..... | 1,740 |
| | | | | 15, ..... | 1,752 |
| | | | | 16, ..... | 1,775 |
| | | | | 17, ..... | 1,881 |

## *Edinburgh West Kirk Charity Workhouse.*

Progressive number and cost of Paupers.*

| Year. | Number. | Cost. | Year. | Number. | Cost. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1808, - - | 246 - - | £7 6 7 | 1813, - | 375 - | £9 4 6¾ |
| 9, - - | 270 - - | 6 18 5 | 14, - | 380 - | 7 11 3½ |
| 10, - - | 290 - - | 8 4 9¾ | 15, - | 357 - | 6 16 2½ |
| 11, - - | 278 - - | 7 19 6 | 16, - | 453 - | (Not estimated.) |
| 12, - - | 290 - - | 7 2 3½ | | | |

## *Glasgow Town's Hospital.*

| Out Pensioners.† | | Cost.‡ | | | Inmates. | Cost. | | | Average of each. | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1808, | 882 | £3,563 | 11 | 2 | 427 | £3,493 | 16 | 2 | £8 | 3 | 8½ |
| 9, | 818 | 3,995 | 15 | 10 | 412 | 3,430 | 5 | 0 | 8 | 4 | 11 |
| 10, | 932 | 4,063 | 10 | 11 | 420 | 3,361 | 11 | 1 | 8 | 2 | 0 |
| 11, | 969 | 4,560 | 4 | 2 | 441 | 3,476 | 5 | 8 | 7 | 18 | 0 |
| 12, | 1,393 | 6,249 | 1 | 11 | 470 | 4,083 | 4 | 11 | 8 | 13 | 9 |
| 13, | 1,329 | 8,077 | 4 | 5 | 482 | 4,643 | 14 | 11 | 9 | 12 | 8 |
| 14, | 1,409 | 7,306 | 5 | 11 | 430 | 4,259 | 18 | 9 | 9 | 18 | 1½ |
| 15, | 1,208 | 6,872 | 18 | 2 | 436 | 4,009 | 17 | 9 | 9 | 3 | 11 |
| 16, | 1,201 | 5,780 | 15 | 5 | 426 | 3,903 | 18 | 0 | 9 | 3 | 3½ |
| 17, | 1,079 | 10,187 | 4 | 2 | 497 | 4,508 | 9 | 8½ | 9 | 1 | 5 |

* Including the *inmates*, old and young only. † Including children at Nurse.
‡ Under the sums stated in this column, are included also, a number of mis-

*Regulations of the Town's Hospital of Paisley.*

In the year 1813, a new and improved edition of the regulations of this hospital was published by the directors, and any person wishing a copy may be supplied on application to the master or to any of the directors. The following is an abridged view of the leading articles:—

With respect to the *mode of admission*—each applicant must state his case in writing—his state and claims must be certified by the elder of the quarter where he lives—each applicant must be inspected and minutely examined, previous to admission—and every one admitted, shall deliver all his effects with a regular inventory to the master for behoof of the hospital.

With respect to the *conduct of the poor* in the house.—Every inmate is required to attend at meals in the public hall, and to be always clean and decent. None are to be absent from family worship morning and evening, nor from church on Sabbath, except on account of bad health. All who are able to work, shall do so under the direction of the managers.—No persons shall carry provisions out of the house—nor be themselves out of the house later than eight o'clock in the evening.—No spirituous or intoxicating liquors are allowed to be brought by the paupers into the house. The greatest propriety in manners and conversation is strictly enforced, and complaints by the paupers can only be made to the managers.

With regard to the *managers*, who are fifteen in number—they meet in the house on the first Tuesday of every month, for admitting persons properly recommended, and for managing the other business of the house—they appoint from themselves *four* small sub-committees, for attending to the various departments of the business of the institution—they also divide themselves into three committees of five, who meet in the hospital once every week, to attend to the internal management, and the state and conduct of the inmates. One member of this sub-committee visits the house at least *twice* every week, and enters his observations in a book kept for the purpose—the treasurer's accounts are audited quarterly by one of the sub-committees, and annually by the whole body, after which,

cellaneous charges, for apprenticing children, for medicines, coffins, payments to General Session, board in Lunatic Asylum, payments for industrious poor, &c. as fully stated in the "Report of the management of the poor in Glasgow," from which the above has been abridged.

they are submitted to the town council, and afterwards published.

With respect to the *master*.—It is his office to keep a register of the names, age, and designation of the inmates, and of the time of their death or leaving the house—to teach the children to read, write, and cast accounts—to perform Divine service in the hall, every morning and evening, and to ask a blessing and return thanks at meals—to attend the children to and from church on Sabbath, and to sit with them there, so as to have them all in view—to catechise and instruct both old and young every Sunday after service, and as often during the week as convenient—to keep an account of all the provisions, clothes, &c. purchased for the house, and of all the profits arising from labour or otherways—to keep the books of receipt and expenditure, which are open at all times to the managers—to warn regularly all meetings of committees, and to officiate as clerk; and on him, along with the mistress, devolves the whole internal government of the institution.

The duty of the *mistress* is—to hire servants—to keep the house clean and in the best order—to superintend the preparation and distribution of the victuals—to visit daily all the apartments, and see that they are in order—to attend to the sick with care and tenderness—to furnish work suited to the capacity of those under her charge, and pay particular attention to the training of the girls—to keep a particular accompt of all the provisions bought, and of the petty charges of the house, and of the quantity of each sort of provisions used weekly—to make out an exact inventory annually—and to do her endeavour to preserve peace, good order, and regularity, and to promote the interests of the institution.

*Observations.*

From the experience of the last eight years, I have no hesitation in testifying, that, the favourable character which was given to the Paisley Hospital in 1791, and subsequently by Mr. Wilson in 1812, still belongs to it; and that although all institutions subject to variable management, must exhibit, at different times, different degrees of excellence, still it has throughout maintained the same reputation for those substantial qualites which ought to belong to every well regulated hospital for the poor. Were a new erection proposed, indeed,

many improvements in the construction might be advantageously adopted; but taking the house as it is, I believe that in no instance have the real purposes of a poor asylum been more effectually answered.

An able and learned man, the late Dr. John M'Farlan, one of the ministers of Canongate, Edinburgh, published, in 1782, a book entitled, "Enquiries concerning the Poor;" in which he gives his opinion as decidedly unfavourable to hospitals in general. In all the features of his system, I cordially acquiesce; but as hospitals *do* exist, and as in all probability they *will* exist, it is gratifying when we find, that in particular instances, they escape the hazard to which all such institutions are liable, and gain the precise object which they are designed to accomplish. With the view of ascertaining this in the present instance, I have no hesitation in subjecting the Town's Hospital of Paisley to a strict scrutiny on the terms of this valuable writer.

1. One objection advanced by Dr. M'Farlan against poor houses is, that they give encouragement to applicants, by holding out a *visible* establishment for relief, and that thus the number of dependents commonly increases in a ratio not at all proportioned to the increase of inhabitants, or the changes of the times. There is a great deal of force in the objection; and there are few establishments of the kind which have escaped the dangerous whirlpool. It gives me pleasure to report, that the Paisley Hospital has established a claim to exemption from the general tendency. The table of the number of inmates above exhibited,* affords decisive evidence of this, and requires only to be surveyed by the considerate reader.

2. Another objection to poor houses is, that they can seldom be restricted to the precise objects they are intended for, namely, destitute and orphan children—aged persons—widows without friends—persons of weak intellect, and such like. There is always a fear lest the doors of such asylums should be opened indiscriminately to all kinds of poor, and thus incalculable evils superinduced upon the system. Now I hesitate not to say, that the Paisley Hospital has from its commencement avoided this danger, and has been restricted exclusively to its legitimate objects. As a proof of this, the following analysis of the present state of its dependents may be taken as a fair illustration:—

* p. 374.

Sept. 7th, 1818, Number of destitute and orphan children at present on the establishment,
- Infants nursed out of the house, 50
- Children from the age of 3 to 12 in the house, ..... 50

Of the adults in the house, in all 114, there are

- Persons who are weak in intellect, and otherwise unfit to gain a livelihood for themselves, ..... 34
- Persons who labour under incurable bodily diseases, or general imbecility of constitution, ..... 80

} 114

Of the whole there are

Above the age of 80 ——— 14
——— 70 ——— 38
——— 60 ——— 23
——— 50 and under 59 of whom 29 are lunatics or weak in mind.

Among the adult inmates, there are about 40 who are able to do a little, and are employed in some kind of work.

As the hospital and session go hand in hand in every movement of importance, each understands its own peculiar province; and thus are escaped the evils which must ensue, where the session gives up the systematic management of the poor, and devolves it exclusively on the managers of the Poors House. The Session of Paisley would not ask, and the Hospital of Paisley would not grant admittance to any who do not come strictly within the line specially marked out by the statutes.

3. Another objection to such establishments is, the unavoidable expence incurred by them, much greater, it is ascertained, than would be incurred by the maintenance of the poor, by means of small pensions at their own houses. This is an objection to which poor houses, *as such*, must plead liable; and I am not disposed to claim for the Hospital of Paisley a full exemption. At the same time, the statements of expenditure given above, may go to prove, that this establishment has all along been conducted, and is conducted on the strictest principles of economy. As an additional practical proof of this, it deserves to be recorded, that in 1776, when the annual expense of each inmate in the Hospital of Paisley was only about £4,*

* It is a curious fact, that for several years after this, the average expense of each inmate, instead of increasing, was considerably diminished, so that in 1792, the cost of each, deducting work done in the house, was not much above £3 annually. The reason is, that while the number of inmates increased, the expense of management and maintenance remained nearly the same.

the following statement of English Hospitals was published by order of Parliament:—*

| | £ | s. | d. |
|---|---|---|---|
| St. Andrew, Holborn, cost of each inmate, | 13 | 15 | 7 |
| Bethnal Green, | 12 | 9 | 1 |
| Christ Church, | 10 | 2 | 1 |
| St. Clement's Danes, | 10 | 7 | 9 |
| St. George, Hanover Square, | 12 | 12 | 1 |
| St. Giles, | 8 | 7 | 2 |
| Greenwich, East | 21 | 13 | 7 |
| St. James, Westminster, | 6 | 5 | 10 |
| St. John, Hackney, | 10 | 14 | 7 |
| Launceston and St. Mary, | 7 | 12 | 5 |
| St. Luke, Middlesex, | 14 | 18 | 5 |
| St. Margaret and St. John Westminster, | 8 | 14 | 2 |
| St. Martin in the field, | 10 | 10 | 3 |
| St Mary le Bone, Middlesex, | 13 | 0 | 8 |
| St. Mary, Whitechapel, | 7 | 10 | 2 |
| St. Nicholas, Deptford, | 19 | 7 | 10 |
| St. Paul, Shadwell, | 10 | 16 | 11 |
| St. Saviour, Southwark, | 10 | 11 | 5 |
| St Sepulchre, Middlesex, | 8 | 17 | 8 |
| Bosmere and Claydon, | 9 | 10 | 0 |
| Nacton, | 8 | 6 | 0 |

In the above twenty-one cases, nothing is more remarkable than the *striking variety* in point of expense, from £21 the highest; to £6 the lowest—a decisive proof that much depends on the mode of management. I am not able to ascertain the precise state of the case *now;* but this I can safely say, that the poor house of Paisley is at this moment conducted with as much economy and as much judgement as it ever was since its establishment. With regard to that part of expense which comes under the head of *management* or *superintendence*, I have to state—that the whole establishment of this hospital is managed by *three individuals*, whose salaries are very moderate. The whole concern is gratuitously superintended by the directors, through the medium of weekly visiting committees, in terms of the regulations.

4. Another objection to the system of poor houses is, that the provision made for the poor in them, is generally *better* than they are properly entitled to. This is a most substantia

* Report on Gilbert's Bill, 1775.

objection in the case of many *English* Hospitals, in which we find a most sumptuous and absolutely ridiculous provision held out to the recipients;* but in the case of most *Scotch* establishments of the kind, and most certainly in the case of the Hospital of Paisley, the evil has been wholly avoided. The provision made, is indeed wholesome and plentiful, but it is as plain as it ought to be.

5. A fifth objection to the system of poor houses is, that they are generally receptacles of idleness, as little or no work is commonly done in them. It is obvious that this objection necessarily arises out of the negligence of the managers in giving admittance to *all* the poor, however distinguished by age or otherways, In those hospitals where the legitimate object is rigidly adhered to, there is little room for the objection. In the Hospital of Paisley, from the character, age, and circumstances of the inmates, it is not expected that much work can be done. But making all proper allowances, I have reason to believe, that the inmates in general are as industrious and active as they can be expected in their peculiar circumstances to be.† At the same time it ought to be remarked, that there never was a more grievous mistake in the calculations of political economy, than that involved in the expectation, that work houses would contribute in any

* The Hospital at Nacton, in England, exhibited in the year 1782, according to Dr. M. the following *bill of fare:*

" Sunday, Breakfast, bread and cheese, butter and milk.
Dinner, beef, dumpling, and pudding—mutton for the sick.
Supper, bread and cheese, and butter and milk every day.
Monday, Breakfast, beef broth.
Dinner, baked suet pudding.
Tuesday, Breakfast, milk broth in winter, milk in summer.
Dinner, beef and dumplings.
Wednesday, Breakfast, beef broth.
Dinner, rice and milk, or broth.
Thursday, Breakfast, milk in summer, milk broth in winter.
Dinner, beef and dumplings.
Friday and Saturday, Breakfast, meat broth.
Dinner, bread and butter."

Inquiry, p. 119.

† Let it be particularly recollected, that *all* the adult paupers who are admitted into the house are considered as in a state of impotence. There is no such thing among us as admitting persons who are able to earn subsistence; and when impostors, as sometimes happens, gain admission, they are soon dismissed. The nursing list also is strictly scrutinized from time to time, and such alterations made in the rate of weekly allowance as is thought proper by the directors.

material degree to their own support. Experience has clearly proved that the expectation was groundless.

6. The last objection which has been made to poor houses is, that they tend to increase the number of poor in the places where they are established. There is a great deal of truth in this; although it is of importance to recollect, that the force of it depends very much on the mode in which poor houses are conducted. In the case before us, I have some reason to think, that the hospital has had no effect of the kind referred to, but rather the contrary. It is a fact, that reluctance to go into the house is general, as it always has been among the poor; and in very few instances, indeed, has their admittance been the result of a *purely voluntary* application. They will struggle with the smallest pittance, rather than be immured within the walls of the poor house; and this is a spirit which we rather wish to encourage. I believe, that were there no poor house, many would eagerly demand permanent pensions from the session, who, as the case stands, continue to do upon a small occasional allowance. The same honourable feeling which at present prevents them from going into the Hospital, would not prevent them from asking a permanent aliment out of it. This affords another strong proof of the advantages resulting from the separate jurisdiction of hospital and session; while it recommends their harmonious co-operation.

With regard to the general question, regarding the advantages and disadvantages of public hospitals, my opinion may be thus stated. Could the poor be all kept in their own houses, it would certainly in many respects be preferable to the mode of collecting so many people together in an hospital. At the same time, there are particular cases in which such institutions, on as limited a scale as possible, seem to be requisite. Amid the crowded population of large cities and towns, there are always to be found considerable numbers of destitute objects, who cannot easily be accommodated by the overseers of the poor; particularly in cases of mental imbecility. Instead of allowing such persons to be exposed to public view on the streets, it is perhaps better, to have them concealed in the recesses of a poor house. There are also to be found in places of crowded population, many of the aged poor who are of such dissipated habits, that they cannot resist the temptation of squandering away their little weekly pittance on spirit-

uous liquors. Such persons too, may be better in an hospital, where they will be supplied with plain and wholesome food, and kept under necessary restraints. With the "principles" of the new Hospital of Glasgow, I most cordially coincide, and there cannot be a doubt, that the arrangements proposed for dividing the different classes of paupers into separate compartments, will secure against many existing evils, and obtain a most beneficent result. *

It has been argued in favour of a work house or poors' hospital, that it affords a *test* by which we may discriminate between those who must be supplied by charity, and those who may, if they are willing, support themselves by their own labour; as it is supposed, that nothing but *necessity* will persuade a man to go to the work house with his family, or even alone, and that those who would otherways be extremely clamorous for weekly supplies, find their own subsistence, when they are convinced, that they must either do so or go into the work house. There is some truth in this, when applied to the case of a large and overgrown parish, such, for example, as that of St. Cuthbert's, Edinburgh; but the truth is, there ought to be no such parishes; or if there are, they ought to be sub-divided into such small departments, as to allow of a close and vigorous and impartial inspection of each by the eldership of the church. Besides, even in the case of a large parish, it does not appear, that the plan of sending *all* the poor to a work house, is a good one. There are many who need assistance, and who are most proper objects of parochial charity, and yet do not come under the description of persons proper to be immured in a work house. I would put the simple question to every candid judge; would it be proper to send to the work house, a poor labourer, who, with a large family, has struggled for subsistence in the honourable spirit of independence; but who, by the vicissitudes of Providence, has been reduced to the necessity of applying for parochial charity? or would it not be much wiser to grant, in this case, a small pension weekly or occasionally, as a help to the industrious applicant? It may be true, that of thirty who will apply for a pension, not three would come into the work-house; but instead of being a ground of lamentation, this is rather a cause

* Since the publication of the Glasgow Report, I understand that it is the design of the Directors gradually to reduce the general system of the Poor house establishment within as narrow limits as possible. In this they will certainly do right.

of thankfulness, for it indicates, that the state of things is not so bad with us as it is in England, where the repugnance to a work-house has in so many instances ceased to influence, as it ought, the minds of a dastardly population. The system of *out pensions*, indeed, is by no means to be approved of; but much less is the system which would throw the whole mass of pauperism on the charities of a work-house. Let this last be appropriated *rigidly* to those who are cast on the parish as paupers, and who, from impotence of body or of mind, and the want of friends, are incapable of attending to themselves. The other, and the more numerous class of persons who are reduced to straits, and who require aid, either statedly or occasionally, ought to remain as the peculiar objects of that beneficence which flows through the accredited organ of the eldership. It is a mistake to suppose, that the *former alone*, are the legitimate objects of parochial relief. It is an established maxim, that to prevent evil, is better than to *remove* it. Now, if by a little stated or occasional aid, the well disposed and industrious poor are enabled to struggle through difficulties, and thus prevented from falling into the ranks of *absolute pauperism*, the end of all charity is much more effectually gained, than by refusing to extend to them such a helping hand, and thus shutting them out from the sympathies of beneficence, except on the unwelcome condition of their surrendering their character of independence, by enrolling themselves among the inmates of a poor house.

From an impartial review of both sides of the question, it may be fairly inferred, that except in the case of very populous towns or parishes, where the number of *absolutely impotent poor* must be very great, and where it is extremely difficult to know the circumstances of the indigent and to distinguish them, it is better, cheaper, and in all respects most for the interest of the parish to maintain the poor in their own houses. If the circumstances of the poor are known as they ought to be, and if the managers are at sufficient pains to attend to their several characters and situations, all the unnecessary expence of a large establishment is at once cut off; and the supplies are, taking one with another, much less than the average expence of individuals in a work-house. Besides, a work-house takes away from the parish whatever the poor could have done for themselves, for the work done in the house, will not, at an average, produce twenty shillings yearly for each individual. In addition to this, the case of England war-

rants us to say, that as the prejudices against a residence in the house are diminished by time, the number received into it will every day become greater; and the defects in the management will always be so considerable, in spite of every precaution, as it would require great advantages indeed to compensate. In the populous parish of Inveresk, comprehending the Town of Musselburgh, a work-house was established many years ago; and after a trial of sufficient length, all parties there came to be satisfied, that the work-house had done them much hurt, and was quite inexpedient in their situation. They were unanimous in agreeing to sell the house, and return to the former practice of providing for the poor in their own houses.*

About twenty years ago, there was attached to the Charity Work-house of the West Kirk Parish of Edinburgh, a large out pension list which required about £250, for its annual support. The governors at that time resolved, if possible, to get rid of this burden, by making an offer to receive the whole number of out pensioners into the house. Had the offer been accepted by all, there would not have been accommodation for above one half. But the fact turned out to be, that of the whole number, only *nine* persons accepted the offer, and thus the establishment was at once cleared of the burden of supporting the rest. In adopting this arrangement, the managers of the house knew very well what the result would be; and they calculated on the presumption, that few comparatively would accept of the offer that was made to them. But it does by no means follow from the result experienced, that all of those who declined accepting the offer of a place in the alms house, were, *on that account*, proved not to be suitable objects of parochial relief. They might be suitable objects, or they might not. Various causes may concur to induce an industrious man and his family to accept of a small weekly pension, while the same causes might by no means operate in leading to ask admittance into a poor house. A well behaved and high spirited Scotchman, with a wife and family, will rather struggle to the last extremity, than go with his household to the parish work-house. Indeed, it would be very strange and very lamentable, had the result in the present instance been different from what it was. Had the whole body of out-pensioners with their families, (for the offer comprehended the families of the pensioners) accepted readily the proposal that was made to them, what

* For a more full account of the Musselburgh Hospital, see next Article.

a melancholy view would have been exhibited of the state of Scotland! No, let us be thankful, that although the spirit of independence has of late years been rapidly diminishing, it has not yet been *so* diminished, as to permit the stated or occasional recipients of parochial bounty to enter, without reluctance, within the walls of a poor house. The aversion to become inmates of a poor house, is a favourable symptom among us; and we would deprecate extremely that short-sighted policy which would doom the victims of poverty, either to overcome this aversion, or to perish for want.

## No. XIX.

*Case of the Hospital or Poor-house of Musselburgh.*

The following fatcs respecting the rise and fall of the poor-house at Musselburgh, for the poor of the parish of Inveresk, are deserving of serious consideration:—

*Account of Inveresk, by the Rev. Dr. Alexander Carlyle—Statistical Account, Vol.* xvi. *p.* 40.

Soon after the present incumbent was settled in this parish, the heritors and other principal inhabitants, with the laudable design of providing better for their poor, especially aged persons and children, erected and furnished a poor's house, or work-house, at very considerable expence, which was ready for the reception of the poor at Whitsunday 1752. The best rules of management that could be devised or collected were ordained, and the house went on for many years, to the comfort of the poor, and the satisfaction of all concerned. An additional expence, as was expected, besides the building, was incurred for the maintenance of the poor, and an assessment was laid on the heritors that year for the first time. The object then being not the most parsimonious plan of provision for the poor, but their comfortable subsistence, and the preservation of the young among them, from idleness and profligacy: The arguments arising from *the danger*, by means of

such institutions, of *erazing the sense of shame* of dependence on the poor's funds from the minds of the indigent, or of *blunting the feelings of compassion* in the hearts of their relations, did not occur; or if they had, would have been considered as the suggestions of *avarice*, in no respect applicable to the state of this parish. The assessment was continued; and as the towns were populous, it was thought no more than justice that they should contribute their share. They accordingly were assessed of a certain sum by the annual meeting of heritors and elders, which was proportioned among them by a large committee of the inhabitants appointed by the meeting. By this means those who frequented any of the meeting-houses, or absented altogether from public worship, were made to contribute their share, as well as those who regularly attended the Established Church, and paid both by their collections and by assessment.

At the end of 30 years, many difficulties having occurred from the backwardness of some to pay their assessments, and a constant intrigue among the inhabitants about furnishing necessaries, or employing the poor, the most disinterested among the managers became heartily tired of the business. Add to this, that the house and furniture came now to need a thorough repair, which could not have cost less than £300 sterling; all which, together with an opinion, that the poor could be maintained cheaper in their own houses than in the poor's house, induced the heritors, and all concerned, after two years deliberation, to sell the house, and add the price to the poor's funds, which was accordingly done in the year 1781."

To the above instance of the dissolution of an Hospital or Poor house, we may add the case of Aberdeen, in which there was a poor house, which after mature deliberation, has been discontinued, and the plan of weekly or monthly pensions adopted as preferable. Indeed, the general sense of Scotland is unfavourable to such establishments. I am happy to see that the eyes of our English brethren are now beginning to open to the vices of the system. Mr. Coke has set them a noble example in pulling down the work-house of his parish in Norfolk, as a public nuisance, and substituting the plan of out-pensions.—Mr. Gilbert was no doubt influenced by the purest intentions in his Bill for the endowment of Hospitals, but he proceeded on mistaken principles; and it has been for the interest of the

country that the provisions of his Bill have not been very extensively adopted.

## No. XX.

*Authentic account of a late scrutiny of the Poor in Glasgow and in Paisley; with Remarks.*

In 1782, at the suggestion of the late venerable Dr. Porteous, one of the Ministers of Glasgow, and according to a plan proposed and conducted by him, there was made an accurate scrutiny into the state of the regular poor on the Roll of the General Session of Glasgow; and tables were printed, containing the names of all the enrolled paupers, their age, the number of their children below ten years of age, their earnings per week, the sessional and meal allowances from the hospital, the nursing wages, and the aid from trades' boxes and other societies. It does not appear that the investigation was repeated till last summer, although frequently proposed, and allowed by all concerned to be imperiously necessary. On the 10th of June last, a Committee who had been previously appointed by the General Session, entered on the proposed investigation, and for several weeks were constantly engaged in examining the paupers, who were summoned personally before them, and recording their age, residence, means of subsistence, title to parochial Charity in this City, and other circumstances. The principal facts exhibited in the report of the Committee are embodied in the following table:—

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Number of cases on the rolls of the eight sessions, many of them having families, | | | 1,354 |
| Number of persons actually present with the Committee | | | 1,182 |
| The remaining 172 being unable or unwilling to attend. | | | |
| Sum allocated monthly for distribution to the above, | £187 | 10 | 0 |
| Average to each pauper monthly, | 0 | 2 | 9¼ |
| Average distribution by the particular Sessions, minimum, | 0 | 2 | 2 |
| maximum, | 0 | 3 | 4 |

The difference being caused by the allocation having been made thirty-six years ago, during which period the number and state of the poor in each parish must have varied greatly.

Of the 1,182 actually examined, there were,

| Males 146, of whom, | | Females 1,036, of whom, | |
|---|---|---|---|
| under 40 years of age, | 6 | under 40 years of age, | 41 |
| 40 and under 50, | 8 | 40 and under 50, | 105 |
| 50 and under 60, | 25 | 50 and under 60, | 282 |
| 60 and under 70, | 46 | 60 and under 70, | 388 |
| 70 and upwards, | 61 | 70 and upwards, | 220 |
| | 146 | | 1,036 |

Of the Females, there were found to be

22 who had been deserted by their husbands.
78 who have children under ten years of age.
344 who have children above ten years of age, mostly grown up.
825 widows.
128 who have not been married.

Of the whole number, 1182,

967 say they belong to the Established Church.
186 say they are Protestant Dissenters.
29 say they are Roman Catholics.
305 are natives of the City of Glasgow.
787 are natives of other parishes in Scotland.
90 are natives of Ireland.

The Report was highly creditable to the accuracy and impartial and laborious diligence of the eldership. It is necessary to observe, that the sessions profess to give aid only to the poor in their own houses, while they can work a little for their own support, or may receive somewhat from their kindred or wealthier neighbours. When any of them is totally destitute or friendless, he or she is sent to the Town's Hospital. It is further necessary to mention, that the number 1,354, is by no means the whole number of paupers who receive aid in their own houses from the public funds of the city. It is not always safe to trust the thoughtless and intemperate with money; it is more prudent to procure oatmeal to them from the hospital. Others, especially if they have children, prefer meal to money; and these obtain it on being duly recommended from the same quarter. Some of the citizens have exclaimed against the indiscriminate profusion of the sessions, and others against their extreme parsimony. The scrutiny now made and recorded, is calculated to prove the great labour performed

gratuitously by the members of the several sessions, and the prudence and fidelity with which they distribute the public funds to the poor. The funds which they distribute are, the collections which are made on Sabbath at the doors of the parish churches, the interest of certain inconsiderable sums mortified to the poor, and a portion only of the fees paid for the proclamation of banns and registration of children.

A similar scrutiny of the out-pensioners of the hospital was made about the same time, but it has not been published. We may, however, remark, that each pensioner was visited at his own house, and his state minutely inquired into. Such scrutiny will be, from time to time, made both by the Directors of the hospital, and by the Inspector lately appointed.

---

With regard to the regular poor on the roll of the General Session of Paisley, a particular and formal scrutiny becomes less necessary, inasmuch as every individual is personally known, both to the elder of the quarter where they reside, and by whom they are recommended;—and to the clerk of General Session, by whom they are paid, and who has an opportunity of seeing the greater part of them, at least every month. At the same time, the session, deeply sensible of the importance of strict investigation with regard to the poor, and alive to the evils which the rapid increase of the number of regular pensioners must bring along with it, have been occasionally in the habit of appointing a small active and intelligent committee, by whom a minute and impartial scrutiny of the roll is made, and the result reported, from time to time, to the session.* The general results of such occasional scrutiny are as follows:—

1. A few pensioners have been reduced in their ratio of weekly allowance.

2. Others had their allowances considerably increased.

3. A few have been removed from the regular pension list, and recommended as more suitable objects of admission into the hospital.

4. A few have been removed from the *regular* list, and transferred to the lists of their respective elders, as *occasional* recipients.

* Indeed, the standing committee may be viewed as a permanent board for this special purpose.

5. In one or two cases it may have been discovered, that paupers have got on the list, who, on inquiry, were found to have legitimate claims on other parishes, to which, of course, they were transferred.

6. In those instances where the character of the pauper was doubtful, some precautionary means were used to prevent a misapplication of the public money.

7. In scarcely a single instance have any individuals been found on the list, who were not, on one ground or another, suitable objects of compassion and sympathy.

Independent of the occasional review which is taken by the session themselves, or by a committee of their number, it appeared expedient that a more minute and full investigation of the regular pensioners, nearly on the plan adopted by the Glasgow Committee, should be made at once for the satisfaction of the public, and the credit of the eldership. Accordingly, on the first of October last, I had the satisfaction of a personal interview with by far the greater number of the monthly pensioners, when, with the able assistance of Mr. Crichton, clerk to General Session, I was enabled to ascertain the results as stated in the following table, besides a variety of other particulars which cannot so easily be reduced to a tabular form; but which shall be incorporated in the general report:—

Number of pensioners on weekly list of session, October 1st, 1818—259.

| Males, 61, of whom, | | Females, 198, of whom, | |
|---|---|---|---|
| under 40 years of age, | 7 | under 40 years of age, | 11 |
| 40 and under 50, | — | 40 and under 50, | 14 |
| 50 and under 60, | 4 | 50 and under 60, | 20 |
| 60 and under 70, | 15 | 60 and under 70, | 58 |
| 70 and upwards, | 35 | 70 and upwards, | 95 |
| | 61 | | 198 |

Of the Females, there were found to be

8 who are married, and who live with their husbands.
130 who are widows.
60 who have never been married.
10 who have children under ten years of age.
111 who have children above ten, a large proportion grown up.

Of the whole number, 259.

288 belong to the Established Church.
21 are Protestant Dissenters.

259 of whom there are, in full communion with their respective congregations,..... 205

Of the whole number, 98 were born in Paisley.
152 are natives of other parts of Scotland.
9 are natives of Ireland, but have resided in Paisley, mostly from early life.

In p. 343, will be found the state of the weekly distribution in November, 1817. The following table exhibits the present weekly distribution, October 1818.

| | | | £. | s. | d. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Pensioner | at 8s per week, | | 8 | 0 |
| 1 | do. | at 2s. 6d. | | 2 | 6 |
| 11 | do. | at 2s. | 1 | 2 | 0 |
| 26 | do. | at 1s. 6d. | 1 | 19 | 0 |
| 7 | do. | at 1s. 3d. | | 8 | 9 |
| 186 | do. | at 1s. | 9 | 6 | 0 |
| 17 | do. | at 9d. | | 12 | 9 |
| 10 | do. | at 6d. | | 5 | 0 |
| 259 | | Amount of weekly distribution, | £13 | 19 | 0 |

The average of each, 1s. 1d. as stated formerly.

Besides a scrutiny of the session poor, it appeared desirable that a similar inquiry should be made into the circumstances of the several inmates in the hospital. Accordingly, such an inquiry was made, and the following is the result:—

Number of inmates in the house at this date, 20th October, 1818.—165.
——— adults—115—of whom

Males 46, of whom,

under 40 years of age, 9
40 and under 50, 2
50 and under 60, 6
60 and under 70, 10
70 and upwards, 19

46 of whom,

There are weavers, - 24
labourers, - 7
wrights, - - 2

Females 69, of whom,

under 40 years of age, 11
40 and under 50, 4
50 and under 60, 8
60 and under 70, 20
70 and upwards, 26

69 of whom,

There are widows, - - 36
Never married, the greater number weak in mind, 26

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Schoolmaster, | 1 | Married, and with their | |
| Constable, - | 1 | husbands in the house, | 7 |

Of the whole number, 115,

65 are natives of Paisley.
43 ———————— other parts of Scotland, mostly the Highlands.
11 ———————— Ireland, but resided long in Paisley.

74 say they belong to the Established Church of Scotland.
10 say they are Protestant Dissenters.
2 are Roman Catholics.

86 the rest (29) being weak in mind or in a state of idiotism, and, therefore, not considered as belonging to any church.

Of the above 86, there are in regular and full communion with their respective churches, - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - 27
Not in communion, - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - 59

Of the whole number, 2 are blind.

In addition to the scrutiny of the regular session poor, and the inmates of the hospital, a survey was made of the *occasional* poor, as registered in the treasurer's books, for the years 1811, 1812, 1817. For various reasons, which it is unnecessary to state, the same fulness and accuracy of information could not be obtained with regard to this department of the objects of charity. As the elders in their respective quarters are allowed a certain degree of discretionary power, with regard to the occasional recipients, their several characters and circumstances do not come directly under the review of the general body; and the same feeling which permits them to disclose their several cases to the elders of their respective quarters, might probably incline them to shrink from a formal and public investigation. The following comprise the general results of the observations I was enabled to make:—

Average number of poor who received occasional aid in the years 1811, —12, about ..... 250
Average number of poor who received occasional aid in the year 1817, about ..... 300
Of the whole number,

Three-fourths, at least, are widows or aged females, who have never been married. A very considerable proportion are strangers, chiefly from the Highlands, but who have been long resident.

A few of the occasional recipients may also be classed among the regular poor; as, besides the weekly pensions, the elders are allowed to give a small *additional* aid, from time to time, as circumstances render necessary.

Although occasional aid may be given at any time, there are *three* periods in particular, when it is common for the elders to give it—at Martinmas and Whitsunday, when the rents are to be paid; and at the new year, when coals and clothes, &c. are peculiarly necessary.

Among the occasional poor, there are all the varieties of character that we might expect to find in a large and diversified class of human beings.

The aid given is either in money or in clothes, or provisions, or otherways, according to the character of the party, or the circumstances of the case.

*General Report, with observations on the whole.*

1. It is worthy of remark, that the greater proportion of those who are regular pensioners on the session rolls or in the hospital, both in Glasgow and in Paisley, belong to that class, who, by reason of the infirmities of advanced age, must at all times be considered as the fair objects of Christian sympathy. Out of 1182 examined at Glasgow, 717 are marked as upwards of sixty years of age. Out of 259, the number investigated at Paisley, 203 were found to be above sixty. Of 115 in the hospital, 75 belong to the same class. Of those classed as under 50 years of age, we may safely say, with regard to all the returns, that ninetenths of them are persons who labour under mental derangement or whose bodily imbecility does not permit of active exertion, or who are defective in one or more of the bodily senses, or who have been left to struggle with the burden of a dependent family. The remaining tenth part may belong to that class who have reduced themselves to premature disease and poverty, by vice or otherways.

2. *The excess of females above males* is another fact worthy of notice. In Glasgow, of 1182, not fewer than 1036 are women. In Paisley, of 259, not fewer than 198 are women. Of 115 adults in the Paisley Hospital, 69 are females.* The most probable causes of this excess appear to be the following:—The deficiency in the means of female occupation, together with the

* See also case of Barony, p. 171.—Gorbals, p. 176.

slender pittance allowed for it—the want of provident habit among female servants, and their propensity to frequent changes of place—the want of *friendly societies*, and other such means of encouraging provident habits among women—the lamentable number of instances of desertion by husbands, from fickleness, infidelity, or licentiousness—the long prevalence of war in Europe—and the probability, that, from the nature of their several occupations, a greater number of women than of men should be spared to the period of old age, and consequently called to struggle with its attendant infirmities. The serious consideration of these causes, may, to the reflecting mind, suggest a variety of expedients by which the evils of female indigence may be alleviated or removed.

3. We may further notice, *the great influx of strangers from other parishes who have become poor*. In Glasgow, out of 1182, only 305 are natives of the city. In Paisley, out of 374, the amount of session pensioners and of adults in the Hospital, no less than 215 are strangers. These facts shew two things—*first*, that the increase of pauperism of late years has been caused not so much by circumstances connected with the internal state of the country, as by the influx of strangers—dissolute in character—poor when they come among us—and seldom able to rise above the level of their state. The *other* is, that as large towns and cities are most liable to incursions from strangers, it is in them that we may expect to find the most extensive prevalence of poverty; and of consequence, that to apply to a large mass of floating population, the scale of a small and secluded country parish, would be extremely unphilosophical. I must be allowed to remark, however, that in the case of Paisley, these observations apply much more strongly to the *occasional* poor, a large proportion of whom are not natives of the place, and are frequently improvident and immoral. To this class belong the greater part of the *Irish* paupers—those only being admitted to permanent aid who have resided long in the place. This seems to be the case also in Glasgow, for of the whole number of regular poor, only 90 are natives of Ireland; and of these, 69 reside within the limits of three parishes; the south—the south-west—and the middle. Those who are familiar with the geography of the city, can easily assign the reason. We also have our *foci* of filth, and wretchedness, and poverty; and to the existence and operation of such receptacles must be ascribed much of that indigence and disease which have been spreading their ravages so widely among us.

4. I beg that particular attention may be paid to the strongly *marked characteristic difference* between the *pensioners on the session list* and those *who are inmates in the hospital.* Of 259 session pensioners, not fewer than 205 are communicants, and in the habit of regular attendance on the ordinances of the gospel, so far as their health will allow. With many of these I am more or less acquainted, and can safely say, that, while all are regular and orderly, a large proportion are eminent for piety and moral worth. By the vicissitudes of Providence they have been reduced to the sad necessity of accepting a small pension in aid of their feeble exertions. Of 115 adult inmates in the hospital, only 27 are marked as communicants, and although a number of these are distinguished for piety and good morals, still there are not a few who have little beyond the name of Christian;—and of the remaining classes, there are few, comparatively, whose character will stand the test of a rigid experiment. The truth is, had they been of industrious, frugal, and sober habits, many who are inmates might have remained in the houses of their friends, and struggled through with a small weekly pension. It may farther be remarked, that there are inmates in the hospital, who, upon the whole, behave very well; but who, if allowed to go frequently into the streets and mingle with society, could not resist those temptations to intemperance and vice which might assail them. It is one of the incidental advantages of a poor house, when under proper regulation, that it keeps within the bounds of moral restraint, those who, if left to themselves, might become, in the worst sense, a burden on society. On this very account, however, such a receptacle becomes an object of aversion and dread to the more virtuous part of the community; and they will rather struggle to the last, than become co-inmates with the vicious and abandoned.

5. From a particular review of the scrutiny, and more especially that part of it which refers to the hospital, I feel warranted in affirming, that, in by far the greater number of instances on record, *habits of intemperance* have been the direct or indirect causes of poverty. In the case of the greater part of the pensioners on the ordinary roll, both in Glasgow and Paisley, indigence has no doubt been the result of unforeseen casualties in the course of Providence; but with respect to the inmates in the hospital in both places, it is an established fact, that drunkenness has been in a great majority of instances, the precursor of wretchedness and want. Even in multiplied instances where drunkenness has not led to absolute pauperism,

it, nevertheless, keeps its victims in a state very nearly allied to it; and infallibly precipitates *their families* into it. These facts of which illustrations innumerable may be adduced both in Scotland and England, suggest many important reflections, both to the ministers of religion, and to the civil magistracy of the country.

6. With regard to the regular pensioners on the roll, inquiry was made as to their *means of support*, independent of the small allowance from the public. As the same individuals are aided in different ways, it was impossible to state particularly, the exact proportion which may be ascribed to each source of supply. The following may be considered as coming pretty near the general result. A great proportion are notwithstanding the infirmities of age and disease, still able to do a little for their own support: and amongst all our recipients of parochial charity, there has never yet appeared any thing approaching to an abject spirit of dependence on the small pittance of the session.—A few of the pensioners are members of friendly societies, or receive from the trades' boxes; but we generally have found, that, in proportion as their years and infirmities increase, the resources of the former are diminished; as the benefit societies, owing to a defect in their constitution, almost entirely fail in fulfilling the promises they held out to their aged members.—A number of the pensioners, particularly the females, receive occasional aid from the Female Benevolent Society, or other institutions of the same kind A very considerable proportion of the pensioners are aided to a great extent by those relations or members of their families, who still reside with them, and who feel the strong tie of filial affection. We have had not a few pleasing instances of a virtuous daughter or grand-daughter, lightening, by her kind attentions and her industry, the frailties and sorrows of a venerable parent or relative. With regard to *grown up children* of the poor, who have settled in the world, and who have families of their own, we do not find the same disposition to return in kind the tenderness and assiduity of parental love. In many instances where the families are large, and the circumstances very moderate, much cannot be expected; and in those cases where the children are prosperous in the world, and removed to some distance, it is painful to observe the indifference and the cold contempt which they shew to their poor relations.—With regard to *all* the pensioners, it may be safely affirmed, that their chief dependence is, on the kindness of their neighbours, and

the liberality of Christian families. It is a pleasing trait in the character of the lower orders in Scotland, that they are kind to one another; and it is important to record, that all the charity which is dispensed from an established source, would do little to alleviate the pressure of human woe, were it not aided powerfully by the sympathies and the substantial kindnesses of private beneficence.

7. It ought never to be forgotten as a general principle, adopted and hitherto acted on by all the sessions in Scotland, that they never hold out to the poor the prospect of a *full* maintenance, independent of their own exertions, and the charities of their friends. The funds at their disposal have never been so ample as to allow of such a thing, and although they were, the exhibition of such a promise would be disastrous in the extreme. The pittance of the session is merely a *help*, and though it must be regulated by the circumstances of each case, it ought never to assume the character of a full and independent maintenance. In the country districts of Scotland, it seldom happens, that an indigent person is left entirely destitute of all resources, except the bounty of the parish fund. In such a place as this, and in all large communities, where there is a constant influx of strangers, the case of *absolute destitution* must occasionally occur; and then it is, that the benefit of an hospital is felt—as affording a safe asylum for those who, through age and poverty, are thrown entirely dependent on the public charity. At the same time it must be allowed, that in such large parishes as the Barony of Glasgow, and the Abbey of Paisley, the same end is pretty successfully gained, by the practice of removing the aged, and entirely destitute, from their own houses, to become inmates or lodgers in the houses of others, at the charge of the public funds. The board is commonly small, and yet it proves a help both to the poor householder, and to his still poorer inmate.

8. The great number of inmates of the hospital, who are either deranged or weak in mind, is worthy of notice. Of these classes at present in the house, there are few, if any, who are suitable subjects for a lunatic asylum, as they are almost all literally idiots, or weak both in mind and body; some of them from their earlier years. Certainly the *cells* of an hospital are not proper receptacles for deranged persons in the *earlier stages* of their disease, and so long as any rational hope of recovery remains; but as there will be always a large proportion of unfortunate individuals in the situation of *incurables*, it seems necessary, that a place of shelter should be provided for such,

that they may be suitably attended to, and preserved from public notice.

9. It is proper to recollect, that the sum total of regular and occasional poor on the session roll, does not include those children and other dependents, who may directly or indirectly share in the public charity, through the medium of the pensioners. At the same time it is necessary to state, that nothing can be more erroneous in its principle and consequences, than the plan adopted by some political economists, of allowing an average of *three* individuals besides the heads, to the family of each pensioner on a parochial roll. The fact is, that in the great majority of instances, the paupers are widows without children, or persons advanced in years, whose children are removed from them, or unmarried men and women who have no dependents. As a proof of this, the case of Greenock in 1811, as stated by Mr. Wilson in his Survey, may be adduced. In this instance, the number of regular pensioners stood 477; and the whole number of dependents on them was only 326. If the ratio of three to each family had been adopted, the sum total of dependents would have been 1431. To the 259 regular poor on the roll of session of Paisley, I suppose there may belong 100 or 150 more, who may be considered as related to them in such a way as to share along with them the public charity.

10. It is obvious to remark, that many of the occasional poor would speedily become regular and permanent; and many of the poor would be in absolute want: were it not for the aid granted to both by means of *private contributions* among friends and neighbours. It is pleasing to notice the readiness with which the case of a poor family, labouring under occasional distress, is met and taken up by the active charity of the humane, who happen to reside near them. To the method of private contribution indeed, there are a variety of strong objections; but still we must approve of the *principle* which prompts to it, and we must acknowledge its happy effects in preventing many from becoming a permanent burden on the poors funds.

11. We may remark in general, that without a patient investigation into the state of the poor, and an actual visitation of them in their own houses, no man can have a correct idea of the indigence, and the wretchedness which reign around him: And farther we may observe, that no man who has not made the requisite inquiry, can form an accurate conception of the patience, the industry, and the mutual kindness by which many of the poor are happily characterised. Virtue, in its sublimest

form, is sometimes found in the midst of rags and penury: and let us esteem and respect it though thus meanly associated.

12. Lastly, the scrutiny of the poor in Glasgow and Paisley strongly suggests, to every distributor of public bounty, the importance of discrimination among the objects of charity.

In the Dissertation on the eldership, (p. 21.) I have noticed the importance and the duty of discriminating the objects of public charity, and of classifying them according to their characters, circumstances, and claims. The following distinctions, in addition to those then marked, ought to be practically recognised.

1. We ought to discriminate among the poor, according to the *causes* whence their poverty is found to proceed. There is a class of persons whose indigence is the result of disease, unavoidable misfortune, and the infirmities of widowhood and age. There is a second class, whose poverty is superinduced by sudden changes in trade, by unexpected stagnations, by the transition from war to peace, and from peace to war, and by the casualties attendant on every condition of human life. There is a third class, whose poverty is effected by habitual sloth, by gross intemperance, by luxurious indulgence, and by other habits of a vicious nature. There is a fourth class, whose poverty may be safely ascribed to circumstances of a local, partial, and temporary description, too various to be reduced to any one head, and yet so important as to require careful and deliberate scrutiny.

2. We ought to discriminate among the objects of charity, according to the *moral* character and *conduct* which they at present exhibit. The circumstances which precipitated them into indigence may be nearly the same, and yet the character and conduct which they exhibit may be widely different. One may be humble; another may be proud. One may be sober; another may be a drunkard. One may be frugal in husbanding his little pittance; another may be lavish and extravagant in his demands. One may be regular and quiet in his disposition and habits; another may be turbulent and unruly. A skilful observer of the poor will mark these features of character.

3. We ought to discriminate according to the *religious connexion* of the paupers. A great proportion of the poor are persons who do not belong, and never did belong to any Christian Society. Of those who are nominally adherents of a particular church or sect, few comparatively, can be recognised as regular and steady members. A great number are irregular in their attendance in the house of God, and hence, the disorderly and

vicious character which they acquire. It would certainly be desirable, that a broad line of demarcation should be drawn between the vicious and abandoned, and those whose lives have been distinguished by a character becoming their Christian profession; and that in distributing alms, due attention should be paid to such a vitally important distinction. It is not fair, that the vicious and profligate children of idleness and intemperance should be placed on the same level, as to allowance, with the reputable members of society and of the church, who, by the vicissitudes of human life, have been, in old age, unexpectedly reduced from a competence to want.

4. There is an obvious distinction to be made between the three great classes of indigent persons, who are the objects of law and of municipal regulation—the *poor householders* who never appeared before the public either as beggars or as paupers, and who, nevertheless, feel themselves unable to provide comfortably for themselves and children; the *professed paupers*, who are either the aged, or the diseased, or orphans, or the children of such as cannot or will not maintain them at home; and lastly, those sturdy beggars, and rogues, and vagrants, whose poverty is the result of vice or of idleness. It is certain, that these several classes require to be treated in very different modes; the first class constituting the objects of that delicate, and cautious, and kindly aid, by the exercise of which, casual want may be relieved, while the spirit of independence is cherished—the third class, composing the fair and legitimate objects of prosecution and punishment—and the second composing by far the greater majority of the ordinary recipients of the public bounty. Plain and tangible as is the distinction between the classes, it has been, particularly in England, lamentably overlooked. All the objects of charity are thrown together into one common mass of degradation and wretchedness; and hence one half, at least, of the mischiefs which have resulted from the poor laws as practically administered.

5. An important distinction ought to be recognised particularly among the inmates of the poor house, between the *idly disposed* and the *industrious*. One grand objection to the greater number of such institutions is, that they are literally *charity* work houses, and that the degree of work done is commonly proportioned, not so much to the *ability*, as to the *willingness* of the party. There is no doubt, a small *bonus* given; but this is of no great importance in a situation, where, independent of this, every want is liberally supplied; and it is

not to be expected that persons who would not work *for their own absolute support*, will work for the interests of the public. If some due discrimination were observed, and rewards and punishments administered according to circumstances, good effects might be expected to follow.

Indeed, the great want in all assessed parishes, both English and Scotch, is a register of the poor conducted on one uniform plan; reviewed, from time to time, periodically; and practically adopted as the basis and rule of distribution.

## No. XXII.

### *State and Management of the Poor in the Town and Parish of Montrose, Angus.*

Population, — — — about 8,000

*Funds for the Poor.*

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Weekly Collections, average of last ten years, — — | £179 | 10 | 3¾ |
| Contributions by Heritors, Merchants, and others, average of last ten years, — — — — — — | 220 | 0 | 0 |
| General Session funds, arising from lands, seat-rents, gifts at funerals, church-yard dues, pensioners' effects, penalties, interest of money, donations, &c. average of ten years, — — — — — — | 261 | 17 | 0 |
| Total amount of funds, — — | £661 | 7 | 3¾ |

*No of Poor.*

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Regular Pensioners on the Monthly list, — | 42 Males | In all 301. |
| Do. do. — | 229 Females | |
| Orphan and destitute children, almost entirely supported by the Session, — — — | 30 | |
| Occasional Poor, not ascertained. | | |

*Rate of allowance.*

| | |
|---|---|
| Highest rate to regular Pensioners, — — — | 4s. ℔ Month. |
| Lowest do. do. do. — — — — | 1s. ℔ Month. |
| Average allowance to orphans and destitute children, — — — — | from 1s. 6d. to 2s. 6d. ℔ Week. |
| Occasional allowances differ according to the circumstances of each case. | |

## No. XXI.

# Plan of Register for the Poor.

The following plan of a Parochial Register for the poor, is constructed partly on Dr. Porteous' scheme in 1782, and partly on a schedule published in 1786, in a collection of pamphlets, on the state of the poor; with a few modifications and additions. The names, &c. &c. it is obvious, are wholly fictitious.

| Number. | Names. | Age | Occupation, &c. | Native of | Period of residence in the place. | Religious Denominations. | Communicants or not. | Total number of each family. | Average weekly amount of gains by work of the whole family. | Average amount of gains from other sources. | Sources of such additional gains. | Parish allowance per week. | Occasional allowance from parochial funds. January. | February. | March. | April. | May. | June. | July. | September. | October. | November. | December. | Observations. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Widow Boyd, | 65 | Winding. | Paisley. | From infancy. | Establish-ed. | — | 1 | 2s. | 6d. | Private Charity. | 1s. | | | | | | | | | | | | *A poor widow, was industrious when in health.* |
| 2 | Alexander Auld, } Jean Young, } Thomas, aged 8 Jean, — 7 Alexander, — 5 Mary, — 3 Rosan, infant. | 48 59 | Labourer. | do. | do. | do. | — | 7 | 7s. | — | —— —— | —— | 1s. | | 1s. 6d. | | | | | | | | 1s. | *A labourer; weak and sickly, and not very industrious.* |
| 3 | Wm. Buchanan, Sarah, aged 10 William, — 8 Agnes, — 4 | 60 | Tailor. | Highlands. | 30 Years. | Gaelic Chapel. | c. | 4 | 6s. | 2s. | Friendly Societies. | —— | | | | | 5s. | | | | | 4s. | | *A widower, left with a young family: weakly, but of good character, oldest girl an idiot.* |
| 4 | Widow Erskine, Helen, aged 25 | 72 | Spinning. | Paisley. | From infancy. | Establish-ed. | c. | 2 | 5s. | — | —— —— | 1s. | | | | | | | | | | 3s. | | *An old widow and daughter, both industrious and pious.* |
| 5 | John Morrison, | 75 | Weaver. | Ireland. | 10 Years. | Catholic. | — | 1 | 4s. | — | —— —— | 1s. | | | | | 3s. | | | | | | | *A poor old man, quite deaf.* |
| 6 | Widow Nicolson, William, aged 8 Mary, — 6 Jean, — 4 | 55 | Winding. | Irvine. | 25 Years. | E. Relief. | c. | 4 | 7s. | 1s. | Relief Session. | —— | | 1s. | 2s. | | | | | | | | | *A well behaved woman, and does what she can, but in poor health, and subject to occasional derangement.* |
| 7 | Jean Murray, Margaret Murray, Janet Murray, | 70 67 65 | Do. | Paisley. | From infancy. | Est. | c. | 3 | 8s. | 1s. | A small property. | 6d. each. | | | | | | | | | | | | *Three sisters, excellent women, but in poor health.* |
| 8 | Mary Muir, | 55 | —— | Glasgow. | 8 Years. | —— | — | 1 | 2s. 6d. | — | —— —— | —— | 1s. | | 1s. | 6d. | | 2s. | | | | | 3s. | *A worthless character, but in deep poverty from her own misconduct.* |

### *Explanatory Observations.*

1. It is intended that a schedule on the above plan, or one similar should be kept, not only by the Treasurer or Clerk, but by *each Elder*, for the poor of his quarter; and thus secure uniformity of operation.

2. It may be difficult sometimes to obtain satisfactory information on some of the above points, such, for example, as the amount of weekly gains, &c. and yet it is obvious that such information is highly desirable, and ought by every practicable means to be sought. In most cases, a general idea approaching to the truth may, with due pains, be obtained.

3. With respect to the *regular* poor, perhaps the plan of each Elder paying monthly those in his district, is preferable to that of one individual paying the whole in a body; and yet on *both* plans it seems desirable that each Elder's register should comprehend the regular as well as occasional poor, since both classes come under his notice, and must be reported of by him from time to time.

4. It is obvious that a register on the above plan is equally applicable to the case of parishes assessed and unassessed; as it may be kept by an *overseer* as well as by an elder.

5. The keeping of such a register, while it would furnish valuable information on the subject of the poor, would not add much to the labours of the elder or overseer, because they are understood, even on the present plan, to make inquiry as to most of the circumstances noticed; and it is no difficult matter to *mark down* the result of such inquiries.

*Supplementary Remarks.*

1. This parish consists of a populous sea-port town, with about 6,000 inhabitants; and an extensive landward district, with a population of perhaps 2,000 more. There is only one parish church, calculated to hold 2,500. The charge is collegiate.

2. The weekly collections at this church, which is the only established place of worship in the parish, together with the other funds noted above, all of which, are of a fluctuating nature, constitute the only fixed provision for the poor, who, in such a populous sea-port town, must at all times be numerous. There is no work-house in the parish, and there has never been an assessment. It has of late been proposed, through dire necessity; but its evils have been dreaded by all, and to ward them off, recourse has been had to *extraordinary quarterly collections.* It is clearly the *interest*, as well as the *duty*, of the landed proprietors and others, to render these collections as productive as possible.

3. Besides the established funds, charities are distributed statedly or occasionally, by the Town Council from mortifications in their hands—by the Trades', Seamen's, and other Friendly Societies—by the different Dissenting bodies—by the Mason Lodges—by the Destitute Sick—and Female Benevolent Societies, to a greater or less extent, either for the support of decayed members, or to the poor in general. The amount cannot be ascertained; but it must be considerable, and no doubt aids powerfully the established fund.—The congregation of the English chapel distribute annually about £50 to poor families; and the Independent or Congregational church lately set a good example, by sending a collection to the Kirk-session. The former of these churches is attended by many wealthy parishioners, who ought to recollect, that their attendance there does by no means exempt them from the duty of attending to the poor of the parish. *Private subscriptions* in cases of occasional distress are frequently made, and with great liberality—their average may be from £10 to £40.

4. The whole expense of managing the established poor funds is just £26 8 8 Litigation is hardly known.

5. The whole established funds are placed under the charge of the Ministers and Kirk-session, the members of which, have a discretionary power of giving occasionally as they see

cause, while the case of *regular* pensioners is determined by the whole body.

6. In addition to the small pittance given to the regular pensioners, and which, it is obvious could not even preserve life; the resources on which they depend are—their own exertion—the aid of friends—benevolent societies—and public begging. The allowance of the Session does not exceed, at an average, *Twenty Shillings* yearly to each! What will our English brethren say to this?

7. The great number of *widows* and *orphans* dependent on the Session, is occasioned by the casualties to which those engaged in a sea-faring life must ever be exposed.

8. Besides the regular and occasional pensioners noticed above, the Session pay for the board of several paupers in the Lunatic Asylum at the rate of £10 per annum.

9. In the year 1816-17, the sum raised in this parish, in aid of the industrious poor, amounted to between £890 and £950. Part of it was given in wages to men employed in making roads, &c. Part, in clothing children; but by far the greatest part in monthly allowances to the necessitous. Including parochial and industrious poor, assistance was given to about 900 *firesides*, at which there were from one to ten persons. The whole was distributed under the direction of Committees.

10. In this parish there is no want of the means of common or religious education for the poor. A Lancasterian school was lately established, under the designation of "*David White's Free School;*" a sum having been mortified for its support by that benevolent individual, who is yet alive, and who enjoys the rare felicity of witnessing the results of his considerate benevolence. His *birth-day* is kept, by an annual public examination of *two hundred* pupils, commonly attendant on the school. To this institution the Kirk-session also contributed; and they also pay a salary to a teacher in the country part of the parish. Besides a Sabbath school, forming, by the deed of the founder, part of the free school institution, there are several Sabbath schools supported by Christians of different denominations, and attended by about 600 scholars.

A few years ago, there was published by an intelligent and benevolent Lady in the neighbourhood, "An Address to the Inhabitants of Montrose," in which, an accurate view is given of the Sessional management, and of the claims of the estab-

lished fund, to vigorous support. I shall quote the following passage, in which the reasons for the neglect of weekly collections are stated and exposed, and the duty of attending to the poor, strongly urged.

"The collections come far short of what they might, and ought to be, by the *thoughtlessness* of the great body of the people, who *do* frequent the church. This *collection* was formerly called the *offering*. The word has unfortunately fallen into disuse. It was the *offering* of the *worshipper* to *God*, for the relief of his or her poorer brethren. From *thoughtlessness*, they who would hardly offer a half-penny (sunk as it is in value within even a few years) to an individual pauper, are not ashamed to offer a halfpenny to the whole collective body of the poor! From *thoughtlessness*, they who were accustomed to throw a halfpenny *into the plate*, when children, continue the same contribution when grown up to men or women. Some appearing in the dress of ladies and gentlemen, give only what every servant maid can afford to give; nay, many pass by, on the other side, giving *nothing!* The very poorest of the people, if not needing charity themselves, can spare a halfpenny in *a week* to their still poorer brethren! can *abstain* from so much in tobacco, in snuff, in tea, or in spirits; and such *self denial* would not be overlooked by their *Father*, who seeth all things, and valueth the *widow's mite* above the gift of opulence or ostentation. If every one would *give* according to their circumstances, the *offering* might be doubled, yea quadrupled, and then no poor pensioner's small pittance need be diminished, or withdrawn; but might receive a comfortable addition. If every maid-servant may afford a halfpenny every Lord's day, (and who will say they *cannot*, who sees the finery in which they appear on that day?) every *unmarried* man-servant, journeyman, or labourer, whose earnings are double, or triple to theirs, can afford a penny at *the least*. I particularly insist on these classes because they are numerous; and because the probability is, that they may one day require supply from this very fund when it will be a great consolation to them to reflect—that in the day of their prosperity, they acquired a just title to it, by their liberality.

"There is not in the island a more open hearted, generous set of men, than sailors, but none more apt to be *thoughtless*. I observe with pleasure, a good old custom revived of late, viz. shipmasters returning thanks for a safe return from a long and perilous voyage, and doubtless this oblation of *praise*

is accompanied by *one of alms.* I hope the honest tars do not think it sufficient that the *captain* returns thanks and gives alms, they should consider how seldom they have an opportunity of contributing to the *weekly offering;* and that upon their return from a long voyage, should they throw a shilling into the plate, they do not in fact give more than he who contributes his halfpenny every Sabbath day. From some old registers we learn, that it was the custom about a century ago, among the mariners belonging to this port, for the captain to act the part of an elder, by making collection for the poor every Sunday during the voyage. By this mode, gratitude for signal deliverances, would probably stimulate them to a warmer manifestation of it by alms, than might take place when weeks and months had weakened the impressions.

" When animadverting upon different classes in society, those *young women* must not escape who spend all their money, and the greatest part of their time and industry, in adorning their persons, and procuring a stile of dress and appearance above their station in life. If they can labour so cheerfully and successfully in the service of *vanity*, they certainly could, and *ought*, to apply some part of their industry in the service of *charity*, and I will be bold to say, it is as much the duty of young women to sacrifice a *cap*, a *ribbon*, or a *bonnet*, to the *necessitous*, as it is for the labourer to sacrifice his *quid* of tobacco; and that one assuming the appearance of a lady, should be ashamed to pass the *plate* like a servant, or like a pauper. Nor can I think that a higher class of young women are excusable, who look upon giving charity as the business of their fathers and mothers, and *thoughtlessly* content themselves with throwing in a penny from *custom*. These " lilies of the field," who need not " to toil or spin" are among those who can afford to be *most liberal* in proportion to what they possess. Having no house to keep, no family-claims or wishes to consult, but applying their income, or allowance, to their own sole use and pleasure, they can retrench at will, and no one say " what doest thou." Such think themselves employed and busy, when drawing, playing, or making pretty nick-nacks; when, in fact, they are only *diverting themselves.* Innocently indeed. But is this enough? If each would attach herself to some poor neighbour, enter into her concerns, and contribute to her comforts, by the *work of her hands*, she would feel a more real satisfaction: assuredly one works with double relish, when some interesting and laudable *end* is there-

by to be accomplished, instead of merely passing, or killing of time.

"There is yet another class in Montrose who should contribute to the funds of the Kirk-session, snd with a liberality beyond what is expected from others apparently in the same rank in life, and that is, the *master manufacturers*. They are the *occasion* of more demands made upon these funds than perhaps any other class whatever; the encouragements they offer at times, drawing many families into the town who, by diseases to which sedentary employments subject people, by sudden reduction of wages, and total want of employment at other times, are reduced to poverty. These gentlemen should consider, that being enriched by the labours of these their temporary servants, they should proportionally contribute to their support in distress. It is in vain to reply, "we have paid them for their work." We all pay our servants the wages agreed upon, but would be liable to censure, if, when they become unserviceable, we turned them over to a public charity, (and to a charity to which we did not contribute) and more especially if we had brought them from a distance. I mean not to insinuate that the master manufacturers are bound to maintain all those who work for them, any more than others are bound to maintain all those who have been their servants, but they should give to the public fund with a liberality proportioned to the burden they must be conscious that they *eventually*, though not intentionally, bring upon it. Let it always be remembered, that throughout this address, I speak of *public charity only*. I accuse no man, or set of men, of not giving private alms; and make no doubt of the gentlemen in question giving private assistance to those whom they employ; but I must be excused for thinking that several of them, not being of the established church, contribute nothing to its funds; and this—as is the case with many others—from not having *duly considered* the matter." *

* Address to the Inhabitants of Montrose, by a Parishioner.—Second edition: 1814.

## No. XXIII.

*On the Relief granted to the Poor, by Dissenting Congregations.*

GLASGOW, JANUARY 27, 1819.

AT a Meeting of Dissenting Ministers, belonging to this City and its immense Vicinity, held this day, the following Resolutions were unanimously agreed to, and ordered to be printed with their names annexed:—

1. That the Poor of Dissenting Congregations have an equal claim upon the funds of the Town's Hospital (or other similar funds) with the Poor belonging to the Establishment, as these funds are raised by an assessment upon the Community in general;—and since a part of the funds of the Kirk Sessions in this City has been hitherto derived from the Assessment, as long as this shall continue to be the case, and as far as these funds are supplied from any other common sources, the Dissenting Poor have an obvious right, in equity, to a corresponding proportion also of them.

2. That they consider it to be a Christian duty to provide, according to their ability, for the comfort of their poor brethren in church-fellowship,—have been in the practice of doing so extensively:—and to convince the public that the reports which have been circulated to the contrary are unfounded, they shall subjoin a statement of the amount of the sums they expend annually, taking the average of the last three years, and also of the number of the poor who are supported by themselves exclusively.

3. That, if any equitable and well-defined plan for the support of the Poor without an assessment shall be proposed, the Dissenters, they have no doubt, will take their poor who may be found upon the public rolls in this City,—and who bear, they have reason to believe, a small proportion to the other poor,—entirely under their own care.

4. That, while they cannot but feel the injurious nature of the reports which have been also circulated concerning the conduct of Dissenters throughout the country, in relation to the support of the poor, they are persuaded, that had their

Brethren in other places been consulted, or were they now heard, these reports would be found greatly exaggerated, or equally groundless with those which respect themselves.

5. That a Committee be now appointed to adopt such measures, in reference to the subject of the foregoing resolutions, as circumstances may require.

| | |
|---|---|
| J. Barr, | D. M'Ilwham, |
| W. Brash, | J. Mitchell, |
| R. Brodie, | R. Muter, |
| J. Dick, | J. Watt, |
| A. Duncan, | G. Struthers, |
| D. Smith, | W. Thomson, |
| G. Ewing, | A. Turnbull, |
| R. Gray, | R. Wardlaw, |
| W. Kidston, | J. Watson. |
| J. M'Farlane, | |

The average amount of their annual expenditure is ascertained by the returns to be not less than £1,791 11 11;—and this besides paying their rates in the City and Barony Parish. And the Public are requested to notice, that the above very considerable sum is not all that Dissenters give to the poor from their own funds; for, besides the Congregations of those Ministers who subscribe the preceding resolutions, there are several other Dissenting Meetings in this City and Suburbs, from which no accounts have been received, but which doubtless give considerable sums to their poor, and whose disbursements, if added to the above, would of course increase the amount. The number of *stated poor* upon their congregational rolls, it appears, is about three hundred and eighteen; that of the *occasional poor* cannot be so accurately obtained, but there can be no doubt that it is very considerably higher. The great accuracy of the Superintendent of the City Poor is well known; but as the religious connexions of the indigent are taken upon their own allegation, it is found, as might have been expected, that even of the few (61 in all) who are represented, on the books of the Hospital, as belonging to the Congregations of the Subscribers, several are unknown to those to whom they have assigned themselves; so that, in fact, the above small number must be reduced still farther.

Along with an accurate census of the inhabitants of the Town of Paisley, as noticed in page 156, there was taken, a register of the various denominations, with the number of families belonging to each. In those cases where families are divided in religious opinion, the profession of the head or heads of the family, has been chosen as the standard. It is also proper to observe, that families and individuals are considered as belonging to that religious body, to which they apply for privileges; although it may sometimes happen, that, from various circumstances, they most frequently join in worship with a different one. The following table exhibits the result of the inquiry:—

| PARISHES. | Number of families in each. | Established Church. | E. and W. Relief. | O. and N. Burghers. | Antiburghers. | Baptists. | Roman Catholics. | Cameronians. | Methodists. | Tabernacle. | Episcopalians. | Old Independents. | Unitarians. | Universalists. | Glassites. | No religious denomination. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Low Church. | 1211 | 834 | 144 | 69 | 38 | 19 | 21 | 19 | 16 | 4 | 11 | 12 | 5 | 2 | 0 | 17 |
| Middle Church. | 1759 | 1114 | 134 | 119 | 72 | 38 | 86 | 30 | 19 | 33 | 32 | 19 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 58 |
| High Church. | 2283 | 1128 | 445 | 153 | 84 | 103 | 59 | 43 | 43 | 29 | 20 | 22 | 11 | 5 | 3 | 135 |
| Total,..... | 5253 | 3076 | 723 | 341 | 194 | 160 | 166 | 92 | 78 | 66 | 63 | 53 | 17 | 9 | 5 | 210 |

*Abstract.*

| | |
|---|---|
| Established Church, - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - | 3076 |
| Dissenters of all kinds, - - - - - - - - - - - - - - | 1967 |
| Excess in favour of the Establishment, - - - - - - - | 1109 |

At the time, when inquiries were made by order of the General Assembly, respecting the state and management of the poor, a schedule of queries was transmitted to the pastors of the various dissenting churches in the town and community at large, with the view of obtaining the most accurate information as to the extent of relief afforded by each congregation respectively to the poor under their charge. In consequence, the following statement was communicated to the author of this work, by the respectable Ministers of the principal Presbyterian Dissenting congregations in the Town and Abbey Parish.

| Denominations. | Number of Sitters. | Number relieved in the course of 1817. | Sums appropriated to their relief during 1817. |
|---|---|---|---|
| Antiburgher, | 700 | 66 families containing 105 individuals. | £170 2 0 |
| Burgher, | 1060 | 47 families. | £129 3 6½ |
| West Relief, | 1560 | 74 do. | £162 1 0 |
| East do. | 1200 | 14 do. | £ 20 0 0 |
| Total, | 4520 | 201 families. | £481 6 6½ |

*Observations.*

1. The three first mentioned of these societies are of long standing, whereas the last has been formed within these few years. This satisfactorily accounts for the smallness of the sum distributed by the second Relief Church, as it is generally a considerable time before the poor accumulate much in a congregation.

2. In regard to the other three instances, the money marked as appropriated during the year to the purposes of relief, does not amount to above one half of what is collected at the doors of the several churches. What is not appropriated to the poor, is collected expressly for religious and charitable purposes; such as, the maintenance of the ordinances of the Gospel in the respective congregations, missions, schools, &c. The members of all the congregations noticed are as forward as any of their brethren in contributing, either individually or socially, to such local charities as demand their aid.

3. The stipends of the respective ministers are generally paid out of the seat rents; and the places of worship are built and kept in repair entirely by the congregations.

4. The greater half of the money distributed as above, has been given in the way of *occasional* donation, and has varied from a few shillings to a guinea at a time. Where *regular* supply is given, the average has been found to run from one shilling to four shillings per week.

5. Although the collections are made expressly for behoof of members of the congregations, sums are occasionally distributed to families and individuals who have been merely *hearers* in the respective churches; and in a few instances, sums have been distributed to the poor belonging to other religious connexions.

6. Although returns were received from only four congregations, it is proper to state, that all the congregations of dissenters in this place recognize the principle of contributing to the relief of their own members in a greater or less degree, and generally do so in proportion to their means. Some of the congregations are so small, as to have no poor among their members; and a few may consist, chiefly, of persons whose circumstances do not admit of their granting relief to any extent, to such of their members as may fall into indigence. At the same time it must be recollected, that as in the assessment for the support of the hospital in the burgh, and in the assessment for the general purposes of the poor in the Abbey parish, no distinction is recognized between members of the establishment and dissenters; it is not to be supposed that any distinction should be recognized in the appropriation of the assessment: and yet it is highly creditable to the various dissenting bodies to be able to state, that several of the congregations make it a rule, to bear a proportional part in the expence of such of their members as may chance to be on the regular roll of the parish. —In Mr. Wilson's survey, the contributions of the dissenting bodies in Paisley, are calculated at £1,250 per annum. This estimate is by far too high. I have reason to think, that £650 will be the average amount of the whole.

From the above statements it appears, that the average rate of allowance to paupers is nearly the same in the dissenting churches of Paisley, as it is in the churches of the establishment. This may be considered as a matter of vast consequence; for whenever there appears a striking inequality in the extent of aid administered by different bodies, feelings of jealousy, irritation, and discontent are apt to be excited among the objects of benevolence. There is good reason to suspect, that some religious denominations are by far too liberal to their poor members. It proceeds from a good motive; but the consequences are very obvious. It is proper that pious and respectable members of churches should be particularly attended to amid declining years and poverty; but it seems advisable to leave the care of them, to a certain extent, to the sympathies of private beneficence, rather than to bestow on them a disproportionate part of the general fund. It would be a good general rule, for

all the religious bodies in a place, to communicate together on the subject of the poor, so as to understand one another's proceedings, and ascertain exactly the extent of aid afforded to their several pensioners, from the various sources to which they have access.

It has sometimes happened, that persons who have been regular attendants at a dissenting church, but not joined members, have applied for aid to the session of the establishment. In such cases, the session commonly make an agreement with the managers of the church to which the applicants adhered, so that one moiety of the grant, whatever it is, is paid by each respectively. Some instances of this have come under my personal observation, and they were always arranged in a way satisfactory to both parties.

It is often said, that the poor belonging to dissenting churches are better taken care of than those belonging to the establishment. How can it be otherwise? Were the whole of the collections at the doors of the churches to be appropriated to such persons as have been members of the church or regular hearers, their situation would be more comfortable than that of any other description of applicants. But it is well known that, particularly in large towns such as this, there is a great mass of people who belong to no religious society whatever, and who have never been in the habit of attending regularly on any place of Divine worship. They constitute what may be called, "the court of the Gentiles;" and the establishment, *as such*, must look after them, otherwise they would be entirely neglected. Now, to this class belong a large proportion of the occasional applicants for relief from the General Session, and their applications, if well founded, must be listened to: and yet it is obvious, that this needy and degraded part of the population must eat up a large proportion of the offerings of charity, originally and reasonably designed for the relief of the *Christian* poor. From this load, dissenting congregations are entirely free; as in no sense can they be bound to attend to others beyond their own members. In some instances, they have been so sensible of the burden laid on the shoulders of the elders of the establishment, as voluntarily to come forward and present donations in aid of their funds. Some years ago, the Antiburgher Congregation of Brechin, and the Scotch Episcopal Congregation of Forfar, distinguished themselves in this deed of disinterestedness. The Antiburgher Congregation in Beith were in the practice of aiding liberally the funds of the Kirk session; and

my respectable friend, Mr. M'Dermid, informs me, that when he was minister of the Relief Congregation of Banff, the members of his church, as a testimony of their approbation of the manner in which the parochial funds were managed, made a voluntary collection in their behalf.*

There is no *legal obligation* certainly in the case; but I beg leave just to hint, that the very respectable dissenting bodies in Paisley would do themselves no discredit by presenting the General Session with an annual or occasional collection in aid of their exhausted funds. Those office-bearers of dissenting churches, who have been associated with the elders of the establishment, in the concerns of the Destitute Poor Society, Subscription Fund, and Clothing Society, know well the load of teasing and never-ending toil which is inseparable from the office of the eldership in the establishment; and I doubt not they will sympathise with them substantially. I fear no contradiction when I say, that if a sum, comparatively small, from the funds of the Hospital, and from the treasuries of the different churches, will have the effect of warding off the evils of a *poor's rate*, *no money can be better bestowed.*†

* See also the account of Montrose, No. XXII.

† Extract of a Letter to the Author, since the publication of the first edition, by the Rev. John M'Dermid, Minister of the West Relief Congregation, dated Paisley, 3d April, 1819.

"In page 161 of your work, you have entered the sum which we distribute annually to our poor. To them all our weekly collection is appropriated. The congregation request to be apprized when the funds are embarrassed, that they may know when it is necessary to augment their weekly contributions. A schedule is read, annually, from the pulpit, that the Congregation may know the amount of their liberality, and the manner in which it has been applied. The one I have beside me is that of which you have entered the gross sum. As it ranks the average for several years, I shall here enter the items:—

In the year 1816, the Session distributed £162 1, in the following manner:—

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| To | 5 | persons, | from | 80 | to | 87 | years of age, from 3/6. to 9/. ℔ month. | |
| " | 9 | " | | 70 | | 80 | " " 4/. 10/. | " |
| " | 8 | " | | 60 | | 70 | " " 3/6. 7/. | " |
| " | 20 | widows,..... | | | | | 3/6. 7/. | " |
| " | 4 | " | with children, ..... ..... | | | | 5/. 10/. | " |
| " | 26 | occasionally, ..... .... | | | | | 5/. 21/. | " at a time. |

The Session paid also for the education of two children.

"I feel urged to make a few remarks at the close of this statement. God commanded his church, in every age, to attend to her poor. Some there are who

Paisley has often exhibited the pleasing spectacle of Christians of different denominations, and office-bearers of different churches co-operating both in the temporal and spiritual concerns of their brethren; and the effects have been of the most satisfactory kind. The City of Aberdeen presents to us a spectacle somewhat novel in its kind, but certainly deserving of record; the spectacle, namely, of a continued and organized union among all the religious orders of the place, for the ordinary purposes of parochial charitable distribution. The following statement respecting it, may be safely relied on.

contribute least to their aid in their own days of prosperity, and yet are most clamorous for support when overtaken by sickness or adversity. Some there are who are liberal while they have ability, and yet are delicately shy in accepting aid when reduced to want. Such noble spirits ought to be treated with attention and with tenderness. We are struck at the persevering liberality of some, even when it would appear that they should rather receive. They indicate a wish to share in the approbation of Christ in regard to the widow and her mite. Nor are the characters here suggested peculiar to any one Church: They are common wherever churches observe a scriptural regard to the wants of their indigent members. The law of Christ is specific "Upon the first *day* of the week, let every one of you lay by him (or *contribute*) in store, as GOD hath prospered him."

"In page 164 reference is made to the Relief Cougregation in Banff. I was ordained as the Pastor of that Congregation on the 14th of April 1796. Among the first meetings of Session, inquiry was made after the state of the poor. The answer was, That the poor belonging to the Congregation were but few, and that the Parish Session supplied them in the same manner as they did their own. Struck at this handsome liberality, I asked what acknowledgments were made in return. The reply was, None; but gratitude. It was immediately agreed, that an annual collection should be made, and committed to the management of the Parish Session: The Relief Congregation in Banff cheerfully supported this measure.

"While this is the state of the fact, it suggests some general observations. All the liberal Dissenters must feel for the friends of truth in the Established Church of Scotland in regard to the poor Let us consider the question upon Christian principles. The Church of Christ is, in her religious capacity, bound, by his authority, to support her indigent members only. How painful to his friends in the National Church to be obliged to support the indigent even among the dregs of society. This it may be supposed, makes some of her best, of her affluent and generous members to be comparatively sparing in their weekly contributions, and to give a great share of their charities to deserving characters of their own searching out. Were all the indigent in the country, or in a parish, who are not communicants distinguished from those who are, were they supported by a fund from the State, or similar plan, a Christian discrimination would hence be made; liberal members in the Establishment would contribute for their indigent members with satisfaction and cheerfulness; her Sessions would be relieved of a great deal of vexation, and a greater degree of scriptural and Christian understanding and sympathy would, in regard to the poor, as is the case already in other concerns, be cultivated between the National Church and the Dissenters."

## No. XXIV.

*Management of the Poor in the city of Aberdeen.*

The parish of St. Nicolas, comprehending the city of New Aberdeen exclusive of the suburbs, which are situated in the parish of Old Machar, contained according to the census of 1811, a population of rather more than 21,000 inhabitants. Since that time it has increased considerably, so that at this present time, we may estimate the number at 25,000. In such a large community, the mass of pauperism must be at all times very great; and yet it is rather a remarkable circumstance, that recourse has not yet been had to the plan of a regular assessment. Private subscriptions have, from time to time, supplied the deficiencies of the established funds; and a number of charitable donations left, from time to time, in the shape of legacies or mortifications, have contributed to lighten the burden which might otherways have been intolerable.—The plan on which the management of the poor is at present conducted commenced in January, 1768. Till then, there were three separate funds in the parish of St. Nicolas for the support of the poor: the funds under the management of the Kirk-session; those of the poor's hospital, and some other mortifications, both of which were under the management of the magistrates. At the period above mentioned, the parties concerned agreed to a union in the management of these; and have since been designated "managers of the poor's hospital and united fund." This association distributes the money, &c. to the ordinary, regular and occasional, poor of the parish. It is composed of the members of the Kirk-session, and the ministers of chapels of ease—the magistrates and town council with 17 delegates elected by them from the inhabitants at large—and a delegate from every congregation of dissenters that contributes the sum of £5, yearly to the institution, or delegates according to the sum contributed; if £10. two delegates; £15, three; and so on in the same proportion, Any society or individual may be represented at the general distribution of the poor's money on the same terms: the individual if he chooses, may attend personally. A woman by contributing at once the sum of £25, may nominate a manager during her own life: a man has this additional privilege, that, by a similar contribution, he may be a manager himself for life.—A

certain proportion of the funds, set apart for the necessary expenses of the poor's hospital, where 40 boys are boarded, cloathed, and educated, is under the management of the magistrates and council, with 17 persons elected by them, and 17 by the Kirk-session.—The kirk session have the exclusive management of various sums of money mortified to them at different times, and of the sacramental collections.—Prior to the year 1768, there was a quarterly collection for the benefit of the poor's hospital. This collection, on the first sabbaths of February, May, August, and November, is still continued for the benefit of the poor's hospital and united Fund. The sacramental collections are distributed among poor persons, who receive nothing from the parochial funds, many of whom have seen better days.—Last year the "Society for the Suppression of Begging" was united with "the Poor's Hospital and united Fund." At the same time, the parish was divided into 43 precincts, with a committee of five or six visitors to each. It was likewise agreed that the conveners of these committees should vote with the managers of the poor's hospital and united fund at the distribution of the money, and of the soup and bread, which are given to the parochial poor.

The chief objection to the plan thus described seems to be, the smallness of the sum which is annually required to entitle to the management of, and a share in the general funds. The sum of £5 is the least that is accepted, while it is expected that congregations will contribute liberally according to their means. An inconvenience that cannot be avoided must frequently occur, that those congregations, which *require most* will *contribute least*; and vice versa. But on the whole, the plan has hitherto been acted on with harmony and success.

## No. XXV.

*Management of the Poor in the Town and Parish of Stirling.*

Population,..... between 5 and 6,000.

*Funds of the Poor.*

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Annual average amount of Session Funds, from collections, &c. for the last ten years,..... | £105 | 16 | 5½ |
| —————— of voluntary contribution for behoof of the poor,..... ..... ..... | 300 | 0 | 0 |
| | £405 | 16 | 5½ |

*Number and rate of Session pensioners.*

Regular pensioners at present on the roll,..... 85
Occasional do..... from 57 to 60
Weekly allowance to regular poor—highest 3s. 6d.
lowest 1s.
Occasional allowances vary with circumstances.

The town of Stirling forms one parish, which is subdivided into districts with elders as superintendents of each, in the way generally established in Scotland. Under the Kirk session, consisting of the ministers and elders, are placed all the funds arising from weekly collections, proclamation fees, &c. &c. usually known by the name of session funds for behoof of the poor. There is no compulsory assessment in this parish; but, in lieu of it, a voluntary association was set on foot about fifty years ago, professedly for the purpose of suppressing begging, and aiding the established parochial funds. The most respectable inhabitants zealously embarked in it—investigated the state of the poor—solicited personally, subscriptions in their behalf—and undertook the task of managing and applying the funds thus raised. This " poors scheme," as it is called, has been conducted on the same plan ever since, and by means of judicious management and zeal in the directors, has aided powerfully the established funds, and ministered to the support of the poor, though it certainly has not been successful in annihilating the nuisance of street begging. Its funds are managed by a committee of the subscribers; and are appropriated chiefly in the shape of weekly or monthly pensions, on the plan adopted by the session; and the rate of allowance is nearly the same

But what particularly distinguishes Stirling in the annals of charity, is, the abundance of its establishments in the shape of " hospitals," or alms-houses for relief of the aged, the afflicted, and the destitute. Of these, the following table will exhibit the specific objects; and the extent and appropriation of their funds, first in 1792, when the Statistical account of Stirling was drawn up, and next, as they stood in 1817.

## STIRLING HOSPITALS.

| | SPITTALS. | | COWANS. | | ALLANS. | | CUNNINGHAMS. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Name of Founder, | Robert Spittal, taylor to K. Ja. V. | | John Cowan, merchant in Stirling. | | John Allan, writer in Stirling. | | |
| Period of erection, | 1530 | | 1639. | | 1725. | | 1814. |
| General objects, | Support and relief of poor tradesmen. | | Support of twelve decayed Guild brethren. | | Maintenance and education of children of poor tradesmen. | | Clothing, educating, and apprenticing out, poor boys. |
| Sum originally mortified, | unknown. | | £2,222 Sterling. | | 30,000 merks Scots. | | ..... |
| Rule of appropriation, | The will of the Governors, the original charter being lost. | | The will of the Donor. | | The will of the Donor. | | The will of the Donor. |
| Patrons or Governors, | Town Council and second Minister. | | Town Council and first Minister. | | Town Council and second Minister. | | Magistrates and Town Council. |
| Funds how vested, | In lands. | | In lands; and in the erection of an hospital. | | In lands. | | ..... |
| | 1792, | 1817, | 1792, | 1817, | 1792, | 1817, | about |
| Annual amount of revenue and expenditure, | £221 | £736 17 5½ | £1,158 St. | £3,047 13 | £298 St. | £609 16 6 | £192 ℔ ann. |
| Number of pensioners, | 44 | 115 families | 100 | 146 families, | 14 boy. | 55 children. | 10 boys. |
| Allowance to each, | from 1s. 2d. to 1s. 4d. ℔ week. | Varies according to circumstances. The hospital also gives *occasionally* to widows of decayed tradesmen. | from 1s 6d. to 2s. 6d ℔ week. | besides casual charities. Varies according to circumstances. | | | |

It thus appears, that the united funds of the session, poors scheme, and hospitals of Stirling, amount to an annual sum of £4,992 3 5; and this, independently of what is distributed by the Dissenting Bodies, by the Trades and Friendly Societies, the Guildry, &c. &c. From this view of the matter, one would naturally infer that in Stirling beggary would be unknown, and that the complaint of poverty would never reach the ears of the humane inhabitants. The fact is otherways; and this favourite abode of ancient royalty and of modern pauperism, affords us a striking illustration of the fact, that little good comparatively results from rich endowments, and extensive chartered establishments in favour of the poor. In 1792, it was supposed "that every twelfth man was a pauper." Whatever may be the exact state of the case *now*, there is reason to fear that the causes which then operated to increase the evils of pauperism must still operate with undiminished force. The causes assigned by Dr. Somerville, in his Statistical account, are chiefly the following:—

1. The near vicinity of the Highlands, and the knowledge of the existence of rich funds in Stirling, which must attract numbers of the indolent, the dastardly, and the vicious, to settle in the town, where, after three years residence, they acquire a claim to the established charity.

2. The absurd statutes of some of the hospitals; acting according to the letter of which "the managers are often obliged to admit upon the funds those who both *can* and *ought* to labour for their bread." Perhaps also the negligence and easy indolence of the managers of funds thus independent of public bounty, tend to augment the evil.

3. The great number of low houses in Stirling, augments the list of the poor. The proprietors of such houses, unable or unwilling to repair them, can let them only to the poor, the sluggish, or the depraved, none else will take them. In such uncomfortable habitations, the spirits of men are broken or their health impaired; and they soon fall unavoidably on the funds of the poor.

4. The low rate of female labour in Stirling, is another source of poverty.

5. One grand cause is—the *Castle*. The invalids and pensioned soldiers, who are its inmates, being generally ignorant, vicious and debauched, get wives like themselves, or make them so. Their children are bred up under the very worst

example. The fathers soon die, worn out with intemperance. They leave their families, beggared, unprincipled, and debauched. These families are the nurseries of beggars.

6. The great number of tippling houses, and the low price of ardent spirits, nourish vice, and promote its consequences, pauperism and wretchedness. On this last particular, the following remarks deserve serious consideration. "While females are servants in families of superior rank, or even in the houses of the better kind of tradesmen, instead of receiving abundance of plain and wholesome food, which is their due, they are foolishly indulged with luxuries, which they can taste no more the moment they become the wives of honest labourers. Feeling this change of situation, which occasions disagreeable reflexions, and subjected to the uneasinesses unavoidably connected with their change of state, they betake themselves to ardent spirits, to kill their griefs, and are thus insensibly led into habits of intoxication, which ruin themselves, their interests, and their families in every respect. There is no cause of increasing immorality, among the lower ranks of the people, more abundant than this. There is none which the care of magistrates and rulers ought to be more employed to prevent. If the mothers of families are corrupted, virtue must be gone. Masters should have regard to the future interests of their servants, more than to their present indulgence. Magistrates and rulers should render the venom, which poisons the morals of the people, as inaccessible as possible."*

## No. XXVI.

*Management of the Poor in the Town and Parish of Dunfermline.*

### *Sessional Management.*

Population, as lately ascertained by inquiry, — — 13,000

*Funds of the Poor.*

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Average amount of Weekly collections at Church, and Chapel of Ease, for the ten years preceding 1817, | £ 71 | 0 | 3 |
| Average amount of general funds at charge of the Session, consisting of rents of property held by adjudication, grave rooms sold, effects of paupers at death, &c. &c. for the last ten years, — — — — — — — | 39 | 8 | 4¾ |
| Average amount of voluntary assessment among heritors and others, for ten years previous to 1815, when the plan of a general association was adopted, - about | 300 | 0 | 0 |
| Total amount of funds for the Poor, at the charge of the Kirk-session, — — — — — — — — | £410 | 8 | 7¾ |

* Stat. Acc. vol. viii. pp. 293, 294.

Expense of collecting and managing the Poors' fund, (being a ℔ centage on the whole amount) at an average of ten years past, — — — — — — — — £ 32 17 2

*Number of Poor.*

| | Males. | Females. | Total, |
|---|---|---|---|
| Poor regularly on the Session roll, annual average for the last ten years, | | | |
| wholly impotent, — — | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| partially dependent — | 20 | 80 | 100 |
| Poor *occasionally* relieved according to circumstances, | | | 114 |
| Total number of Poor assisted by the Session—average of the last ten years, — — — — — | | | 216 |

*Rates of allowance.*

Highest—to regular Poor, — — — — — 3s.
Lowest—to do. — — — — — — — 6d. } ℔ Week.
Ordinary allowance to the wholly impotent, 4s. or 4s. 6d. according to the circumstances of the case.
Occasional allowances vary from 2s. to 10s. or more, according to circumstances. The average annual amount of such allowances for last ten years has been £39.

1. The established places of worship in this parish are, the Parish Church, which is a collegiate charge; and the Chapel of Ease;—the weekly collections at both which, are placed under the administration of the Kirk-session for general behoof of the poor. Of course, extraordinary and occasional collections may be made, and are made, for other purposes.

2. For many years previous to 1815, there was a voluntary assessment laid annually on the Heritors, resident and non-resident, in proportion to their respective rents, and made over to the Kirk-session, and distributed to their poor, among whom were a few dissenters. Since 1815, this assessment, as well as the annual collections which are made by seceders, and other charities, have been put into one fund, and managed by a Committee annually chosen—the Kirk session fund still continuing separate.

3. In the above table, a plain and palpable distinction is recognised between *the wholly impotent* poor, who through blindness, insanity, diseases or other causes, have become totally dependent on public bounty,—the *partially dependent* who, though *regularly* on the roll, are nevertheless able to do something for their own support, or are otherways aided;—and the *occasional* receipients who may be termed *poor industrious householders*, to whom is given a small gratuity from time to time, to prevent their falling into the ranks of pauperism.

"If the number of the *first* class in the parish of Dunfermline be limited to 2, it is only similar to what occurs in other parishes in Scotland, in most of which extremely few, and in many, none receive *entire* subsistence from public funds; and is just an illustration of the excellence of the Scottish mode of managing the poor."*

4. Prior to 1813 there were a few Dissenting poor on the Kirk-session roll, but no separate list was kept of them. During that year their number was 25; and the sum given them £60 2. In 1814 the number was 33; and the sum, £92 7. Since that time they have been all on the associated fund; of which we shall now give a short account.

*Voluntary Association for the Management of the Poor.*

Till the beginning of 1815 the poor of Dunfermline were managed in the ordinary manner, by the members of the Kirk-session, whose peculiar funds were powerfully aided by annual voluntary assessments among the heritors of the parish. For several years also there was in operation, a "Beneficent Society" for the general support of the poor; the funds of which arose from the subscriptions of the inhabitants. As its exertions were wholly confined to the town, its plan was obviously too confined to admit of general application. It was accordingly proposed that something on a more extended and permanent basis should be attempted, with the double purpose of providing for the wants of the poor in a regular and systematic manner—and of warding off the dreaded evils of a compulsory assessment.

In September, 1814, a general meeting of heritors and others was held, when it was proposed that in order to accomplish objects so generally desirable, a committee should be appointed to prepare a report on the subject. At another general meeting on the 9th January, 1815, the Committee presented their report which was cordially approved of and adopted. Its leading features are these:—That a general voluntary association for behoof of the poor shall be formed consisting of the heritors, ministers of all denominations, and inhabitants at large who may become subscribers to the proposed fund—that out of the whole number of subscribers a committee of managers shall be annually chosen, who shall meet monthly or as

* Mr. Chalmer's Letter in Christian Instructor, Dec. 1818.

often as the business of the poor shall require—that the town and parish shall be divided into 15 quarters with two or more of the managers as *visitors* and distributors to the poor—that the regular pensioners on the roll shall be judged of by the managers at the ordinary meetings—that the visitors shall possess a discretionary power to give occasionally as they shall see cause—and that the whole procedure shall be reviewed from time to time, and regularly submitted in a printed annual report to the public at large. The following quotation from the address published at the formation of the society, will afford a pretty clear view of the leading principles on which the establishment has been organized.

"The business of the Visitors is carefully to inspect the state of the poor in their respective districts, by visiting them in person, and to report to the Committee at their monthly meetings. As much of the success and benefit of the plan will depend upon a minute investigation of the circumstances of the persons who apply for charity, it is particularly incumbent on the Visitors to acquaint themselves with the following circumstances respecting each applicant:—1. *Age;* 2. *Married or not;* 3. *How many children to support, their sex and ages;* 4. *How long resident in the parish;* 5. *What circumstances of distress;* 6. *What employment;* 7. *If aid be received from any other source; &c.*

The Visitors also call at the houses within their respective districts, for the purpose of noting down the subscription of the inhabitants for the whole year, and, at the same time to collect the first quarter. The officer to collect the other three quarters, and to pay it into the hands of the Treasurer.

It must be carefully attended to by the poor, that all applications for assistance from this fund, be made through the Visitors to the Managers, at their monthly meetings.

In cases of urgent necessity, the Visitors of any district are empowered, with the consent of any of the Managers, to grant such temporary supply as the necessity of the case may require, and to report to the next monthly meeting.

If any pauper receiving supply, shall be found begging in this or other parishes, their names shall be struck off the list.

A list is to be published at the end of every year of all the subscriptions and donations received by the Committee, and of their disbursements to the poor.

The Managers cannot forbear congratulating the public upon the many important advantages, which they are confi-

dent will result from the adoption and success of this institution. The evils arising out of a legal assessment which are most severely felt, wherever it has taken place, will be prevented. It is notorious, that in England these parochial assessments absorb a very considerable proportion of the national property, while multitudes of the poor are still unprovided for: that much of the money raised by legal assessments, is spent in management, lawsuits, removals, &c. without being directly applied to the support of the poor. The union of persons of all ranks and descriptions will secure, as far as can be done, an equal attention to the situation and interest of the poor. The charities being all collected into one fund, relief will be administered at once from the common source, according to the exigencies of the applicant, without danger of imposition, or unequal distribution, to which the former practices were necessarily liable.

It will be found none of the least of the benefits arising from the scheme, that begging will be suppressed; an evil of great enormity; universally felt and complained of. Much time is spent by persons who might be employed in doing something for their own support; habits of idleness and dissipation are induced; opportunities and temptations to petty thefts are presented; the inhabitants, especially in the country, are often put in fear, and sometimes suffer injury from sturdy vagrants; much money is thrown away on the worthless; and thus a great part of the public charity is diverted from its proper object."

The plan thus adopted has been acted on regularly since April 1815, when the first committee of managers was appointed, and the parish subdivided according to the terms of the regulations. The following table will exhibit at one view, the transactions of the society from its establishment till April 1818, when the latest report was published:—

RECEIPT.

| | 1815–16. £ | s. | d. | 1816–17. £. | s. | d. | 1817–18. £. | s. | d. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Received from Heritors..... | 421 | 9 | | 453 | 14 | | 441 | 2 | |
| ——— from inhabitants at large of town and parish,..... | 203 | 6 | 4½ | 181 | 3 | 10½ | 186 | 6 | 4½ |
| ——— from Collections at various places of worship,..... | 86 | 11 | 2½ | 115 | 9 | 4 | 80 | 18 | 5 |
| ——— extraordinary Collections, | | | | 99 | 4 | 3 | 36 | 6 | 1½ |
| ——— miscellaneous sources,..... | | 10 | 6 | 1 | 10 | | 1 | 1 | 3 |
| ——— arrears of former years,..... | | | | 21 | 0 | 5 | 5 | 18 | 5½ |
| | 711 | 17 | 1 | 872 | 1 | 10½ | 751 | 12 | 7½ |

EXPENDITURE.

| | 1815–16. £. | s. | d. | 1816–17. £. | s. | d. | 1817–18. £. | s. | d. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Distributed among the Poor, regular and occasional, in weekly, monthly, or occasional allowances, as by Treasurer's and Visitors' books..... | 697 | 17 | 1 | 803 | 15 | 4 | 684 | 15 | 7 |
| Expences attending the scheme; viz. Printers accounts, Stationary, Candles, Officer's and Collector's Salaries, Postage, &c &c..... | 30 | 12 | 6 | 28 | 3 | | 32 | 15 | 7¼ |
| Expences of legal prosecutions,..... | | | | 4 | 7 | 6 | | | |
| ——— Coffins, Coals, &c. &c. | | | | 16 | 8 | 1 | 17 | 4 | 6 |
| Balance due the Treasurer,..... | | | | 16 | 12 | 6 | | | |
| | 728 | 9 | 7 | 869 | 6 | 5 | 734 | 15 | 8¼ |

*Number of Poor regularly and occasionally relieved.*

1815–16.....350.
1816–17.....241.
1817–18.....240.

During the first year of the establishment, many were admitted on the roll whom the managers by strict investigation, were afterwards able to expunge.

That the voluntary association has answered the great purposes designed by it, may appear from the following passages from the last report.

"The Committe have much pleasure in stating to the Public, that the plan adopted by the Association for the support of the Poor, has for these three years past, answered the most sanguine expectations of its friends. The Management and distribution of the funds being conducted on the basis of investigation and personal inquiry, by the Managers and Visitors of the Society, the wants of the Poor have been more extensively, regularly, and judiciously supplied, than under any former scheme."

In the management and distribution of this general voluntary fund, no distinction of religious sect or denomination is recognised. In the adoption of this principle, the Society act agreeably to equity and to law—to *equity;* which requires that the contributors to a fund should have the charge of its appropriation;—to *law;* which has intrusted the concerns of the poor to a certain extent at least, to the proprietors and inhabitants of the parish, without regard to their religious peculiarities. It often happens that the majority of the heritors in a parish profess a different form of religion from that established by law; and yet they do not thereby denude themselves of the right of interesting themselves in the concerns of their resident poor population.

In order to form an accurate idea of the state of the poor in Dunfermline, we must take the average of the last *four* years, as being the time during which the Session and voluntary Association have carried on their operations jointly and severally. The following table will exhibit a comprehensive idea of the subject:—

| Average for last four years | *Kirk Session.* | *Association.* | *Amount of both.* |
|---|---|---|---|
| of stated pensioners on the monthly rolls,..... | 37 | 256 | Stated pensioners, 293 |
| — of occasional pensioners, | 48 | 40 | Occasional — 88 |
| — of money to stated poor, | £152 12 9 | £751 7 9 | 381 |
| — of money to occasional poor, ..... | £13 14 6½ | £30 | Sum total of funds distributed both in stated and occasional gifts, &c. £980 7 1¾. |
| — expence of managing funds,..... | £7 12 1¼ | £25 | |

## No. XXVII.

*Historical Sketches of Benevolence.*

UNDER this title, we shall throw together a few facts, illustrative of the good effects which may result from the voluntary efforts of benevolent public spirited individuals, associated together for the relief of the poor, and the general benefit of the community. As the present state of Scotland will, in all

probability, call for more extended and systematic exertion in the way of voluntary associations, it may be considered as of great importance to preserve a record of what may already have been done in this way, as an example of what may afterwards be attempted; or at least as supplying some hints which may at a future period be improved. I shall confine the sketches within the limits of the last ten years.

1. The Destitute Poor Society of Paisley.*

In the month of December 1807, a society was formed, denominated The Paisley Destitute Poor Society, for the relief of the destitute poor in the town and suburbs, who were suffering from the severity of the winter; the stagnation of trade; and the high price of provisions. The plan being begun on a very limited scale, it was found, upon inquiry into the situation of the poor by the managers of the society, that some more extended efforts would be necessary. At first, the funds were raised principally by contributions, at the rate of One Penny per week for each member; but it was soon found that this mode would never meet the existing exigency, and therefore subscriptions on a more enlarged scale were solicited. With this view, an address to the inhabitants of the community, detailing the objects and operations of the Society, was printed and widely circulated.

After its circulation, and in consequence of it, donations to a considerable amount were received by the managers of the society from a number of the generous inhabitants, which enabled them to meet the wants of many of the most distressed of the poor in the town and suburbs. In all cases where aid was granted to the poor and indigent, one or two of the managers visited the habitation of each applicant, and reported the situation and circumstances of the case to the committee, who met regularly once every week; and who, after due consideration, granted such assistance as each case seemed to require. By the month of May 1808, the society had expended in money, provisions, body clothes, shoes, stockings, bed clothes, and cordials, to the sick and the dying, the sum of £397 18 2; leaving a balance in the hands of the Treasurer, of only £88 2.

At this period, the managers judged it proper to suspend operations, on the general principle, that associations of the kind are only intended to serve a temporary purpose, and that

* For the leading facts respecting this, and the Clothing Society, I am indebted to one of the distinguished conductors of both—Mr. Peter Ewing.

there is great danger of their being unduly relied on, if continued beyond the time which the circumstances of the people seem to warrant. Accordingly, they declined doing any thing more at present on an extended scale, and resolved, that during the summer, assistance from the funds should only be granted in cases of sickness and disease. On this plan, the society acted till the month of February 1809, by which time the whole of the funds were expended.

At the beginning of the winter 1810, under the sanction of the magistrates, the committee of the society judged it proper again to commence operations upon a still more extended plan than heretofore; and, at the same time, to open a wardrobe for the reception of cast-off bed and body clothes, to be applied in clothing the naked. Accordingly, on the 20th December of that year, there was published and widely circulated, an address, stating the plan and procedure of the society hitherto, and inviting the farther aid and co-operation of the public. The whole town and suburbs were subdivided into 16 districts, particularly marked and described in the printed address. Over each of these, there presided 2, and, in a number of instances, 3 individuals of the committee, forming altogether a body of 36 managers, who met regularly every Thursday evening during the winter; while the general body was subdivided into five smaller committees, who met alternately every night in the week except Sunday. From a minute statement, at present before me, it appears that, from the 27th December 1810 till the 6th July 1811, there were distributed, by the managers of the society, various articles of clothing, to the amount of 1551, among 787 poor families and individuals. As many of these articles were presented to the society by benevolent persons in the town and vicinity, the whole expenditure for purchases and repairs amounted only to £84 14 4. Each article distributed is distinctly marked in the society's books, and preserved for the inspection of all concerned. A record is also kept of the names, designations, places of residence, and circumstances of each recipient, and the donations granted to each.

The following table exhibits the amount of the distribution in money, and in various articles of provision, with the cost price of each department.

## *Paisley Destitute Poor Society.*

MR. ROBERT CARSWELL, SEN. PRESIDENT.

MR. PETER EWING, CLERK.

MR. WILLIAM WATERSTON, SECRETARY.

| | | | | | £ | s. | d. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Expended from 27th Dec. 1810, till the 7th of February, 1811,..... | | | | | 630 | 0 | 0 |
| Expended from 7th February till 23d May 1811. | | Pecks of Meal. | Pecks of Potatoes. | Lbs. of Herrings. | | | |
| February | 14 | 386 | 412 | 924 | 14 | 2 | 11 |
| | 21 | 383 | 391 | 782 | 14 | 2 | 5 |
| | 28 | 465½ | 470 | 822 | 14 | 17 | 2½ |
| March | 7 | 484½ | 485 | 940 | 16 | 19 | 5 |
| | 14 | 514½ | 462 | 970 | 15 | 2 | 2 |
| | 20 | 513½ | 490 | 924 | 13 | 8 | 10 |
| | 28 | 548 | 515 | 980 | 15 | 13 | 5 |
| April | 4 | 523 | 436 | 1030 | 11 | 14 | 9 |
| | 11 | 476 | 466 | 872 | 14 | 9 | 10 |
| | 18 | 522 | 421 | 932 | 11 | 16 | 0 |
| | 25 | 459 | 491 | 842 | 8 | 3 | 0 |
| May | 2 | 424 | 314 | 982 | 10 | 17 | 4 |
| | 9 | 264 | 309 | 628 | 7 | 8 | 4 |
| | 16 | 223 | 119 | 618 | 8 | 4 | 0 |
| | 23 | 123½ | 411 | 238 | 8 | 1 | 9 |
| | | | | | 715 | 1 | 5½ |
| | | | | 12,484.. | 104 | 8 | 0 |
| | | | 6,192..... | | 206 | 8 | 0 |
| | | 6,310½..... | | | 434 | 5 | 3½ |
| Expended from 23d May till 31st Aug... | | | | | 124 | 18 | 11½ |
| Wardrobe Expenditure ..... | | | | | 84 | 14 | 4 |
| Total..... | | | | | 1,669 | 16 | 0½ |

The Paisley Destitute Poor Society expended the above sum in eight months among 1,366 families, consisting of 4,098 individuals.

The whole amount of expenditure by the Society, in its various modes of operation, is as follows:—

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Expended, from 6th December 1807, when the society first began, till February 1809,..... | £ 486 | 0 | 2 |
| Expended from 27th December 1810 till 31st August 1811,..... | 1669 | 16 | 0½ |
| Sum total,..... | £2155 | 16 | 2½ |

In the queries and replies, the sum total is stated at only £1,865 19. The reason of the difference is this: In the smaller sum are included only *the monies* actually received and expended. In the larger are included not only the donations in money, but also the various donations in meal, potatoes, and coals, received from various quarters, and valued by the society according to a certain rate. Thus there appears a nominal difference of about £200.

---

### 2. *Paisley Female Benevolent Society.*

In the month of November 1811, a society, under the above designation, was formed for Paisley and its vicinity. Its *object* is to visit at their own houses, and to relieve by occasional donations of money, provisions, clothing, and coals, *aged and destitute females*, of whom there must always be in such a place as this a very large proportion, and whose wants, particularly in the winter season, must be peculiarly clamant. Its *management* is vested in a committee of *superintendents* and *visitors*, who meet on the first Wednesday of every month for the general business of the society, and who take charge of the actual distributions to the various recipients of the society's bounty. The *general principles* on which the society proceeds are as follows:—

1. Every subscriber, of 10s. 6d. annually, may recommend one poor person as an object of attention to the committee.

2. No applicant, however recommended, is relieved until personally visited by the managers, and ascertained to be a suitable object.

3. The town and suburbs are divided into districts, over each of which a superintendent and one or more visitors preside, with the view of visiting the houses of all the applicants from each district, and taking charge of the distribution to each.

4. In every case of application for aid, the committee take means to ascertain the extent of relief which the applicant may receive from other sources, and act accordingly.

5. The visitors of the district pay particular regard to the information which may be furnished them by the elders of the quarters, and other gentlemen who, from their connexion with

the Destitute Poor Society, or otherwise, have it in their power to give useful hints.

6. The committee studiously guard against giving any encouragement to the idea of *permanent* reliance on the society's bounty.

7. The first attention is paid to the aged and sick—then to the infirm and destitute—then to widows with young children—and lastly, to women in particular cases of distress, though not literally old or in a state of widowhood.

8. The superintendents and visitors make it an uniform practice to accompany their donations with advice as to the state of the houses, presents of Bibles and good books, &c. and when they find children or others who cannot read, they use means to get them educated by their introduction into charity schools.

9. Each visitor keeps a book, in which are particularly marked, the name, residence, age, &c. of each pensioner, with the amount of donations given, and these are reviewed by the Committee every month.

The following tables exhibit at one view the whole transactions of the society since its commencement up to October 1st, 1818, as abridged from the seven annual Reports.

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Amount of expenditure from Nov. 1st 1811, to Oct. 1st, 1818... | £2,900 | 14 | 7½ |
| Average of each year,..... | 414 | 7 | 9½ |
| Of the whole fund, there has been expended in the purchase of provisions, and in small donations weekly or monthly, as marked in the books of the visitors,..... | 1,262 | 9 | 2 |
| Average of each year,..... | 180 | 7 | 3 |

The following is a state of the various articles of clothing, &c. which have been purchased or distributed by the society during last seven years.

| | |
|---|---|
| Shifts of various kinds, flannel, cotton, harn,&c. ..... | 3,028 |
| Petticoats, do. do. ..... | 1,425 |
| Bedgowns,..... | 44 |
| Bed Covers,..... | 70 |
| Flannel Slips,..... | 346 |
| Blankets,..... | 69 |
| Yards Flannels,..... | 146¼ |
| Flannel Caps,..... | 470 |
| Pairs Stockings, ..... | 669 |
| —— Shoes,..... | 144 |
| Articles of different kinds,..... | 6,371¼ |

Coals distributed,..... 961 Carts.

Number of families annually visited and relieved, about 400.

As an illustration of the kind of objects whom the society aim to relieve, the following is extracted from the third annual Report:—

" Of 355 pensioners then on the list, there were

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Above | 90 | years of age..... ..... | 14 |
| | 80 | do. do. ..... | 34 |
| | 70 | do. do. ..... | 97 |
| | 60 | do. do. ..... | 92 |
| | 50 | do. do. ..... | 54 |
| | Blind,..... | | 5 |
| | | | ——296 |

" The remaining 59 were either confined to bed, or were in such a delicate state of health, as to be able to do very little for themselves. It is also proper to state, that a considerable number were such as neither received nor were entitled to receive from any other quarter." The following is the concluding part of the last Report, published in October 1818.

" The committee have stated in all their Reports, that besides donations in money and coals, donations of clothing of all kinds, new or old, will be peculiarly acceptable. They regret to state, that the hint has not yet been taken to any extent by the public. They are sure it requires only to be pressed on their attention. If the old clothes that are either thrown aside or bestowed on brokers, pedlars, and such like, were sent to the depository for the purposes of the society, what good might not be done to the shivering victims of poverty?

" From the limited state of their funds, and from other considerations, the society have unanimously resolved, that henceforth their attention shall be directed exclusively to the relief of *aged female indigence.* This was the specific object for which the society was constituted, as appears from the plan and regulations published in Nov. 1811; and the members of the society are more and more convinced from experience of the absolute necessity of confining charitable distributions to some *specific* cases, in order to prevent the evils which are too commonly found to result from general and indiscriminate beneficence. The directors will be always happy to attend to any cases that may be recommended to them by subscribers; but they would beg that subscribers will attend to this limitation of the plan, as it certainly never could be the object of such an institution to relieve *all* the female indigence and distress which might at any time prevail in such an extended community as this.

"The society leave the above statement of facts with the public. They are satisfied that the cause in which they engage is a good one, and they have undertaken to promote it to the best of their judgement and ability. The institution has now existed seven years. Its leading principles and objects have been exhibited more or less fully in all the reports; and its mode of management has at all times been open to the most critical inspection. The committee of management would earnestly request an impartial and discerning public, to consider the claims of the case which is brought before them, and to exercise that liberality which a suitable object, when properly stated and recommended, never fails to experience from the charitable and humane."

### 3. *The Clothing Society of Paisley.*

In the month of December 1817, was formed, a clothing society for the industrious poor of the town of Paisley. It was conducted chiefly by the members of the Destitute Poor Society, and nearly on the same plan. The committee consisted of about 50 individuals, by whom the town was divided into eleven districts, with a sub-committee to each, who met separately or together, at least once every week. In consequence of an address which was extensively circulated among the inhabitants, various donations of clothing were received; and the following is the general result:—

| | |
|---|---|
| Number of families or individuals assisted with clothing. - - - - | 692 |
| Amount of articles of various kinds distributed among the above, according to an exact list taken and kept by the secretary, - - | 1,158 |
| Money expended in purchasing or repairing the articles of clothing distributed, - - - - - - - - - - - - | £159 13 6 |

The office bearers of this society were, James Carlile, Esq. preses; Mr. Archibald Livingston, treasurer; Mr. Peter Ewing, secretary; Mr. James Mure, clerk.

In spring 1818, the circumstances of the town having considerably changed to the better, the society was dissolved.

In June 1817 was formed,

4. *The Paisley Sewing School Society,*

For instructing the children of the poor in the ordinary branches of needle work, an object of peculiar importance in such a place as this, where, by reason of the numerous kinds of manufacture which admit of the employment of children at a very early age, their education in the useful arts of female industry is frequently neglected. The leading features of the institution, as illustrated in the printed regulations, are these:—That those girls only shall be admitted whose circumstances prevent them from attaining what it professes to teach any other way—that the school shall be under the charge of an approved mistress, and shall be superintended by a committee of twelve ladies, who shall visit the school at least twice every week—that, instead of being entirely gratis, girls above eight years of age shall pay sixpence per month; and those below that age threepence, payable per advance—that every girl desirous of admission, if not recommended by a subscriber, must give satisfaction to the committee respecting her general good conduct—that scholars shall be admitted monthly by the committee—that, during the meeting of each class, a chapter of the Bible, at the direction of the mistress, shall be read by one of the scholars; and an instructive story shall be read to them, occasionally, while they work—that the girls shall be allowed to bring their own clothes to make and mend, &c.

The institution only requires to be known and suitably encouraged, to be productive of the best effects.

## No. XXVIII.

*Management of the Poor in Greenock.*

In Greenock, the poor, till 1785, were, as in other parishes, wholly dependent on collections at church, and other funds, at the charge of the kirk sessions. As the poor increased, while the funds diminished, it became necessary to adopt some other

measures for their relief. In general, voluntary assessment or subscription was thought most eligible; and this, with the collections, answered expectation for some time. But the extraordinary collections which were made quarterly in all the places of worship, established and dissenting, falling short of what was expected, and the number and wants of the poor having increased, so that, at the first of January 1810, a debt of £252 had been contracted, it was resolved, at a meeting of the landed proprietors and inhabitants, that, while the ordinary and quarterly collections were continued, the deficiency should be made up by a contribution from the heritors, in proportion to their estates, and by subscriptions from the inhabitants, without having recourse to the farmers in the country part of the parish. The town was divided into nine districts, and the funds were committed to the management of the magistrates, ministers, agents for the heritors, and nine householders. Their report, at the end of the year 1810, contained the following statement of the amount and application of the fund:—

| *Sums Collected.* | £. | s. | d. | *Sums Applied.* | £. | s. | d. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Ordinary collections at three parish churches,..... | 433 | 13 | 8 | To 477 ordinary poor, (who have of wives, children, and other persons dependent on them, 326) with five insane paupers, at from 1/6. to 16/. ℔ month, ..... | 1149 | 18 | 0 |
| Quarterly, do. ..... | 83 | 19 | 10 | | | | |
| Proclamation fees,..... | 121 | 4 | 0 | | | | |
| Mortcloth do. ..... | 29 | 5 | 6 | | | | |
| Donations, chiefly from fees collected by the Justices, on affidavits, | 94 | 14 | 1 | To 305 persons relieved by occasional supply,... | 304 | 12 | 6 |
| Interest and small fines,... | 34 | 0 | 2 | | | | |
| Contribution from heritors, | 96 | 15 | 0 | To 21 orphan children, at from 30/. to £5 ℔ quarter, | 122 | 5 | 0 |
| Subscriptions from the inhabitants,..... | 1004 | 16 | 0 | Funerals of paupers, clothing, &c. ..... ..... | 55 | 11 | 5 |
| | | | | Necessary expences, ..... | 84 | 5 | 3 |
| | £1898 | 8 | 3 | | £1714 | 12 | 2 |

"From the preceding accounts, which are taken from a printed report, it must be obvious, that the mode of both raising and applying the fund for the poor was judicious and frugal. Orphans and insane paupers were wholly supported from the fund; therefore, the small sums allowed to others were merely an aid to stimulate their industry. In many instances,

they were bestowed as a reward for exertion, and hence, as the committee express themselves, "an almost incredible number were preserved from begging, idleness, and vice." These beneficial effects, obtained at so small expence, are strong arguments for continuing a subscription in lieu of assessment."*

Since 1811, a change has taken place in the mode of managing the poor in this flourishing seaport town. By an act of parliament, obtained a few years ago, the three parishes of Greenock, (one of which comprehends a considerable landward district,) have been united in regard to the poor, and an assessment has been imposed, in terms of law, which lays one half on heritors, and the other half on the tenants. A general meeting of heritors and Kirk-sessions is held in February and August, as appointed by law; at the first of which, they examine the poors' rolls, fix the sum to be levied, name assessors, and appoint a committee of their own number, along with the ministers, to see their regulations carried into effect, and to do whatever else the law empowers the general meeting to do, for the prevention of improper settlements, and for the proper management of the poor. This committee meets monthly; the ministers attending only when they have business. The parishes are managed in the usual way, by the Kirk-sessions, and a sub-committee of the other committee; when enrolments are made, the rolls are examined, and the sum wanted fixed; and the accounts of each parish audited at the end of the year; which enrolments, sums, and docquets, the committee receive and produce to the Annual Meeting as their own. Each session, with its assistant sub-committee, confines itself to the affairs of its own parish; but the General Committee, having the result of all their respective labours before them, is qualified to recommend to the Annual Meeting such measures as may produce uniformity in the management of the whole. At the end of each month, the kirk treasurer of each parish makes out an account of the sum wanted from the assessed fund, in aid of the parish funds for the ensuing month, which is signed by the respective ministers and kirk treasurers, presented to the committee, and signed by the chairman, as an order on the bank holding the funds. The poor regularly on the rolls are paid monthly by the treasurer of each parish; and *occasional* supplies are given by him on a line being produced from the elder of the quarter, counter-signed by the minister of the

* Wilson's Survey, p. 312.

parish. In February 1818, the General Meeting of heritors and sessions appointed, that a sufficient number of persons should be named by the committee, to inspect the state of the poor who are not legally settled, that measures might be adopted for preventing them becoming a burden on the town. The committee, in compliance with this appointment, divided the town into 40 wards, with two inspectors to each ward, who have made the returns wanted, and at the same time, at the request of the sessions, have given in remarks on the session poor. In consequence of the first part of their report, summons of removal have been served on the poor not settled by law;—and in consequence of the second, the sessions have been found acting with strict œconomy. This appointment of *inspectors* is not in the law, but is within the power of a General Meeting; and has, in this instance, as in others, been found highly advantageous.

The present state and management of the poor in Greenock may be judged of from the following table:—

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Population of the three parishes, | | | 25,000 |
| Number of elders' quarters in do. | | | 40 |
| *Funds of the Poor.* | Annual collections at three parish churches, | | £524 |
| | Amount of other parish funds, | | £143 |
| | Assessment for 1816, £2,100 | | |
| | ——— 1817, £2,500 | average, | £2333 |
| | ——— 1818, £2,400 | | |
| | | | Sum total of provision for poor, £3000 |
| *Number of Poor.* | Ordinary poor on the rolls, | | 824 |
| | of whom 72 are wholly maintained by the parishes, being insane, orphans, &c. | | |
| | Occasional poor, | | 300 |
| | | | Total, 1124 |
| *Allowance to regular Poor.* | Maximum, except in the case of lunatics, | | 10s. 0d. |
| | Minimum, | | 1s. 6d. |
| | | | ℔ month. |

Occasional gifts vary from 1*l.* to 10*l.* according to circumstances.

## No. XXIX.

### *Management of the Poor in the Parish of Eastwood.*

In the mode of managing the poor in this parish, there are a few specialties which deserve notice.

Till within the last five years, there was no regular assessment. The collections, at the parish church, with other church funds, went far in support of the ordinary poor. But as it must be obvious that the poor of such an extensive parish could not be supplied by such limited funds alone, recourse was had from time to time to voluntary contributions among the heritors. On a day regularly fixed, once a-year, a meeting of heritors and Kirk-session was held, when a statement was exhibited of the amount of the regularly established fund for the preceding year. Whatever it might be, the heritors commonly agreed to subscribe to exactly the same amount, thus securing the great ends of an assessment, without any of its inconveniences.

This plan continued for many years, and was found to answer every purpose. At length it was resolved by the heritors, that instead of the plan of voluntary contribution, hitherto acted on, a regular scheme of assessment should be adopted. This was done; and in the course of a very short time, it began to shew its usual disadvantages. One great evil was particularly felt; namely, that those individuals, of the lower classes, who paid at the rate of a few shillings annually, came forward on occasional emergencies and demanded relief, on the ground that they had contributed to the fund, and, on that account, had a right to remuneration. In this way, the poors' fund began to be considered by them in the light of a *bank* or *friendly society*, to which the claims of members and contributors are complete. To counteract this evil, it has been lately agreed to, as a temporary measure, by way of experiment, that no person shall be required to pay to the fund any sum less than 5s. *Since this measure was adopted, the collections, which had fallen off, have nearly doubled.*

The following table will exhibit a comparative view of the state of this parish, in regard to the poor, at different periods.

| | Population. | Ordinary Poor. | Expenditure for ordinary and occasional Poor. |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1793, | 2,642 | 24 | £ 74 2 0 |
| 1811, | 4,845 | 48 | £253 7 3 |
| 1818, | 5,200 | 80 | £400 0 0 |

Allowance to ordinary poor, from 6*l*. to 24*l*. ℔ quarter.

The numbers of *occasional* poor vary, as do the sums allotted them.

## No. XXX.

### *On the New Prison and Bridewell for the County of Renfrew, now erecting in Paisley.*

Had the limits of this work permitted, it was my intention to have considered at some length the important subject of *prisons;* and, particularly, the principles on which the plan of the new gaol and bridewell of the County of Renfrew has been constructed. In the meantime, it gives me pleasure to state, that in this instance the judicious and enlightened suggestions, published in 1810, by the Rev. Dr. M'Gill of Glasgow, have been adopted and acted on to a very considerable extent.

1. With regard to *personal security*, nothing can be more complete than the provision which has been made for it—partly, by the localities of the situation—partly, by the construction of the rooms—partly, by the proximity of the governor's house; and partly by the strong and high walls with which the building is surrounded. The necessity of irons seems to be thus completely superseded.

2. Equally ample is the provision made for the "health" of the prisoners. The rooms, without exception, are lighted and aired from without;—a wide and airy passage runs from end to end of every flat;—the rooms are all spacious and lofty, and each has a ventilator towards the middle passage;—water is introduced into every division of the house;—there is a bath for the use of the prisoners;—and there are courts for exercise and recreation. Provision is made for heating the gaol and bridewell on the same principle as the Glasgow Lunatic Asylum; and this, besides having fire places in the day room and some of the cells of the debtors.

3. With regard to "*classification:*"—the prisons for *debtors* and *criminals* are wholly distinct;—the rooms are of such dimensions as to allow of the solitary confinement of criminals, while provision is made, in the structure of the house, for subdividing into distinct compartments, according to circumstances.

4. The apartments for *sleep* and for *work* are distinct; and these last vary in size so as to allow of different species of labour being introduced.

5. For *religious instruction*, a commodious *chapel* has been provided, so constructed as to admit the prisoners both from bridewell and gaol without interference, and so placed as to be secure from every risque. In this chapel, divine service will be performed at least once every Sabbath.

But the construction of a gaol is one thing, and its *practical management* is another. On this point, the following hints are respectfully suggested.

1. Let the provision which is made for the prisoners be altogether independent of the jailor; and let it not be his *interest*, in any shape, that they should indulge in fermented or spirituous liquors.

2. As there is ample provision made, in the structure of the house, for the work of the prisoners, let every facility and encouragement be given to it—let proper implements be provided—let regular accounts with every prisoner be kept, and let the gain of each, after paying the expense of his maintenance, be *his own*.

3. Let a committee be annually appointed to visit the house daily, or as often as possible—to mark its state—to see that the regulations are enforced—and to enter their observations and suggestions in a book kept for the purpose.

4. Let a proper person be appointed, in the capacity of *chaplain*, to perform divine service—to instruct the ignorant privately—to attend to the younger inmates—to provide proper books—and to watch over the general character and conduct of the prisoners.

5. Let this establishment be annually visited by the Lord Lieutenant, Vice-Lieutenant, or Sheriff of the County; and let the result of his observations be transmitted to Parliament.

—It is obvious, that the above remarks are meant to apply equally to bridewell and gaol—For information on both subjects, I would particularly recommend Dr. M'Gill's Remarks on Prisons—Howard, and Buxton, and Gurney, on the State of Prisons—Account of the Prison at Philadelphia, and the Report of the Society for the improvement of Prison Discipline, &c.

## No. XXXI.

*General Average Statement of Public Charitable Distribution in the Town and Abbey Parishes of Paisley.*

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Parochial Charity, | General Session, - - - - - - - about | £1,200 | |
| | Town's Hospital, - - - - - - - - | £1,500 | |
| | Abbey Parish, including Johnstone, - - | £1,700 | |
| | | | £4,400 |
| Extra Parochial. | By the magistrates, interest of mortified funds, | £96 | |
| | Lady Grant's Legacy, - - - - - - - - | £23 | |
| | Female Benevolent Society, - - - - - | £360 | |
| | | | £419 |
| Distributions of incorporated bodies, - - - - - - - - - - | | £500 | |
| ——— Benefit Societies, - - - - - - - - - - | | £1,500 | |
| | | | £2,000 |
| Distribution by Dissenting Congregations, - - - - - - - - - | | | £ 650 |
| | In all, - - - - - | | £7,469 |

## No. XXXII.

*Account of the Dollar Institution.*

In the Dissertation on the tendencies and effects of compulsory assessments, reference was made to the splendid bequest lately left to the poor of the parish of Dollar, near Stirling. (p. 115,) I have since obtained information respecting the nature of this bequest, and the purposes to which it is applied. The following facts are stated on unquestionable authority.

The bequest was left by the will of a person of the name of Macnab, a native of the parish, who, though destitute of all the ordinary advantages of education, by skill and industrious perseverance amassed a very large fortune in mercantile pursuits, the greater proportion of which he left to the poor of his native parish.

The sum originally devised, was about £70,000. Having been deposited in the Court of Chancery, where it lay for years, till some points of law had been settled by litigation, it has accumulated at the usual rate; and now, after paying the expense of law suits with the parties, it amounts to £92,345 2 8 3 per Cents. being in sterling money about £85,000.

The trustees appointed by will of the donor for administration of this charity, are "the minister and Kirk-session of the parish for the time being." But as it has been repeatedly found by the court of session* that Heritors of parishes have a joint right with the session in the management of all sums mortified to the poor, it follows, that the Heritors of the parish of Dollar, are legally vested with authority to review all the transactions of the trustees expressly nominated, and to see that they act in conformity to the terms of the original bequest. In the mean time, the Court of Chancery has ordered the interest and dividends to be henceforth paid to the minister and the elders of the parish for the time being.

The original design of the bequest as stated by the donor in his will, appears to be, the benefit of the poor of the parish by the erection of an hospital, or by such other means as shall appear to the trustees most advisable. A dispute having arisen between the Kirk-session and Heritors respecting the precise application of the bequest, it was found by the Master of the Rolls that the exact terms of the original deed must be adhered to in every iota, and an order was issued to that effect. It has since been found by the Lord Chancellor that the Court of Chancery has no jurisdiction in the first instance, over a charity to be erected in Scotland; that the Trustees ought to be left to their own judgment, subject to the control and correction of the courts of law in Scotland, from which an appeal may be taken to the Supreme Court in England. Accordingly, an order of Chancery has been issued for payment of the money or interest to the Trustees, to be applied for the benefit of the poor, by the establishment of Charity Schools, or such other means as may appear best fitted for following out the benevolent designs of the testator.

It is the intention of the Trustees to lay out the money for the education of the poor, and occasionally assisting the more deserving of the parishioners to keep their children at school. With this view, the foundation has lately been laid of a large building, to be denominated the "Dollar Academy", and classes have already been opened under separate masters for all the branches of education usually taught at a parochial school; it being understood that the number of the classes shall be increased as the circumstances of the parish may require. It is the laudable wish of the Trustees, that the course of education provided

* See Dissert. IV. p. 97.

for in this institution shall be such as may prepare young persons for the mercantile and manufacturing professions, and for agricultural and similar pursuits. It is their intention also, to establish some bursaries, to enable such boys as promise well, to prosecute their studies at the University. Those only who *live* in the parish are to have the benefit of the Institution. All who may be considered *poor* (and this includes the greater part of the population) are to receive education *gratis;* others are to pay a fee to be fixed by the Trustees.

The parish of Dollar is situated at the foot of the Ochils, distant from Stirling 12 miles. The air is salubrious—the soil fertile—and the situation on the whole, one of the most healthy and desirable in Scotland. In 1792 the population was only 510, but from the establishment of bleach-fields and other public works within the parish, or in the immediate vicinity, it may be expected rapidly to increase. I have no doubt that from the judicious arrangements made by the Trustees, and from the enlightened superintendence of the gentleman who holds the situation of minister of the parish*; the institution will prove a real blessing to the district and to the country at large.

## No. XXXIII.

*Additional decisions on the Poor.*

Since Dissertation IV. was printed, I learn that the Faculty Decisions have been published to November, 1817. There is, however, no case directly bearing on the subject of the poor. The only one at all applicable, is that of 14th February, 1817, Kirk-session of Garvald, against Forrest; where it was found that Sessions are not entitled to anticipate the burden of supporting an illegitimate child, by pursuing the father for aliment, unless a claim for its support has actually been made against the parish.—As to cases since November, 1817, I find on application to the collectors that there are none.

* The Rev. Andrew Mylne, A. M. author of a treatise on astronomy, and of various works on elementary education; all possessing distinguished merit.

In Section I. of Dissertation IV. it is laid down that a litigant on the poor's roll, however litigious, cannot be subjected in expenses. This has been very properly altered by subsequent precedents; and litigants *in forma pauperis* are put on the same footing as others in this respect, and are found liable in costs where the merits lead to such a finding. They may not be recoverable by reason of poverty; but the principle is the same.

## No. XXXIV.

*State and Management of the Poor in the Parish of St. Cuthbert's, or West Kirk, Edinburgh.*

Population, — — — about 42,000

| | | | ℔ annum. |
|---|---|---|---|
| *Funds of the Poor.* | Collections at Parish Church and Chapel, — — — — | | £500 |
| | General Session Funds, — — — — — — — — | | 200 |
| | Assessment, (1816 & 1817,) — — — — — — — | | 3,500 |
| | Amount of Funds for the Poor, about — — — — | | £4,200 |
| *No. of Poor.* | Regular Poor, — — Inmates in the Workhouse, Old and Young, about | 420 | 720 |
| | Occasional Poor, and out-pensioners of the Workhouse, about — — — — — — — — — — | 300 | |
| *Rate of allowance.* | Expense of each inmate in the House, annually, from £6 to £8. | | |
| | Allowance to Out pensioners—highest — — — | 8s. | ℔ Month. |
| | lowest, — — — | 3s. | |
| | average, — — | 5s. | |

1. The ecclesiastical provision connected with the establishment for the population of this parish is;—one parish church calculated to hold 2,700; and one chapel, to hold 1,350.

2. Till about the middle of last century, when population had rapidly increased, the poor were supplied in the way most generally adopted in Scotland;—by means of weekly collections and other funds at the charge of the Kirk-session.

3. In the year 1765, an assessment was begun, and has been kept up ever since, varying in amount according to circumstances. Since 1770, it has been levied on the proprietors

and tenants of lands and houses equally, according to the *real* rent.

4. The assessment is laid on at a conjunct meeting of the Heritors and Session, on the 1st Tuesday of August each year; when the Treasurer lays before the meeting a state of the whole receipts and expenditure during the preceding year; with a view of what sum is likely to be required for the next year; when the amount of the assessment is fixed, and authorised to be levied according to that statement and view.

5. In 1762, a Charity work-house was built; with regard to which, we have to state the following particulars:—

(1.) It is calculated to accommodate between 400 and 450 old and young; although there have never been in it above 430.

(2.) The management is vested in the Ministers of the church and chapel; the whole members of Kirk-session; the Lord Provost of Edinburgh, and certain Magistrates, and Deacons of Incorporations, &c. *ex officio;* together with 13 Heritors chosen annually at a joint meeting of Heritors and Session, on the 1st Tuesday in May.

(3.) The *internal* management of the house is vested in a master and mistress chosen by the Governors; and who act according to specific regulations.

(4.) The whole body of Managers meet *quarterly*, on the business of the house; and a Committee of their number, consisting of fifteen, meet monthly for all ordinary business. It belongs to this Committee to admit or reject applicants.

(5.) Every applicant, either for admission into the house, or for an out-pension, must present a petition, drawn up according to a printed form—stating his circumstances and claim; and attested by one of the Managers, in whose district the applicant resides.

(6.) Though by the rules, any Manager has the full power of recommending applicants, *practically* this power is exercised only by the elders; who, in consequence of having distinct quarters or bounds in the parish assigned them, are supposed to be, and almost uniformly are, much better acquainted with the actual circumstances of applicants, than almost any other of the Managers can possibly be.

(7.) Besides admission into the house, applicants may be admitted to the *out-pension* list, on its being certified that they are confined to bed; or in a state of disease, which would render them unfit inmates; or in circumstances of occasional dis-

tress; or placed in such a situation as renders it expedient, in the opinion of the Managers, to place them on the regular roll of out-pensioners, rather than to admit them into the house.

(8.) In admitting to the out-pension list, the rate is fixed according to an impartial view of the circumstances of the applicant, and particularly the extent of his other resources.

(9.) The elders have the power of *advancing* whatever sum they may think necessary to paupers; and also, of giving lines of admission to them into the workhouse, in the intervals between the monthly meetings; but at these meetings, the situation of the paupers so relieved and admitted, is specially considered, before the money so advanced is refunded to the elders, or the paupers are permanently admitted.

(10.) The house is visited weekly by two Managers, who note in a book kept for the purpose, the result of their observations.

(11.) The whole Session funds, including the weekly collections and dues arising from the church-yard; viz. from mort-cloths, graves, turfs, &c. after paying beadles, clerks, and other necessary expenses are paid into the Treasurer of the workhouse; the collections weekly; and the other funds once-a-month; and the Treasurer accounts annually, to the general meeting of heritors and elders for all his intromissions.

## No. XXXV.

*Account of the Destitute Sick Society of Edinburgh.*

THE following extract from their last report, published in December 1817, will put the public in possession of the leading features of this Institution, and the modes of its operation for more than 30 years past.

" The prominent design which they pursue, is to administer to the wants and necessities of the *industrious* poor, when prevented by personal or domestic sickness, from following the occupations by which they are accustomed to provide for them-

selves and families, and who, having neither friends nor relations to support them, nor ascertained legal claims on parochial or other public charities, would, without such assistance, languish, or perhaps even die, amid all the horrors of helpless and hopeless misery. And, surely this is a description of the population of our country, which has peculiar claims on every patriotic, no less than on every humane and Christian mind.

It was for the relief of such distress, that, in summer 1785, the formation of this society was originally suggested by a few benevolent individuals, in consequence of having learned the great good that had been done by a similar society instituted in London some years before.

During the first year and a half, viz. from July, 1785, to November, 1786, the sum distributed was only £61 18 6 by which aid was given to 137 families, consisting of 424 individuals. The second year, the expenditure was £105 9 7 on 230 families, or 590 persons. From 1787, to 1800, it varied from £200 to about £300 annually, by which from 400 to 600 families, consisting of from 1,000 to 1,250 individuals were relieved. During the next ten years, the increase both in the sums expended, and in the number relieved, was nearly in the same proportion with that of the preceding period; but, since 1810, the increase has been much more rapid, advancing, in point of expenditure, from less than £500, till this year, it has considerably exceeded £1,100; and, in respect to the number relieved, from about 750 to above 2,200 families, or from 1,850 to above 5,800 individuals. To the causes of this unexampled increase, it is unnecessary to advert; but the fact is stated with the view of shewing, how greatly beyond any thing which its original institutors could have anticipated, its operations have gradually been extended, and, by consequence, what a vast and continually accumulating load of human misery has been alleviated by its exertions. Yes! the fact is worthy to be known and remembered. Since July 1785, till November last, the means of lessening the aggravated pressure of helpless poverty, combined with debilitating sickness, have, by the instrumentality of this society alone, been afforded to no fewer than 22,419 families, composed in all of 55,093 individuals.

Let the philanthropist and the Christian dwell for a few moments on this fact. To above *twenty thousand* habitations of wretchedness, and penury, and sorrow, the means of compar-

ative comfort, and subsistence, and joy, have been conveyed. On above *fifty thousand* human beings, who had few to pity and none to help them, struggling with weakness and want, and trembling under a cloud of fear as to the future, the means of support have been bestowed, and the light of hope made to shine. Who can tell, how many, from among these thousands, have thus been raised from the bed of distress, and enabled, with recruited strength, to pursue their wonted labour with cheerfulness and vigour; supporting, by their industry, and training to the same habits, those children of their affection, who, but for such seasonable relief, might have been deprived for ever of a parent's protection, a parent's example, and a parent's prayers? Who can tell, how many widowed mothers and orphan children, have thus found the declaration realised in their own experience, that God is the husband of the widow, and the orphan's shield? Who can tell, how many a supplication has thus been made to ascend from the couch of sorrow, for blessings on the almoners who visited and soothed it; and how many songs of grateful praise have issued from the lips of renovated health to that God who sent relief in the time of need? Nay, who can tell how many have had their last moments cheered and elevated by the instructions and prayers of the visitors, who carrying along with them at once the alms-givings of charity, and the gift of a Bible, or the oral message of peace and reconciliation, have been honoured to assist in preparing the departing spirit for entering that better world, where poverty, and sickness, and sorrow, and fear, and death, shall be known no more for ever? —For, the society have no wish to conceal, that although the communication of religious instruction is not the direct or immediate object of the institution, no favourable opportunity is neglected by the visitors, of prudently and earnestly recommending the great concerns of salvation to the pensioners of their bounty.

" And at what pecuniary expense have these 22,000 families and 55,000 individuals been relieved? Let those, who seem scarcely to know or consider the value of money, and who are accustomed thoughtlessly to spend what might have added to the means of such relief, consider, what they will perhaps scarcely believe, that all this has been done for little more than £12,000! the whole expenditure of the society, from its commencement till November last, having been only £12,225 17 10:—a sum which, though it has diffused gladness

through such a multitude of dwellings and of hearts, would not nearly defray the expense of erecting and opening a single theatre, according to the taste of the present day. And, with these facts before the public, will the society appeal in vain to any who have the smallest pretensions, they will not say to the tender sensibilities, but to the ordinary humanity of our nature, if they possess the means of contributing to their funds? Or will any Christian, who has the power, however limited, refuse them the little he can spare? "*He that giveth to the poor, lendeth to the Lord, and he will repay.*"

## No. XXXVI.

*Progress of Infectious Fever in Paisley and Glasgow.*

### TABLE I.

MONTHLY Report of Fever Cases, admitted into the House of Recovery, and on the Dispensary in Paisley, since 1st January, 1818.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| January, | Admitted, | 48 |
| February, | | 45 |
| March, | | 52 |
| April, | | 57 |
| May, | | 88 |
| June, | | 68 |
| July, | | 94 |
| August, | | 98 |
| September, | | 118 |
| October, | | 140 |

### TABLE II.

Weekly Report of Fever Cases, extracted from the books of the Committee, appointed for aiding in suppression of fever in Paisley, from 7th December, 1818, to 26th April, 1819.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1818, 7 Dec. | *Number of Cases reported for the preceding week.* | 117 |
| 14, | | 117 |
| 21, | | 139 |
| 28, | | 121 |
| 4 Jan. 1819, | | 113 |
| 11, | | 114 |
| 18, | | 122 |
| 25, | | 108 |
| 1 Feb. | | 123 |
| 8, | | 127 |
| 15, | | 101 |
| 22, | | 101 |
| 1 March, | | 96 |
| 8 | | 86 |
| 15, | | 98 |
| 22, | | 100 |
| 29, | | 86 |
| 5 April, | | 88 |
| 12, | | 58 |
| 19, | | 59 |
| 26, | | 58 |

## TABLE III.

### Sum Total of Fever Cases in Paisley.

| | |
|---|---|
| Cases of Fever treated within the House of Recovery during 1818, | 606 |
| Cases on the Dispensary previous to the institution of the Fever Committee, | 92 |
| Cases Reported to the Fever Committee by their own statement, | 850 |
| Supposed number of private Cases during the year, | 200 |
| Total, | 1748 |

## TABLE IV.

The reader will be enabled to form a comparative view, of the towns of Glasgow and Paisley, with regard to the contagious fever, by examination of the following statement:—

| | |
|---|---|
| Typhus Patients, admitted into the Royal Infirmary, since January 1st, till end of October, 1818, | 1,192 |
| Do. into Relief Hospital, from 28th March last, till end of October, | 798 |
| Under the care of District Surgeons, in general, since 28th March, | 552 |
| Treated by particular District Surgeons, since 1st Oct. 1817, till 26th Oct. 1818, | 750 |
| | 3,292 |

The whole number of Fever Patients for last year in Glasgow, Dr. Millar believes, cannot be less than 4,000. See Letter to the Fever Committee, &c.

The following observations by Dr. M'Gill, in his "Remarks on Prisons," are worthy the attention of all who feel an interest in the comfort of the labouring classes, and who have the power of applying a remedy to the existing evils, which are so properly adverted to.

"While on this subject," (the health of prisoners,) "will I not be pardoned, for expressing my ardent wishes, that those who may be able to remedy the evil, would give attention to the condition of those wretched hovels, which the labouring classes in great towns are obliged frequently to inhabit. Pent up in the narrowest, and dirtiest lanes, in houses, damp, confined, airless, crowded and huddled together, more like places for cattle than men; they breathe a foul and putrid air, and lose all spirit and desire for cleanliness, decency, and order. The effect of such circumstances, not only on the health and comfort, but morals and character of the people, is great. Those habits of decent neatness, so important, not only to comfort, but to dignity of mind, and a maintenance of character, are lost; because the opportunity of forming, or maintaining them, is not given. The woman loses the desire to please, and sinks into a slattern. Home affords few inducements to the husband after the labours of the day. His family presents a scene of filth and disorder; spiritless and unhappy, he is tempted to seek abroad, the comfort which his own dwelling cannot give; and habits of drinking, not unfrequently complete the wretchedness of his condition. If such be the effect on the parents, need I enlarge on what must be the state and comfort of children! Can it be inconsistent with the liberty of the subject, or the rights of private property, to guard against such evils? To fix, for example, a certain width for the streets, and lanes, and passages of a town, within which, they shall not be contracted, to oblige proprietors to set apart places for dunghills, and means for carrying off stagnant water from the houses they let, according to their number and population; and to appoint rules for keeping clean, not only the larger streets, but the narrowest lanes and corners of the city. These might all be objects of public police; and few objects, I am persuaded, would produce greater effect on the comfort, health, and manners of the people."

# PART THIRD.

# SKETCHES

OF

# THE STATE AND MANAGEMENT OF THE POOR

ON THE

# CONTINENT, &c.

IN this department of the work, it is my intention to exhibit a few specimens of the mode in which the concerns of the poor have been attended to, in former and in later times, in different countries and cities on the continent of Europe. The intelligence has been obtained partly through the medium of authors, who have written professedly on the subject; and partly through the medium of reports, magazines, and manuscript communications chiefly in the German language, with which I have been favoured by correspondents in Hamburgh. The particular authorities will be cited and referred to, under each separate article.—This part of the work might have been extended to an indefinite length; but the necessary limits of a volume of moderate size, rendered selection and condensation indispensably necessary.—The facts exhibited are, in most instances left to make their own impression; although a few reflections on the general principles illustrated by them, are occasionally introduced.

## No. I.

*Regulations enacted by the Emperor Charles V. respecting the Poor of Holland, and the United Provinces.*

In the Statute-book of the Emperor Charles V. of date, 7th October, 1531, we have a variety of enactments on the

subject of the maintenance of the poor, and the suppression of begging. As these form the ground work of the procedure adopted in those countries, particularly in Holland, as will be more fully exhibited afterwards, I shall select a few of the leading regulations, subjoining such remarks as naturally occur.

" Whereas, the poor of our provinces are now much more in number than they formerly used to be, and whereas, it has been found by experience, that many abuses have arisen from suffering them to beg and ask alms, particularly that it fixes them in idleness (which is the beginning of all evil) and that neither they nor their children follow any trade, or method of getting their living, but are thus brought into base actions, and a bad manner of life, so that though young, strong, and healthy, they nevertheless extort, by great importunities, what ought to go to the poor and sick, to the impotent, and those who are in danger of starving; and whereas, before our departure we desire to remedy and regulate these evils; Be it enacted, that no one, be it man or woman, from this time forward, shall beg or ask alms, by day or by night, secretly or openly, in the streets, in the churches, nor in, nor at the houses of our good people, in any manner whatsoever, upon the penalty, that whosoever acts contrary to this law, shall be put, for the first offence in prison, and fed on bread and water, according to the discretion of our officers, judges, and magistrates, who shall be commissioned to execute this our edict:"—" And for the second offence they are to be whipped and corrected, according to the discretion of our officers; except always the mendicant friars, &c. No foreigner, nor outlandish person, shall beg or ask alms, but shall be liable to the same penalties; *except pilgrims.*—All the poor residing in our said provinces, and having been there a whole year, must remain in the places where they are settled, and have their share and part of the alms which shall be there ordered them, without going to beg alms or bread, openly or secretly, as hitherto.—Whoever shall permit their children, whether great or small, to go and commit any rascality, or to beg and ask alms, shall undergo the aforesaid penalties, and the children shall be whipped with rods, and otherwise corrected according to the discretion of the magistrates. As for the support of the poor, sick and others, not able to get their bread, nor having any thing to live upon, in any town or village of our said provinces; we order that a common fund shall be made of all

charities, poor houses, hospitals, brotherhoods, and others having the distribution of the product of alms, and that part thereof shall be given to the poor, according to the advice of the masters and governors of the aforesaid charities, poor-houses, &c. joined with such of the officers and magistrates, of every town, parish or village, as shall be deputed for that purpose, according to the manner hereafter declared; except that alms founded for ecclesiastics, as well mendicants as others, shall be distributed according to the directions of the founders.—That for the future, boxes shall be placed in every parish church of our provinces, to receive the secret alms of our good people; the said boxes to be locked with three keys, of which the parish priest shall keep one, the magistrates another, and the deputies to be appointed for joint management, a third; which said persons are empowered to take the money out of said boxes, whenever they shall think good; and further, the magistrates and officers of each parish shall depute an honest man or two, to go round the said churches, once or twice a-week, to collect for the poor; and besides, the aforesaid deputies of every parish, shall go once a-week or oftener, to every house, in order to beg alms for the support of the poor; and all these several committees or deputies, as well those who receive, as those who distribute these contributions, are obliged hereby to give an account, at the end of every month, of what they receive or distribute, before the magistrates or their deputies, in public and open places, where every body shall be admitted that have a mind to come in.—In order to regulate and conduct this work of charity, the magistrates of every town and village are hereby required to chuse out persons, residing among them, the best qualified for the said purposes, whom we require and order to take upon them this care, according to their duty to God, and out of a true spirit of charity, and to regulate themselves in it according as is prescribed them by our edict; and the said deputies so chosen, shall appoint themselves a Treasurer to keep their particular accounts of the aforesaid alms, and what belongs to them on that account, and shall each in his district, take or cause to be taken, an exact list of the number, state, quality, and condition of the poor within it, of what trade and of what age they are, how they are burdened with children, what they gain or may gain.—The alms shall be distributed in every parish, according to the discretion of the said deputies, be it in money, bread, firing, clothes, or other necessaries, consideration being had of the

quality and condition of the aforesaid poor persons; to drunkards, idlers, gamesters, and such like, no money is to be given, but only bread, firing, clothing, and other necessaries to maintain their families; and those that lead idle and roguish lives, and are able, shall be compelled to work and to bring their gains home, under the penalty of being deprived of the benefit of the alms purse; and besides, of being punished arbitrarily by the magistrate.—That sick and weak persons, who cannot come out of their houses, and women in childbed shall be visited and assisted by the alms purse, and provided with linen, sheets, and coverlids, with victuals, with firing, and other necessaries; and so likewise must young orphans and foundlings be maintained out of the said alms purse.—As to the children of those poor people who were idlers living upon roguery, some shall be put to school, and some to trades or to service, and shall on holidays and Sundays, be taught the Lord's prayer, the creed, and the commandments, and shall be carried to mass and to vespers every Sunday; and that the said children may be put into a condition to go to trades or service, the said committee shall have them cleaned, and clothed decently.—The poor that live upon this alms purse must wear a badge.—We forbid all persons who by themselves or their children, enjoy any share of the distribution of the alms purse, from henceforth to go into or converse in taverns, cabarets, or such like places; we likewise forbid them playing at ninepins, bowls, dice, or other such forbidden games, upon pain of arbitrary punishment; consenting, nevertheless, that they may sometimes drink a pot of beer for their recreation with their wives, but not so as to be drunk."*

*Remarks on the above Statutes.*

1. From a comparative view of the above statutes and others enacted about the same period in Scotland, England, and other countries, it is curious to remark the almost universal prevalence of mendicity during the latter half of the fifteenth and the beginning of the sixteenth century, caused probably in part by the multiplication of religious houses and orders; and partly by the general dissoluteness of manners. The prevalence of mendicity appears to have been the great cause of the establishment of

* Groot. Placart. Book I. b. 20. T. Savary's Universal Dictionary translated by Malachi Postelthwayt Esq. Vol. II. p. 492.

poor laws in all countries; and the laws to restrain it partake of the severity of the times.

2. The exemptions in favour of mendicant friars, pilgrims, &c. show that popery had still the ascendancy in the united provinces;—and it is very plain that such exemptions tended to cripple the law, and to establish mendicity in several forms under the sanction of civil statute. In popish countries, to this day, the monks and friars constitute the severest part of the burden of pauperism. *

3. One year's residence appears by these laws to constitute a settlement. This is certainly too short a term. A period of not less than three, and not more than five years, appears to be the most fair and equitable. Such a period is necessary to establish a character in a place, as well as to found a fair claim on the ground of independent industry.

4. The law which allows and requires parents to watch over their children, and inflicts a penalty for negligence and bad example, appears very salutary and politic on obvious grounds.

5. The fund provided for alms appears to have been wholly voluntary; and thus were avoided many of the evils of assessments, while the obligations of private charity were recognised and enforced.

6. The mode of collecting and distributing appears to be the most judicious that could be thought of, and a wholesome check on managers is furnished by the *publicity* of their transactions, and the periodical reviews of the magistrates.

7. The duties devolved by these laws on magistrates and deputies appointed by them, were afterwards taken up and discharged, as they still are by the elders and deacons, who form the consistory in the Reformed Church.

## No. II.

*View of laws enacted by the States General of Holland in* 1614 *and* 1649, *regarding the poor; with remarks.*

"ALL men or women, who being in health go a-begging, or are vagabond, either in the towns or open countries, shall be obliged within four days from the publication of this edict, to

* See Dissert. V. Sect. I. p. 107.

quit the province of Holland, or to acquaint the officer of the place where they design to get their livelihood, by work or by trade, and to give him a declaration who they are, whence they came, what is their business, and likewise inform him where they lodge and lie at nights; and pray permission to stay in that place, one, two, or three days, engaging themselves not to beg in the meantime.—All children forbid to beg, on pain of being put to bread and water, if above eight years of age.—The fathers and lodgers of children as well above as under eight years of age are required to take good care that their children do not go a-begging under the penalty of being punished as beggars themselves.—For the clearing of the open country, all the drosts (constables) are ordered to go about the districts every eight days, and take up all vagabonds and beggars, and to deliver them into the hands of the officer of the place where they are taken, to be proceeded against according to this law. We command likewise the ordinary officers of justice, so often as they can, and at least once a month, to do the same; and the aforesaid drosts are ordered to give an account to the provincial council of state, and the aforesaid ordinary officers to the court of Holland, either by word of mouth or by writing, of what they have done, touching the execution of this article.—Officers are ordered to search inns, and all suspected places, to find out beggars, and apprehend them.—All carriers, waggoners, &c. &c. are forbidden to transport any beggars, from one place to another, under penalty of three guilders for every offence.—Every town, village, or parish, is bound to maintain its poor out of the income of charitable foundations and collections; and if that fails, the magistrates are to maintain them at the general expense of the inhabitants in such way as may be agreed on, provided the poor, who are able, be made to work and all indolence punished."

1. It would appear that in 1614 and 1649 when the above laws were enacted by the states, mendicity still prevailed to an oppressive extent, and its suppression seems to be the prominent object contemplated by all the statutes. These statutes are particularly severe on those houses which were supposed to harbour, and thus to encourage in their evil ways, beggars, gypsies, and such like. It seems a wholesome regulation to appoint occasional domiciliary visits of the police, to such haunts of idleness, beggary, and vice. Places of this kind are to be found in all large towns, and a vigilant *surveillance* is the only adequate check.

2. Notwithstanding the radical change that had taken place in Holland, and the United Provinces both in religion and in political administration, the laws of Charles V. respecting the poor appear to have been retained as on the whole, politically wise. In the reformed provinces of Holland, the administration of the poor passed into other hands than those to which it was entrusted by the laws; but the laws themselves were only enlarged and confirmed, not abrogated.

3. In all these regulations, it is an essential principle of vast importance that no person ought to be held in the capacity of a pauper who is able to work; and that the laws should contemplate the relief only of those who by sickness, age, or other necessary causes, are rendered inefficient and dependent. This principle has been practically lost sight of in England.

4. Voluntary beneficence is still recognised by these laws, as the grand resource for the relief of the poor; and the civil magistrate is appointed to interfere only where that is found to be insufficient, and the means for supplying such deficiency, it is in every case left to those most interested and best qualified, to determine.

5. It does not appear that either in the laws of Charles V. or in those of the States General, is the idea held out of a *right* on the part of the poor to maintenance from the rich. This idea seems to have been grafted on the English system, and the practical mischief which has resulted from it is incalculable.

## No. III.

*On the reasons for the small proportion of Poor in Holland.*

The following remarks on this subject were written nearly forty years ago; and it may be supposed that since that period the state of Holland and of all commercial countries, has greatly changed. Still, I have reason to believe that the representation, in its leading features, will apply to the present state of Holland; and on that account I have thought it worthy of a place among these sketches.

"The principal reason assigned for the small proportion of poor in Holland, is the natural disposition of the people, strengthened by education and habit. From their earliest days, they are trained up in the practice of industry, sobriety,

and frugality, which enables them to support themselves in almost any situation. They are remarked for this in every corner of the world; a Dutch family will pick up a subsistence where another is starving. Their habitual temperance becomes a source both of public and private prosperity. While they deny themselves to those excesses which plunge so many thousands in other countries into the depths of poverty and wretchedness, they become by their industry useful members of the state; and, living with contented parsimony, they are seldom a burden on the public, having laid up some provision for a time of distress. Though they have been stigmatized with selfishness, and taking every advantage in trade; yet it is certain that there is neither the same dissipation among the affluent, nor the same profligacy among the commonalty, that is observable in most other states in Europe.

The national character of the Dutch is probably formed by their situation and circumstances. Confined to a narrow spot of ground, industry, with the most frugal œconomy, become absolutely necessary. Did they depart from these principles, their ruin must be the consequence. They are encouraged to the practice of these virtues, not only by the example of the rich, amongst whom it is reckoned a reproach to be idle or profuse, but likewise by the employment afforded to every individual, and the opportunity given in a free commercial state of acquiring wealth. Their extensive trade, their fisheries and manufactures, constantly require so many hands, that the natives are insufficient for the demand. There it is well known, that, if any person be found idle, it cannot be for want of employment. On this pretence they can expect no compassion; therefore, unless they are disabled by age or disease, they are compelled to labour.

In Holland, as in every other country, it is to be expected that some will be found addicted to slothful and vicious habits, from which neither poverty, nor the fear of shame can deter them. Though it is not to be expected that any punishment will entirely reclaim such; yet, as the example is dangerous, and the number of the useless and vicious might increase, were any indulgence given to them, persons of this character are treated with great rigour. The civil magistrates are invested with large discretional powers, as censors of the morals and manners of the people.

Though it has been said that there is no public begging in Holland, yet this is not strictly true. In some instances it is

permitted. When an industrious family is reduced to indigence by fire, or by any uncommon misfortunes, a license is granted to beg; but this is granted with restrictions, and a certificate which they must have ready to produce when required. There are also a few vagrant beggars; but these are seldom natives, being commonly Jews or Germans. Vagrant begging they are at the utmost pains to suppress, and they are rigid in the execution of the laws against it.* In every town there is a public correction house, in which offenders are confined for a shorter or longer time according to their fault. The provision allowed them is of the poorest kind, being commonly boiled beans and water. Even for this they are compelled to work. They earn their hard fare, by rasping *lignum vitæ*, or by some laborious exercise of the same kind. When they complete their task, whatever they do beyond it is for their own benefit. No corporal punishment can be so great a terror to persons of a slothful or of a vicious disposition: and as, from the strict execution of the law, they may lay their account with this treatment, it is to be expected that the numbers of this character, under such a government, will be smaller in proportion, than in other countries, where there is less restraint.

On the whole, as it has been observed, that sloth and vice are the most frequent causes of dependent poverty in this country, so we must ascribe the small number of poor in Holland to their industry, to the encouragement given to it, and to the punishment inflicted on idleness and profligacy."

## No. IV.

*Method of providing for the Poor in Holland.*

The mode of providing for the poor in Holland bears a very striking resemblance to that appointed by the constitution, and embodied in the practice, of Scotland. The immediate charge of the poor is committed to the consistory or session, composed of the elders and deacons of the church, who are generally of the most respectable and intelligent of the citizens. Every parish is divided into districts or quarters, and over

* Sir J. Carr speaks of having been annoyed by beggars, but at the same time praises the strictness of the police.—Travels in Holland, 1807.

each of these, one or more of these office bearers preside. They are supposed by residence and otherwise to be well acquainted with the state of the people of the district, and are at particular pains in inquiring into the character, circumstances, and real state of the poor. When an industrious family is in distress their case is immediately attended to and a weekly provision allotted them, such as is thought sufficient for their support. The aid is generally granted in money, or provisions, or clothing. Occasional charity is also given to poor persons labouring under temporary distress. Indeed the greater part of the public charity is bestowed in occasional gifts. For instance, it may easily be supposed that in winter during six or eight weeks when the frost sets in severely, the wants of the poor will be peculiarly clamant, and many families may require some aid to carry them through, who at other seasons are able to support themselves.

Every town or congregation supports its own poor, either out of the collections which are made every Sunday, and church-day, at the ordinary collections which are made four times a-year, or the extraordinary ones, which are made when necessity requires, and which are frequently four times more. These voluntary contributions are laid up and distributed by the deacons of the several congregations, and the poor are by them either maintained in their own houses, or lodged with others, according to their circumstances or infirmities. The charity of the people of Holland is such, that in ordinary years, the collections suffice for the maintenance of the poor; but in extraordinary ones, the magistrates have advanced great sums for that purpose; as for example, in the year 1740 (the winter of which was extremely cold) the magistrates of the Hague paid 15,000 guilders,* and those of Leyden 30,000, on that account. But the diacony or treasury of the reformed and established church of Amsterdam was on so good a footing, that they did not even in that year, want the aid of the magistrate. They distributed 578,758 guilders, but their income is about 500,000. It ought to be recollected that in former times, the ordinary and extraordinary collections in the Dutch churches were uncommonly liberal; and even at the present day the poor are by no means neglected by the congregations; the Romish, Lutheran, and various dissenting congregations, support their respective poor in the same way as the reformed church. In Holland there is no fixed and permanent tax for the poor; small fees are exacted at marriages, baptisms, &c. and an occasional assessment may

* A Dutch guilder is equal to about 1s. 10d. Sterling.

be imposed, but voluntary benevolence has all along been the permanent feature of the system.

Besides regular and occasional distribution, the Dutch have their hospitals for the reception of the poor, of the same nature with our charity workhouses; but they seem to have been aware of the expense of them, and therefore have put them on a more limited plan. None are admitted but old unmarried men or women and children whose parents are abroad, or unable to take care of them. Such of them as are able, are put to work certain hours of the day for the benefit of the hospital; the remaining time they are allowed to work for themselves. As soon as the children are able to work they are put to regular employments. Their wages go to support the establishment; they receiving a small sum by way of encouragement.*

Besides poor and orphan houses, they have also in Holland different charitable foundations, where poor people of certain qualifications, according to the intention or humour of the founders, are admitted, and receive a more liberal provision. They have likewise *proveniers* or boarding houses, where, for so much money paid in, a person acquires a good lodging and maintenance for life. The sum paid is in proportion to the age of the person to be maintained, and according to the nature of the accommodation stipulated for. The houses resemble in this respect, the cloisters and convents in Popish countries.

It is to be supposed that the charitable establishments of Holland must have suffered much during the long and severe conflict lately terminated. We may now rationally hope that its admired Institutions will regain their former lustre, and that through mutual intercourse, they will become better known and imitated by the inhabitants of other countries.

On the whole, there is reason to think that Holland owes its good management of the poor, not so much to its laws, as to the economy, the fidelity, the perseverance, and the piety of those who have been entrusted with their practical administration.†

* There are also correction-houses (called *Rasp-houses*) on the plan of our bridewells, where culprits are subjected to hard labour and scanty allowance; while instruction and other means are employed to effect their reformation.

† Collections relative to relief of Poor, p. 83. M'farlane's Inquiries, p. 208. Postelthwayt's Dictionary, vol. II. p. 495.

## No. V.

*Charities of Naples and other Towns of Italy.*

The Hospitals of Naples are very numerous and very richly endowed. They are superintended by persons of the first rank, who bestow on them a care and an economy rarely exemplified. To each of them is annexed what is called a *confraternity*, or voluntary association of benevolent persons who attach themselves to one species of affliction and distress, and thus by the division of labour, secure the more complete discharge of the obligations of benevolence. The members visit the hospitals—inquire into the case of every inmate—and render them the kindest services. Of charitable foundations in Naples, the number is about 60. Of these there are—

Hospitals properly so called,..... 7.
Receptacles for Foundlings and Orphans,.....30.
Banks for small receipts and loans,..... 5.

The rest are either schools or confraternities. Besides these there are both in Naples and other towns of Italy, *Conservatories* or schools opened for poor children of both sexes, where they are educated, fed, and taught some handicraft or other. There are also *benevolent associations* for relief of occasional distress among the industrious poor; for the visitation of prisoners, &c. &c.*

The grand objections to Italian charities are *two*—*First*, the funds, supplied by legacies, donations, &c. are immensely disproportioned to the real demand, and thus tend to encourage idleness and vice—*Second*, in admission of applicants to the charities, there is little or no discrimination, and the distinction between those who *cannot* and those who *will not* labour for themselves is practically neglected. The consequence is, a profusion of pauperism and prevalent mendicity.

* Travels in Italy by Baretti, Eustace, &c.

## No. VI.

*State of the Poor in Spain and Portugal.*

SOUTHEY says of Lisbon, "the streets are infested by a "nuisance more intolerable than their nightly darkness, or "their eternal dirt,—the beggars. I never saw so horrible a "number of wretches, made monstrous by nature, or still more "monstrous by the dreadful diseases that their own vices have "contracted. You cannot pass a street without being sickened "by some huge tumour, some misshapen member, or un-"covered wound, carefully exposed to the public eye. These "people should not be suffered to mangle the feelings, and in-"sult the decency of the passenger; if they will not accept the "relief of the hospital, they should be compelled to endure the "restraint of the prison. I do not extend my censure to that "multitude of beggars who weary you at every corner with sup-"plications for the love of GOD and the Virgin; these wretches, "so many and so miserable, do indeed occasion harsh and un-"gentle feelings, not against them, but against that depraved "society, that disinherits of happiness half the civilized world."

In *Townsend's journey through Spain* it is observed, that the country is depopulated from the various evil consequences of bad government. The *regidors*, police magistrates, purchase their offices, and indemnify themselves at the expense of the poor and industrious. The number of convents is nearly nine thousand. Persons bound to celibacy by vows are estimated at near two hundred thousand. Speaking of Seville, he says, "In traversing the streets I was struck with the multitude of "beggars clothed in rags, and was at first inclined to attribute "this to the decay of trade; but upon examination, I found "a more abiding cause in the distribution of alms at the Arch-"bishop's palace and at the gates of twenty convents, daily, "and without distinction, to all who make application for re-"lief. Such misplaced benevolence is a bar to industry, and "multiplies the objects of distress, whose numbers bear exact "proportion to the provision so made for their support."

Mr. T. notices, in his account of Cadiz, three hospitals for the sick, in one of which they have six thousand patients, and

lose annually on an average one tenth, There is also a Retreat, or Asylum, for forty-seven widows. But the most interesting of their public establishments is the *Hospicio*, or general workhouse. In it are received the poor of all descriptions, young and old, the blind, the lame, idiots and insane. The average number of persons maintained in the house appears to be eight hundred and fifty-five. "Forty-five looms and six-"teen stocking frames are provided for their service, with a "sufficient number of spinning-wheels, working benches, tools "for carpenters, turners, shoemakers, and taylors, a twisting-"mill, a spinning-jenny, and a machine for carding cotton." The expence of the house for the year 1786, was equal to £13,850. The food for each individual appears to have amounted in the year to £6 7 4; clothes to 13s. 8d.; but the average expence of the establishment will give £14 8 7 for the expence of each, not including the produce of his labour. This produce, besides its proceeding from but a part of those who are on the establishment, as the infirm of all kinds contribute nothing by industry, is much less profitable than that of ordinary manufactories. "People deprived of liberty uni-"versally eat too much, and work too little. This, beyond a "question, is the case at Cadiz in the *Hospicio*, in which they "have ninety-two holidays allowed them, and in which the "expense of food and raiment is double what it should be."

## No. VII.

*Philanthropic Society of Paris.*

As there is no poor's rate in France, the care of the poor devolves on the funds of charitable establishments, and on the charities of private benevolence. Among the benevolent associations in Paris previous to the revolution, the "Philanthropic Society" demands particular notice. It was founded in 1780, under the patronage of Louis XVI. for the purpose of raising subscriptions for the relief of the poor, whom its members sought out, visited, and relieved, with commendable assiduity. From the Reports it appears, that the funds of the society gradually increased from 1780 to 1789; that it consisted on an average of 821 members, among whom were some of the Royal Fa-

mily; that its receipts had often exceeded the sum of 120,000 francs; and that during the first ten years of its existence, the aid which it had distributed to the poor of Paris alone, amounted to more than 1,200,000 francs. Since the Revolution, its movements have been sadly crippled; but in the Report for the year 1813, 1814, it is stated that the members of the Society, in addition to their ordinary charge, distinguished themselves by their tender care of the sick and wounded soldiers who had suffered in Buonaparte's wars. In fact, the Society has extended its efforts to every object of charity; to the distribution of aid to the distressed; to the establishment of dispensaries, and the endowment of schools for the instruction of the poor.*

## No. VIII.

*State and management of the Poor in Iceland.*

In the very interesting narrative of Sir George Stewart Mackenzie's travels in Iceland, during the summer of 1810, &c. we find an account of a regularly established law to secure the maintenance of the infirm poor. "The Icelandic laws "respecting the condition and maintenance of the poor are "very strictly enforced, and become much more burthensome to "the farmers and peasants of the country than the taxes to "which they are subject. With the exception of three small "buildings for the admission of a few incurable lepers, there "is no public establishment in the Island which affords a "permanent abode to the aged and destitute, and by all such "the more immediate assistance of their fellow citizens is there-"fore imperiously required. The laws render it necessary for "every farmer or householder to receive into his family, "and to give support to, those of his relations even in the "fourth degree of kindred, who may be in a destitute con-"dition. If he has no such calls made upon him by con-"sanguinity, he is still required to assist in support of the "poor, either by admitting some orphan or aged person into "his house, or by contributing an annual sum proportioned

* Rapport du Societé Philanthropique, &c. 1814.

" to the value of his property. It not unfrequently happens, " that a landed proprietor, who pays little more than two rix- " dollars to the public revenue, is called upon for forty, fifty, " or even sixty, as his ratio towards the maintenance of the " poor in the district, when he is unwilling to receive any of " these into his own habitation. The execution of the poor " laws is committed to the Hreppstiorè of each parish, and " forms the most essential part of the duties of his office."

## No. IX.

*Management of the Poor at Manheim.*

SUBSTANCE OF A LETTER FROM GEORGE SINCLAIR, ESQ. YOUNGER OF ULBSTER.*

*Manheim, 22d Nov.* 1816.

MANHEIM consists of about 20,000 inhabitants. The wars which desolated Germany, involved the town in great distress. The sick and aged were left destitute; the education of poor children was neglected; and beggars increased. The late Grand Duke of Baden, impressed with a sense of these evils, established a Commission for the police of the poor, consisting of eight members of different religious persuasions. The funds were raised by an appeal to the benevolence of the public; an asylum was established for education, work, and cure; begging was prohibited by law, and a fine of one rix-dollar was imposed on those who gave alms to mendicants on the street, in place of referring them to the proper officer.

The town is divided into eighteen districts, in each of which there is a committee, consisting of a chairman, treasurer, and overseers, who remain in office two years, and one half is annually renewed, but may be re-elected, if a wish is intimated to continue. A perpetual general treasurer, with a salary, is appointed by the Commission.

* I have used the liberty of quoting this Letter from Mr. Ewing's Glasgow Report; and take this opportunity of noticing the extraordinary claims which that valuable document has on the attention of the public.

The duty of the *chairman* is, to receive from the overseers all the applications for relief—to empower the overseers to draw on the district treasury the sums requisite for supply; or, in case of urgent need, to grant aid himself—to keep a book, in which the names of the paupers are entered on separate pages, with remarks—and to attend to the conduct and morals, as well as the necessities of the poor. The duty of the *treasurer* is, to receive the contributions of the subscribers in his district—to pay to the overseers the sum they are authorised to disburse—and to keep regular accounts in printed forms, of which a copy is sent to the Commission, who authorise the general treasurer either to receive the balance, or make up the deficiency. The duty of the *overseers* is, to obtain as accurate a knowledge as possible of the poor in their districts, by visitation and inquiry,—to superintend the conduct, circumstances and health of paupers—to procure employment for those who are able and willing to work—to pay the allowance to all the paupers at the same time, once a week, who appear personally, if well, with their work-book—to keep an account of the allowances in clothes, beds, or money; of the work procured, and performed, and of any change that may occur in the situation of the families—to pay, besides occasional visits, two every year over the whole district, and make a complete revision of the necessary particulars relative to each pauper, which is reported to the Commission—and to introduce their successors in office to the knowledge of the paupers.

There is also a *messenger* for each district, who calls regularly on the chairman and overseers to communicate information, and receive orders; collects subscriptions; reports beggars; and attends to the ordinary details. Each district holds a monthly meeting, and considers what is proper to be done. All other charitable institutions are requested to send to the Commission the names of the persons to whom they communicate relief, to prevent deception, and ensure uniform distribution.

The general object of the Commission is to supply the *impotent* poor in proportion to their necessities, and to afford relief to the *industrious* in extraordinary emergencies. Clothes are given, and if they be sold, the pauper is sent to the correction house. Single paupers are lodged and fed with poor families, which produces a saving for both. Calculations are made of the support requisite;—a child of twelve years is stated to require as much as a grown person—from five to twelve, three-fourths—from one to five, one-half—and an infant, one-

fourth. A distinction is made between the allowance in summer and winter. If an able person be without the means of subsistence, it is concluded to arise either from want of employment, dexterity, or inclination. Provision is made for the two first cases, in large halls, with materials for spinning hemp, wool and cotton, and knitting stockings;—those who have no wheels are supplied;—the spinning is done in their own houses, or if they have not light and fuel, in the working-rooms. Those who will not work, after due trial of their obstinacy, are sent to the correction-house. Those who are incapacitated by age and infirmity for doing much, must do what they can, and show by their work-book, that they have performed the task assigned.—To ascertain the necessary amount for each poor family, the number and age are computed, and the expenses of each calculated by the estimate, from which are deducted what they receive from earnings and from other charities. House-rent is always among the first objects of attention—if this be in part or in whole relieved, the poor will in general be able to make out the rest themselves. Fuel is supplied at a magazine, and soup at a public kitchen; and estimates are made by each overseer at the commencement of winter, and tickets issued accordingly.

A *school of industry* for children is established, contiguous to the public reading school, where they are taught knitting, sewing, and spinning. What they earn is given to their parents, and the children are likewise encouraged by premiums in clothing.—*Orphans* are boarded with such poor families as have the best character for cleanliness, industry, and morality.

## No. X.

### *Account of the Hofwyl Institution.*

In the 61st No. of the Edinburgh Review, there is exhibited a very full and satisfactory view of this interesting Institution, compiled from various continental publications. As it is in relation to the poor alone that the subject comes under our consideration, I shall select the following account of the provision made by the establishment for the education of the poor. It is taken from Mr. Brougham's sketch, affixed to the

Report of the Education Committee of the House of Commons.

'The branch of the establishment, which is more particularly deserving of attention, and with which all the others are more or less connected, is the seminary for the poor. Mr. Fellenberg having long remarked the extreme profligacy of the lowest orders in the Swiss towns, and the habits of ignorance and vice in which their children were brought up, formed, many years ago, the design of attempting their reformation, upon principles equally sound and benevolent. His leading doctrine was, that to make those poor people better, it was necessary to make them more comfortable; and that this end would be best attained by forming, in their earliest years, habits of industry, which might contribute to their subsistence, and by joining with them a greater degree of intellectual cultivation than has ever yet been extended to the labouring classes of the community, or been imagined to be compatible with their humble pursuits. He began his experiments upon a small number of children, which he has now increased to between thirty and forty; and this may be reckoned the utmost limit upon a farm of so moderate an extent. Those children were taken from the very worst description of society—the most degraded of the mendicant poor in Berne and other Swiss towns. With hardly any exception, they were sunk in the vicious and idle habits of their parents, a class of dissolute vagrants, resembling the worst kind of gypsies. The complete change that has been effected in them all, is one of the most extraordinary and affecting sights that can be imagined. When I saw them, there were some who had been there for several years, and had grown up towards manhood; but the reformation in almost all took place during from one to two years, or a very little more, according as they were taken at an earlier or a more advanced age. The remark which I made, is that which immediately strikes all who visit Hofwyl;—the appearance of the children alone, their countenance and manner, impresses you with a conviction of their excellent dispositions. To describe all the steps of the process by which this reformation has been effected, would be impossible, as much depends on minute circumstances, and upon the great skill and judgment of Vehrli, a young man, who has devoted his life, under Mr. Fellenberg, to the superintendence of this part of the establishment, and to whose extraordinary virtue and ability its success is princi-

pally owing. But I shall endeavour to give the Committee some idea of the mode of treatment pursued.

'The first principle of the system is to show the children gentleness and kindness, so as to win their affections, and always to treat them as rational creatures, cultivating their reason, and appealing to it. It is equally essential to impress upon their minds the necessity of industrious and virtuous conduct to their happiness, and the inevitable effects of the opposite behaviour, in reducing them from the comfort in which they now live to the state of misery from which they were rescued. A constant and even minute superintendence, at every instant of their lives, forms of course part of the system; and, as may easily be supposed, the elder boys, who have already profited by the care of the master, aid him in extending it to the new comers, who for this purpose are judiciously distributed among them. These are, I am aware, very general principles; and upon their judicious application to practice in each particular instance, according to the diversities of individual character, their whole virtue depends. But a somewhat more specific notion of the plan may be formed by observing, that it is never allowed for a moment to be absent from their thoughts, that manual labour, in cultivating the ground, is the grand and paramount care which must employ their whole lives, and upon which their very existence depends. To this every thing else is made subordinate; but with this are judiciously connected a variety of intellectual pursuits. At their hours of relaxation, their amusements have an instructive tendency; certain hours are set apart for the purposes of learning; and while at work in the fields, the conversation, without interrupting for a moment the necessary business of their lives, is always directed towards those branches of knowledge in which they are improving themselves during the intervals of labour. The conversation, as well as the habits of the poor at Hofwyl, partake largely of religious influence. The evidences of design observable in the operations of nature, and the benevolent tendency of those operations in the great majority of instances, form constant topics of discourse in their studies, and during the labours of the day; and though no one has ever observed the slightest appearance of fanaticism or of superstition (against which, in truth, the course of instruction pursued is the surest safeguard) yet ample testimony is borne by all travellers to the prevailing piety of the place. One of these has noted an affecting instance of it, when the harvest once re-

quired the labourers to work for an hour or two after night-fall, and the full moon rose in extraordinary beauty over the magnificent mountains that surround the plain of Hofwyl. Suddenly, as if with one accord, the poor children began to chant a hymn which they had learnt among many others, but in which the Supreme Being is adored as having "lighted up the great lamp of the night, and projected it in the firmament."*

## No. XI.

*Account of the management of the Poor at Hamburgh,* †
*By the Bishop of Durham.*

In the beginning of 1788, an institution was formed for the poor at Hamburgh. Of 110,000 inhabitants in Hamburgh there were above 7,000 distressed persons in want of regular relief, besides an average of 2,500 in the hospitals.—There were peculiar circumstances attending this great and commercial city, which contributed to increase the number of poor, requiring assistance; severe winters, heavy taxes on the necessaries of life, fluctuation of trade, the attraction of the poor from neighbouring countries in expectation of employment; and a great number of female servants at very low wages, of whom many must necessarily remain unprovided for, when age or sickness should unfit them for actual service.

As soon as the outline of the plan was agreed upon, an arrangement was formed, that such revenues as till then had been expended in alms by the several churchwardens, and those the administration whereof had been connected with the workhouse, should be united under one administration with the monies to be collected from private benevolence. The most respectable inhabitants went round personally to collect subscriptions; and the town was divided into sixty districts, each being allotted to the care of three overseers; and the whole being under the direction of a board, or committee of fifteen directors, elected from among the overseers.

* Report, pp. 195, 196.

† This account is taken from Baron Voght's publication.

The general object was to provide comfort and subsistence for the aged, and for those afflicted with incurable disease, or labouring under temporary sickness; to supply the means of occupation for those who could work; and, by giving education and employment to children, to afford the most beneficial relief to those burdened with large families.

For the reception of the aged, a public building or asylum, was provided; but in cases where they had friends, who would receive them, they were allowed as much as their expense in the asylum would have amounted to. For the sick, and particularly for women at a period when they have the greatest need of charitable relief, medical assistance was provided. For the different districts in the town there were appointed five physicians, five surgeons, and five midwives, who, upon notice were to attend the lodging of the patient if not capable of going abroad. Food and medicine were immediately supplied, with so much attention and economy, that in the course of the three first years, 12,969 poor persons had been attended in sickness whose cure (including broth and an occasional supply of other food) had not cost more upon an average, than 3s. 6d. each.

For a provision for the children of the poor, where, from the vice or the disease of a parent, no suitable home remained for the child, they boarded them in the houses of the better sort of poor. In other cases they allow the mother a weekly sum for the younger children. They also prepared a warm room in every parish, and bread, milk, and potatoes in plenty; so that parents who went out to work, might leave their young children there during the day, and thus prevent any obstacle to their own industry, or to that of their elder children. At the same time they came to a determination "that no family should be allowed any relief for any child above six years of age; but that such child, being sent to school, should receive not only payment for its work, but also an allowance in the compound ratio of attendance at school, good behaviour and application to work." For the instruction of the children, three sorts of schools were opened:—the first for those who had no other employment; these were schools of occupation as well as instruction; the second, evening schools for the education of children who work with their parents during the day:—the third were Sunday schools, which continued alike open to all, as well to those who had gone into service at Hamburgh, as to children on the school list. The average number in these schools were six hundred; the expense of them about £700 a year.

The most difficult part of the undertaking still remained: that of procuring regular and suitable employment for those who could work; and of ascertaining who were, and who were not able. A resolution was adopted, " not to permit any one to receive a shilling, which he would have been able to have earned for himself; and at the same time to reduce the support of those, who required relief, below the scale of what any industrious person, in such circumstances, could earn." Printed queries were sent to the poor, the answers to which were written on the blank column of the page, verified by the evidence of their neighbours, and by the personal attendance of the overseer, or (where the state of health was in question) of the physician. Many of the queries were calculated to ascertain the average earning of each member of the family; but in this respect the truth was, for some time, very difficult to be obtained; it being the interest of the party, to make his capacity for work appear less than it really was.

A manufactory for spinning flax existed at that time in Hamburgh. The proprietor gave it up to the institution, together with the stock, the teachers, and the experience of several years. As the poor who wanted relief, were chiefly women and children, this was adopted as their general work. The clean flax was sold to the women at a certain and low price; and the yarn which they spun, purchased of them at thirty per cent. above the usual rate. To whatever fineness the yarn was spun, the whole profit was received by the poor. Every poor woman brought with her work a book, in which the pieces delivered in by her were noted; so that she thereby received a certificate of industry, and the institution had a regular account always before them of the employment of the poor. In the mean time, the men and larger boys (who were not the numerous or necessitous part of the poor) were employed in mending the roads, cleaning the streets, making rope yarn, and other labour, at a certain allowance per day.

After these general preparations were made, the committee conceived that they could now offer relief to all sorts of poor; as they had the means of enforcing the only condition required—that of contributing to their own support, the degree of exertion which they are capable of. The overseers therefore went through the streets, and made inquiries if any inhabitants were in need of relief. Those who applied, if capable of work, were supplied with employment; if prevented by want of skill, they were admitted into a school opened for that purpose; and

in the course of three months were taught to spin; being allowed for the first week a gratuity of two shillings, every week after, twopence less; and in the twelfth week, dismissed with the donation of a pound of flax and a spinning-wheel.

The quantity of work which the disabled poor were capable of, was easily and accurately ascertained by a week's trial at the spinning school. The result was produced weekly before a sub-committee; and the sum that each poor person could earn, was entered in a book; from that time they were paid weekly, what their earnings fell short of 1s. 6d. a week, whenever it appeared by their book, that they had earned to the known extent of their abilities.

In the proportion of two shillings a week, an allowance was made for their lodging. But as this is paid every six months, and the pauper's allowance is weekly, it was thought proper (except in cases where the lodging was otherwise provided for) to retain fourpence a week, for the purpose of paying the landlord's rent; thereby keeping the poor out of debt, and giving them a more comfortable habitation, than what otherwise they could have expected.

Clothing and bedding were at first much wanted; but in order to prevent their being pawned or sold, it was thought proper to mark them as the property of the institution, which the pauper was to keep while he behaved well. The committee purchased the materials by wholesale, and employed some of the poor in making them up. They were delivered to the pauper on the recommendation of the overseer, countersigned by the director of the district: or to children, upon the recommendation of the sub-committee of the schools.

A complete list of the poor being at length obtained, public notice was given, in the month of October, 1788, that no deserving poor person could or would, in future, remain unnoticed. Instructions were very generally distributed among the poor, as to the mode of obtaining relief; and the public was intreated to inform the committee, if any pauper had not been duly attended to.—No such case has hitherto occurred.

It was established as a general rule, that three years' residence in Hamburgh should entitle the party to relief; allowance being also made for accidents, illness, or childbed; which, in all cases, were held to be proper objects of charity. A place of reception was opened for foreign poor, where they were taken care of for three days, and then discharged with the means of subsistence home. At the same time, in order to prevent the further influx

of other poor, it was prohibited to receive any stranger, without informing the magistrate or overseer, under pain of bearing all the expense of supporting such stranger, if he should become an object of charity within three years.

These general regulations have been strictly adhered to for ten years; except in the cases of poor persons being ill, when they have sick tickets given them, which exempt them from the general rules; and during the most severe winter weeks, when a regular increase of allowance is ordered by the committee. But no inequality of distribution is ever admitted, whatever may have been the prior situation of the party. Those who had formerly been in a more respectable situation, continued to be the proper objects of private benevolence; of which no public institution ought to supersede the exertions.

The conduct of the institution is in the general committee, consisting of fifteen directors. They appoint four sub-committees from among themselves; one for manufactures, another for the schools, a third for clothing, and a fourth for the police of the poor. The sub-committees have each their separate officers, and keep distinct accounts, which are given in every month to the treasurer and the board.

Ten of the directors are selected; each one of them superintending six of the sixty districts, to receive from the overseers accounts of what is wanted in the respective districts for fixed support, for occasional relief, for accidents, and for discretionary assistance; which, when certified by the director of the district, is sent for payment to the treasurer; whose accounts are laid every month before the committee, and checked by the director's certificate. These ten directors may be considered as "the advocates for the institution," to prevent, in their several districts, excess of expense.

From the inquiries made at the commencement of the institution, it appeared that there were more than 4,000 women, 2,000 children, and 1,000 men, then in Hamburgh in the utmost want * of immediate relief. The whole number consisted of

* The poor at Hamburgh had been habituated to live almost entirely on a miserable beverage, which was *called coffee*, and sold in messes, with about half a pound of indifferent bread. This wretched substitute for food they took twice a day. About two years ago the directors introduced the use of Count Rumford's soups, with a great benefit to the poor at Hamburgh. It has been a great saving of 9 parts in 16, or rather more than half the former expense of their food. Children in particular have derived great advantage in health and strength from the use of these soups.—The saving to the institution in respect of fuel, by the introduction of Count Rumford's boilers, is stated in the Report (which contains

7,391 individuals, and composed 3,903 families. The first clothing of so great a number of destitute persons, would have exceeded the powers of the institution, but for the quantity of ready-made shirts and other apparel, which the ladies supplied with a liberal hand. Clothing and schools for instruction are now wanted only for the children.

The purchase of spinning-wheels, and of other instruments of employment, and the support of schools where 500 grown persons were at the same time instructed in spinning, added to the allowance made to the poor for the loss of time while they were learning to spin, occasioned a very enormous expense at the commencement of the institution. But this was not of long continuance. The Schools for teaching spinning to grown persons soon became unnecessary; 3,354 spinning wheels had been given to those who had proved themselves able to spin. These were employed in spinning, when more lucrative employment was not to be found. 2,000 poor, who at the time they entered the school could do nothing at all, have since earned from 8d. to 20d. a week, at times, and during hours which were formerly lost to them. The average of all expenses attending the employment of the poor during three years, up to December 1796, including the loss upon the sale of manufactured goods, has been only £611 per annum; and in the worst cases that have occurred, the expense of enabling a pauper to earn five guineas a year, has not been more than half a guinea.

It will not be a small recommendation to many persons, that since the year 1788, scarce a beggar has been seen at Hamburgh. But there is another much more important circumstance; the decrease of sickness and misery among the poor. The average mortality of the medical institution at Hamburgh, before 1788, had been above one in ten. In the year 1789 it was greatly reduced, and has since by a gradual progress diminished to less than one in twenty.—This and the extension of the schools, and of the benefit of the medical institution to persons *not actually entitled to relief*, has greatly diminished, and must still have a much greater effect, in diminishing the list of distressed poor, and in increasing the number of industrious and thriving citizens at Hamburgh.

a great deal of minute and curious detail in respect to fuel as well as food) to have been rather more than 61 parts in 66; the cost of their fuel, which is very scarce at Hamburgh, being at present not a tenth of what it was.—Hamburgh Report of Jan. 1798.

## No. XII.

*Thirty-eighth Report to the benevolent inhabitants of Hamburgh, respecting the progress of the Poor's establishment, comprising the accounts of Receipt and Expenditure of* 1816 *and* 1817, *with some observations on their connexion, and relative circumstances.*

*Hamburgh, July,* 1818. *

We have necessarily during the former year denied ourselves the satisfaction of speaking to our beneficent fellow citizens regarding the Institution for the poor, as many branches of it have been established and arranged in the course of the year that is just completed, and we were desirous of laying before our readers the results of them as accurately as we possibly could.

Now however, when we propose to ourselves the agreeable task of giving an account of the application of that support, which the established contributions, as well as voluntary benefactions have supplied with such liberality; we feel at the same time the most serious concern, in adverting particularly to what has, during the period just expired, increased the disbursements so very considerably when compared with the statement of former years. The cause of this is two fold; on the one hand the *diminished liberality* of the inferior classes in their *contributions*; and on the other hand, the greater urgency for support on the part of those who receive; and both of these occasioned by want of a feeling of *self respect* and *self denial.*

In former times a family were induced with extreme reluctance, to prefer a claim to public support in behalf of an unfortunate member, or relative; if sickness befel a relative, relations and friends lent their aid; if children became orphans, the relations of the deceased parents distributed them among one another, and thus prevented them from becoming a burden on the pub-

* For this and some other articles relative to the poor of Hamburgh, I am indebted to some gentlemen in that city, particularly to Samuel Jackson, Esq. Merchant; to the Rev. W. M. Mudie, Minister of the English Church; and to the Rev. Mr. Hubbe, one of the Pastors of the Lutheran Church, and Chaplain to the Orphan House. For aid in the translation from German into English, I am under obligations to the Rev. Robert Douglas, Minister of Kilbarchan.

lic. Many an individual in a mean garb and in a state of honest poverty, performed deeds of philanthropy, which appearing in a more elevated situation in society, might well have given occasion to a public and honourable notice.

But in those times persons really *could* give; they were able to lend assistance; a simple manner of life, plain clothing and moderate desires and wants, enabled even the man of the lowest rank, who was industrious in his calling, to lay up some part of his earnings, and to give to the destitute. A regular attendance on public worship maintained, and domestic piety strengthened, his feelings of practical Christianity. Opportunities of ministering relief to distress were considered as given by God, and improved with a cordiality which induced them not only to limit their own wants, but even to dispense with their own little comforts.

How completely are circumstances now reversed. The manner of living among the middling and lower classes, their food, dress, every thing, alas! above their situations. Attempts at high and more refined sensual indulgence, in place of sober domestic life. Instead of the *charity box*, in other days so well replenished, pawn broker's duplicates for articles of dress, and household furniture put away; debts contracted in every corner; and only a single step between them and that state which demands relief to be given;—who can expect that men in such circumstances themselves, should bestow any thing, or minister to the wants of others.

When therefore those who are naturally expected to *contribute their part*, bring themselves to such *a fine state of ability*; when even these take every occasion that may present itself of soliciting public support for their own connexions; where can we look for support to those who belong, whether by their own fault or not, to the class properly denominated poor or destitute?

In our last public statement we have specified some of the causes that now for a long time have aggravated the necessities of our poorer fellow citizens, who are objects of public support; and of these, alas! the consequences still continue to be strongly felt. The present generation has partly grown up during a period when public instruction was not at all enjoyed, or only in a very scanty measure; when the long continuance of war, and of contraband trade, operated so unfavourably on education, on morals and domestic order and comfort. The very circumstances of the times, have in a great degree generated a

character of indifference, which nipping in the bud the feeling of true honour, now so easily determines the poorer classes to look round at once for foreign aid, rather than to seek a resource in themselves.

It is true, that the mode of life of the superior orders, from whom so many poor people had their subsistence, is also in some measure changed. It is true, that many foreign establishments introduced since the restoration of our independence, are not in various ways, less advantageous than formerly to the inferior and labouring classes. We admit that the depressed state of our sugar manufactures, which have not yet been restored, must have deprived the poorer inhabitants of many alleviations of their sufferings, which that very liberal description of our fellow citizens so freely afforded. And it is true, that the high price of bread must have pressed upon the poorer classes very severely. But it is also to be considered, that our revived commerce and shipping trade, have again opened a copious spring, from which the operative classes must draw, as the great number of ships built, refitted, and improved, together with the general revival of trade, has given every encouragement to industry, merit, and good conduct. Those who require relief, ought certainly then to be fewer, and even of these, the sums called for by their exigencies must be less considerable. Would the lower classes only maintain a strictly regulated economy; did they not at the same time draw on themselves the heaviest distress by early and improvident marriages, as well as by their inconsiderate and improvident behaviour in general; in a word, were the poor who may be on the brink of want, not so readily to view their state as hopeless, but rather to exert their utmost efforts, and make it a point of honour to better in some degree their own situations, what happy consequences in regard to our social prosperity would necessarily follow.

We cannot therefore with sufficient earnestness wish and entreat, that instruction and example, public exhortation, and the lessons of private life were unceasingly directed to impress on the hearer, that only personal worth is true honour, and that only ones own bread tastes sweetly, and that every one gives up a very essential part of his happiness at the first moment that, despairing of his own resources, he looks round for support to any other than himself.

And where could these truths be more readily admitted than in a free independent state, such as ours! in which every one, equal in the view of the law, knows no other dependence than

on what is procured by his own exertions. Set bounds to thy wants, my less fortunate, fellow citizen—fulfil, strenuously and honourably, your engagements, and the fine feeling of independence is thy reward, the respect of thy countrymen, thine honour, without considering other relations, or outward circumstances.

Difficult as it may no doubt be for many a householder to support his family, yet much may be accomplished as well by the industry and regular conduct of the husband, as by the prudent and systematic economy of the wife; and we respect so much more the person who, struggling firmly with the hardships of his lot, sees in difficulties only an opportunity of surmounting them, who finds enjoyment even in self denial, and whose reward is the calm consciousness of his independence.

And does not a God of order and of love rule over us all? Shall we not resign ourselves to the cheering hope that our generous struggle, our confiding reliance on strength imparted from above, shall be graciously rewarded in the end!

Yes, beloved countrymen, there is such a reward.—Religion permits us to hope for it. The history of the world—our own experience confirms it. Labour becomes its own recompence; the contest issues in a triumph. Sacrifices, however painful, terminate in heartfelt enjoyment!

Let us only return to the honesty and moderation of our fathers. We will assist others according to our means; but we shall also guard our independence as long as it is possible. We will give as far as benevolence, combined with a wise consideration of nearer claims, may permit:—but we shall also exert ourselves especially to recommend every one to his own care, and to make him more alive to that fine inward consciousness of independence, following which, under the favouring influence of vigorous exertion, he may rise to the capacity of extending to others that aid which at present he would be inclined to implore.

*The amount of subscriptions* in the year 1816, being Marks 36,090 4, which account in the year 1815, was Marks 31,955, —nearly 4,000 marks above the former year, proves how readily the *better* description of the citizens of Hamburgh return again to habits of beneficence. We find this account in the following year, 1817, amounting to Mks. 39,544 4: and on the grateful repetition of that remark, we express our acknowledgments to those meritorious individuals who, by taking the

charge of the subscription, have done so much towards procuring such an addition.

Yet would the subscriptions yield considerably more, in all probability, were not the liberality of the citizens of Hamburgh called upon to relieve the distresses of foreigners.—It is true that expatriated Hamburghers have, during the late years of misfortune, received much hospitality, attention, and support, among strangers. It ought, however, to be stated that both in earlier and more recent times, the bounty of our people had never been confined to the natural limits of their native soil; and that their benevolence so actively displayed on all and on every occasion, might well prefer its claim for a corresponding return. Besides, it will not be denied that in the late times, the demands on our benevolence for alleviating the sufferings of strangers have been very general—and the accounts published of its amount by those who charged themselves with its collection and distribution, have naturally given rise to an idea of our being in a state of comfort and opulence. And the more so, as it is at least supposed that all poverty and wretchedness must have been removed or greatly alleviated at home, since such sums could be, and actually were applied to the relief of wretchedness and want abroad. Let us, however, be candid, my dear countrymen, and as we can honestly say that we give with cheerfulness, let us ask ourselves whether we are careful always to give with a prudent discrimination of the claims addressed to us? Can we—yes, it is asked;—dare we as upright and conscientious citizens to think of the wants of those at a distance, till all is in some degree of order at home?

While, from the accounts of receivings and expenditure, we are clearly placed in a condition, through your kind liberality, again to extend the assistance ministered—so the consideration of this object gives sad occasion to shew, in what manner, from year to year, nay, from month to month, the wretchedness of the lower classes is still farther unveiled as the lamentable result of the bygone years. And whilst want and misery were shewing themselves still more and more, in the midst of us, can we answer it to you and to ourselves to send such sums away to distant quarters, when so many forms of unrelieved wretchedness call for it amongst ourselves? Never indeed, let us shut our hearts to the distresses of our fellow-creatures—and rather extend our active good will wherever want and pain may solicit it;—but it will be right that we attend to our own necessities in the first place; and consider the regulations and

arrangements that have been introduced with the view of ministering to domestic calamities.

The *collections in Boxes* during the year

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1815, | amount to | 16,639 | Marks. |
| 1816, | ... | 16,992 | ... |
| 1817, | ... | 17,100 | ... |

At first view, it might seem that this account as stated stands in need of no comment;—and yet we must detain the attention of our readers for a short time upon it. These *Box contributions*, it is known, divide themselves into those of what are called the *large* and the *smaller* Boxes;—and to remark how much the produce of the small Boxes has fallen off is distressing in the highest degree.

In the year 1800, so greatly had the proceeds of the small ones declined, that premiums for diligence were given to the Messengers:—and the negligent were exposed to be reprimanded and punished. This had so favourable an effect that the contributions rose in 1801 from 3,700 to 6,200 Marks. In 1812, it fell back again to 4,400 Marks. The critical years of 1813 and 1814, we pass altogether; but when 1815, 16, 17, return only half 1801, it is obvious that many who have it fully in their power, do not contribute at all.

It has been customary for many years to make collections for behoof of the poor at all places of public resort or amusement, such as assembly rooms, concerts, public houses, or places where public entertainments are given; and as these collections were made by all indiscriminately, they generally consisted of shillings and pence, thus indicating the interest which even the lower classes took in the duty of assisting their still poorer brethren.* We regret to state that the amount of such collections for some years past has greatly lessened, which seems to indicate that the people who used thus to contribute are fewer in number, or reduced in circumstances, or less inclined than formerly to the exercise of charitable feelings.

Of late there have been many complaints of the rich not helping the poor with that steady liberality which used to be experienced. A little aid in the way of donations in money, or clothing, or food, given weekly or at stated periods, would

* In Rotterdam, and in other cities of the United Provinces, it is usual to collect for the Poor at *theatres* and places of public resort, as well as at churches.

be less felt by the donor, and be more productive to the receivers, than larger gifts bestowed occasionally, and without due regard to the relative circumstances of things. Let the wealthy part of the community reflect for a moment on the variety of claims which come incessantly on the managers of the poor: for support of orphans; relief of age and sickness; supply of female wants at particular seasons; education of poor children, &c &c. and they would more deeply feel the necessity of supporting the institution by regular and cheerful contribution.

The amount of general donations through the medium of the public charity box of the city, for the three years past, is as follows:—

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1815, | 9,010 | Marks. |
| 1816, | 10,893 | do. |
| 1817, | 11,421 | do. |

The gifts bestowed on *occasion of marriage* amounted in

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1815 to | 577 | Marks. |
| 1816 - | 1,148 | do. |
| 1817 - | 932 | do. |

The striking increase in the year 1816, indicates the effect of the restoration of peace and of independence to the city.

It has been customary for *sugar brokers*, on making an advantageous bargain, to bestow a gift on the poor. Formerly this gift used to be bestowed in the form of a breakfast to poor families. Of late it has been converted into money and bestowed on the poor's establishment for general purposes. Its amount has been in

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1815, | 4,000 | Marks. |
| 1816, | 4,100 | do. |
| 1817, | 4,500 | do. |

In all the churches there are boxes fixed for receiving the offerings of charity. The amount of such collections has been

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| In 1815, | 9,949 | Marks. |
| 1816, | 11,496 | do. |
| 1817, | 12,967 | do. |

The increase during the two past years indicating a better attendance on public worship than used to prevail formerly; and hence we infer that the interests of religion are at least attended to with greater external decency and order.

The amount of *legacies* to the poor has been

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| In 1815, - - - - - - | 1,500 | Marks. |
| 1816, - - - - - - | 1,400 | do. |
| 1817, - - - - - - | 4,300 | do. |

The gifts bestowed by those persons to whom legacies of a considerable amount were left, have been

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| In 1815, - - - - - - | 1,698 | Marks. |
| 1816, - - - - - - | 1,179 | do. |
| 1817, - - - - - - | 252 | do. |

In this year there is a most astonishing deficiency—from what cause it is impossible to say; but the fact is stated that it may put legatees in mind of their duty to testify their gratitude to their benefactors by becoming benefactors in their turn.

## No. XIV.

*Observations by Sir Thomas Bernard on the Hamburgh Plan.*

The division of *labour* has not produced more extraordinary effects in a well-conducted manufactory, than the division of *attention* in a well-arranged institution. The giving to every acting member his peculiar and appropriate duty, not interfered in by any other person, as has been done with great effect at Hamburgh, is of the utmost importance in every establishment. Those who have attended much to the conduct of charities, must have had frequent occasion to regret, that even among the best intentioned men, more time, and more power, is often wasted in the counteraction and controversion of petty and trivial measures, than in the furtherance of the real objects

## No. XIII.

## *Account of Receipts and Disbursements of the Hamburgh General Institution for the Poor,*

For the year ending last day of Dec. 1816.

UNDER THE TREASURERSHIP OF M. AUGUSTUS SCHWALL.

### Receipts.

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| To Subscription Account, | (Current) Marks, | *36,090 | 4 ß 0 |
| - Box Collections, | — | — | 16,992 | 2 ß 9 |
| - Donations and Benefactions, | — | — | 10,893 | 11 ß 3 |
| - Bridegroom's do. | — | — | 1,148 | 12 ß 0 |
| From the Treasury of St. Peter and John, | — | — | 2,727 | 2 ß 0 |
| - do. St. Nicholas, | — | — | 2,778 | 9 ß 0 |
| - do. St. Catharine, | — | — | 1,933 | 0 ß 6 |
| - do. St. James, | — | — | 1,265 | 4 ß 0 |
| - do. St. Michael, | — | — | 2,390 | 0 ß 0 |
| - do. St. Gertrude, | — | — | 125 | 11 ß 0 |
| - do. St. George, | — | — | 936 | 3 ß 0 |
| To Bequests and Legacies, | — | — | 1,400 | 0 ß 0 |
| - Heritage Account, | — | — | 2,179 | 14 ß 0 |
| Received from the Treasury of the City, | — | — | 80,000 | 0 ß 0 |
| — Collection on New Year's Day, | — | — | 6,172 | 5 ß 6 |
| — do. Good Friday, | — | — | 4,837 | 13 ß 0 |
| — Int. Acct. ℔ abstract of Annuities paid, | — | — | 7,873 | 6 ß 0 |
| — Capital Account, | — | — | 1,750 | 6 ß 0 |
| | (Curt.) Mks. | | 180,884 | 7 ß 0 |

### Disbursements.

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| By Weekly alms distributed, | (Current) Marks, | | 110,616 | 2 ß 6 |
| - Money for Fuel do. | — | — | 1,848 | 8 ß 0 |
| - Cure and nursing Sick at their houses, | — | — | 11,777 | 3 ß 0 |
| - Institution for delivering poor, | — | — | 1,595 | 13 ß 0 |
| - paid for children boarded, | — | — | 4,749 | 15 ß 0 |
| - paid Salaries Money, | — | — | 3,685 | 0 ß 0 |
| - Messengers' fees, | — | — | 5,926 | 0 ß 0 |
| - Printing and Binding, | — | — | 1,424 | 2 ß 0 |
| - Various outlays, | — | — | 455 | 7 ß 0 |
| - Institution for Interments, | — | — | 1,282 | 4 ß 0 |
| - School Account, | — | — | 12,356 | 13 ß 0 |
| - Agio Account, loss, | — | — | 27 | 13 ß 0 |
| - Cash not accounted for, | — | — | 91 | 6 ß 6 |
| - Expended in the distribution of Bread, | — | — | 25,000 | 0 ß 0 |
| | (Curt.) Mks. | | 180,884 | 7 ß 0 |

## *General State of Capital on the last day of Dec.* 1816.

### Debtors.

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Under the administration of the Establishment for the Poor, are comprised for the most part money bonded— | | | |
| Marks Banco, 332,730 ß 10, at 20 ℔ cent. is | (Curt.) Mks. | 399,276 | 12 ß 0 |
| - Bank Account, 11,062 ß 13, — is | — | 13,275 | 6 ß 0 |
| - Pack Thread Manufactory, | — | 600 | 0 ß 0 |
| - Money for Fuel, | — | 1,883 | 11 ß 0 |
| - Deputation for distributing Bread Account, | — | 25,000 | 0 ß 0 |
| - Cash, | — | 29,805 | 8 ß 0 |
| | Ms. Curt. | 469,841 | 6 ß 0 |

### Creditors.

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| By General Balance of Capital, 31st Dec. 1815, | Mrks. Curt. | 392,504 | 6 ß 0 |
| *This has been increased—* | | | |
| By Legacy of M. J. D. Klefeker, | Mrks. 33,333 | 5 ß 0 | |
| - do. Lady of Councillor Faber, | — 1,000 | 0 ß 0 | |
| - do. of M. Barsen, | — 2,000 | 0 ß 0 | |
| - do. Mrs. Hester M. Freeman, | — 2,003 | 4 ß 0 | |
| - do. Mrs Margt. Tonnies, | — 2,004 | 14 ß 0 | |
| - do. Mrs. C. M. Schritzmeyer, | — 800 | 0 ß 0 | |
| - Donation of M. J. Stoblman, | — 6,000 | 0 ß 0 | |
| - do. S. T. M. Senator Beneck, | — 600 | 0 ß 0 | |
| - do. Anonymous, | — 300 | 0 ß 0 | |
| - do. on drawing the largest prize in the Lottery, | — 500 | 0 ß 0 | |
| - do. S. T. Burgomaster Schrœder, | — 600 | 0 ß 0 | |
| | Mks. Banco, | 49,941 | 7 ß 0 |
| Add 20 ℔ cent. for Currency, | | 59,929 | 12 ß 0 |
| Cash account for distributing Bread, | | 25,000 | 0 ß 0 |
| | | 84,929 | 12 ß 0 |
| *Has been diminished—* | | | |
| Deduct loss on Pack Thread Spinning, | Ms. 2,504 | 1 ß 0 | |
| Do. do. Flax Yarn do. | - 1,489 | 14 ß 0 | |
| Do. Money for Fuel expended, | 1,848 | 8 ß 0 | |
| Added to Cash Account, | 1,750 | 6 ß 0 | |
| | | 7,592 | 13 0 |
| | | 77,336 | 15 ß 0 |
| | Curt. Marks, | 469,841 | 5 ß 0 |

N. B. The State of Receipts and Expenditure, as also view of the Capital for the year ending 31st Dec. 1817, will be understood from comparison with the above, there being little variation as to the *particulars;* though differing in the sums.

* 14 Marks=to £1 Sterling.

of the institution. This is the *friction*,—the impediment of action,—the obstruction to progress,—which it is most essential to prevent; and it is in this respect, that the benevolent and enlightened founders of the institution at Hamburgh, have been peculiarly judicious and successful.

The maxims adopted at Hamburgh in the execution of their plan, are very deserving of attention:—"That every allowance, which supersedes the necessity of working, becomes a premium to idleness:—that labour, not alms, should be offered to all, who have any ability to work, however small that ability may be:—that one shilling which the poor man earns, does him more real service than two which are given him:—that, if the manner in which relief is given is not a spur to industry, it becomes in effect a premium to sloth and profligacy:—and that, if the mere support of a pauper is above what any industrious person in the same circumstances could earn, idleness will become more profitable than industry, and *beggary* a better trade than the *workshop*."—In proportion as the conductors of the institution at Hamburgh have rigidly adhered to these maxims, they have found the benefit extended and increased; whenever they have relaxed, the *thermometer of industry* has been lower, and less work has been done.

One great cause of the success of the institution at Hamburgh has been the *publicity* and *regularity* of the accounts. Without this charities often become jobs, the directors grow indifferent to public approbation or censure, and the administration falls into the hands of under-officers, who soon learn so to entangle the business, that no subsequent director is ever able to unravel the clue.

That which has been done in Hamburgh, by the co-operation of its best and wisest citizens, has been effected at Munich by the abilities and perseverance of one individual. The particulars of that establishment are so well and so generally known, that it is unnecessary for me to enter into the detail of them. The institution has, in both instances, been wisely adapted to the circumstances and condition of the respective places; at Munich, with additional power, from the establishment being blended with the government of the state, and producing an influence on the country, of which that city is the capital; and from its being connected with a variety of useful and extraordinary inventions and improvements, which Count Rumford has made for the benefit of mankind.

# No. XV.

## *Comparative State of Hamburgh, in the years* 1789 *and* 1799.

(FROM THE REPORT OF 1799.)

| 1789 | *and* | 1799 |
|---|---|---|
| 1. The streets crowded with beggars: many of them strangers; all in great distress; the modest and deserving perishing unheard and unknown, for want of a share in that relief, which the street-beggar anticipated by fraud and importunity. 446 persons in the house of correction, besides prisoners. | | 1. Scarcely a beggar to be seen: every necessitous inhabitant receiving, under kind and regular care and inspection, sure and beneficial relief. In ten years 3,081 poor strangers relieved, and returned to their places of habitation.—Not more, in the whole, than 147 persons in the house of correction. |
| 2. It appeared upon inquiry, that besides street beggars, there were many poor persons without bedding or clothes, perishing wretchedly and unknown; objects who were ashamed to make their appearance in the day time, on account of the want of decent apparel. | | 2. It is known to all the poor inhabitants, that if they apply to the inspector of the district, they will receive immediate temporary relief, and that the necessary inquiries will forthwith be made as to their situation, and the means of assuring to them regular support. |
| 3. There were not less than 600 persons, without bed or bedding; and 2,000 without linen: all of them dirty, ragged, and devoid of all domestic comfort. | | 3 No poor person without proper clothing; none, who may not have linen and a bed. If they are not able to earn them by labour, they receive them as a gift. |
| 4. Not less than 2,200 poor neglected children, covered with rags and vermin: many of them, from infancy, taught by their parents to beg and steal, and growing up in vice and infamy. | | 4. In the preceding ten years, 2,699 children educated in the schools of industry; and 4,833 received, since 1793, into the other schools. Of these, 538 children have been apprenticed. |
| 5. The distresses and the conduct of the poor were almost unknown, except to a few clerical and medical men. When the directors and inspectors made their | | 5. There are now 180 inspectors, 5 physicians, and 5 surgeons, who regularly visit every part of Hamburgh. Each house is numbered, and there are 2,200 poor |

first inquiries, they visited some narrow courts inhabited entirely by beggars, lost to society, and scarcely preserving the human form; courts which benevolence approached with a degree of alarm and horror.

6. With a very few exceptions, the poor man who was prevented by sickness from working at his trade, or afflicted by long and severe illness in his family, was thereby irretrievably ruined. His alternative was to apply to an ignorant empiric, to the destruction of his health; or, if he called in regular medical assistance, he was in consequence obliged to dispose of his furniture and implements of labour, to the ruin of his family.

7. A poor family, consisting of more than two children, found it impossible to procure subsistence merely by the labour of the father; and the mother being without occupation, the children, however well disposed their parents might be, were inevitably reduced to hopeless beggary.

8. The artisan who, for want of employment, or of a sale for his work, was behind hand, found himself compelled to pawn his tools; and by extreme indigence was frequently reduced to a wretched state of inactivity; in consequence of which, though possessed of strength and skill to labour, he became a hopeless and helpless beggar.

9. No establishment for the preservation of natural children, persons employed to bring the inspectors immediate information of any distress or disorder in the city. Thus are misery and vice diminished among the poor; and virtue and patriotism increased among the rich.

6. Those who are too poor to pay for medical assistance, may have it off the establishment, together with pecuniary relief, until they can resume their work. During a period of ten years, 36,803 sick persons have been thus relieved; of whom 30,978 have been recovered, and restored to the community. The mortality among the sick, in the early part of the preceding ten years, was about eight in the hundred; it now bears only half that proportion.

7. A large family became in 1792 an advantage to the honest and industrious. The parents receive an allowance for any child too young to attend the schools; where the other children are instructed, clothed, and fed; and have some surplus of their earnings to carry home to their parents.

8. Since 1795 a committee has met regularly every Saturday, to discharge debts, redeem pawns, purchase materials and tools, or advance loans for distressed artisans, *who can show that their distress is not occasioned by vice or idleness*. In four years, 940 families have been so relieved; and nearly one-third of the money so employed has been already repaid.

9. A foundling hospital was opened in 1795; in which 138 chil-

and for the restoration of their unfortunate and penitent mothers to the paths of virtue and industry.

10. There were 7,391 paupers, (4,087 women, 1,079 men, and 2,225 children) besides persons in hospitals.—Mendicity, spreading like infection, and paralyzing the industry and energy of the poor, was become an epidemic disease among the lower classes of life.

dren have been already preserved, and 153 mothers maintained till they could be placed at service.

10. There are at present 3,090 paupers, fed and clothed, and obliged to do such work as they are capable of. Of these, 1,592 are aged persons, from 60 to 100 years of age; 1,097 maimed or diseased persons of middle age; and 401 children, the greater part of whom are very young.

GENERAL NUMERICAL STATEMENT.

| | *In* 1789. | *In* 1799. |
|---|---|---|
| Poor, above childhood, | 5,166 | 2,689 |
| Poor children, | 2,225 | 401 |
| Receiving relief, | 7,391 | 3,090 |
| In the house of correction, | 446 | 147 |
| In the sick hospital, | 920 | 894 |
| In the orphan hospital, about | 1,000 | 600 |
| Total, | 9,757 | 4,731 |

Reduction in the number of paupers, 5,026.

If from 5,026 be subtracted the persons receiving relief, the average number of which is 237, and children merely receiving education, which may be set at 1,054, still there will remain a saving to the community of THREE THOUSAND SEVEN HUNDRED AND THIRTY-FIVE PERSONS.

## No. XVI.

*State of Mendicity in London, from the first Report of the London Society for suppressing Mendicity.*

THE following is a summary of all the cases referred to the Society from the first opening of the office, on the 25th of March, to the 31st December, 1818:—

| | |
|---|---|
| Total number of cases registered | 3,284 |
| Of which were referred to London parishes, and obtained casual relief, by the interference of the Society | 1,222 |
| Relieved, and sent to parishes in the country | 184 |
| Clothed and relieved, and sent to sea; not having regular claims upon the Committee for Distressed Seamen | 128 |
| Provided with employment, and partly clothed | 216 |
| Provided with situations and tools, or the means of efficiently supporting themselves | 186 |
| Obtained admission into workhouses | 92 |
| Obtained admission into hospitals and infirmaries | 69 |
| Sent abroad, by application to Consuls and Foreign Ministers | 54 |
| Found, on investigation, to be in receipt of sufficient means of supporting themselves | 286 |
| Refused parochial relief when provided for them (in most cases admission to workhouses being offered) | 146 |
| Did not return as ordered by the Society | 137 |
| Ascertained to be impostors and confirmed vagrants, and ordered to be prosecuted (of these 385 have been apprehended and imprisoned, and chiefly passed to their parishes) | 564 |
| Total | 3,284 |

| Of these there appeared to be— | |
|---|---|
| Belonging to parishes in London | 720 |
| To parishes in the country | 1,022 |
| Irish | 927 |
| Scotch | 129 |
| Welch | 59 |
| Foreigners of all nations | 427 |

*Alleged causes of distress.*

| | |
|---|---|
| Age and infirmity | 587 |
| Sickness and accidents | 537 |
| Loss of husbands by death and desertion | 219 |
| Foreigners wanting the means of returning | 106 |
| Want of tools and implements of work | 122 |
| Want of clothes | 98 |
| Suspension of pay and prize money | 47 |
| Number of cases in which the causes of distress were apparent | 1,716 |
| Number of cases in which the want of employment, real or pretended, was the alleged excuse for begging | 1,568 |

Total number of meals supplied by the Society — 16,827

"From the above statement it will be seen, that the operations of the Society are not confined to the objects referred to them by tickets, but that endeavours are made to clear the streets of sturdy beggars and known impostors, and for this purpose men are acting as constables in the constant employ of the Society."

The Report then goes on at some length to describe the error, and consequent inefficiency, of the present general sys-

tem of relieving the poor, some of whom were, upon application, presented with a shilling or a sixpence, whilst others who were considered as vagrants, were passed to their parishes, from which they might again come with impunity upon the public. It then notices the means which were resorted to, to evade the interference of the Society, by some persons who were really beggars, though in order to avoid prosecution, they pretended to sell matches, tapes, religious tracts, &c.; and it adds, "whether any radical alteration shall take place in the present system, is for the Legislature in its wisdom to decide; but in the mean time, much assistance would be rendered to the Society, if the following regulations were adopted, which practical experience has shown to be necessary."

1st. One of the Magistrates at each Police-office to superintend the state of vagrancy within the district, and especially to attend to all vagrancy charges, which are now left till all the other business is gone through, occasioning frequently a delay of six hours before a hearing is obtained.

2dly. A sufficient number of officers under the direction of the Magistrate, to apprehend and take charge of vagrants. (By the 17th of George the II. any person may apprehend a vagrant, and convey him before a Magistrate; but if this be not done during the hours at which the Police Magistrates attend, or at a time when they are disengaged, there is no place of security for lodging the offender, or any person to whose custody he can be delivered; nor is there, after conviction, any officer to convey him to prison.)

3dly. Able bodied vagrants, on conviction, to be subject to hard labour, and the law enforced in all cases where they shall be found begging a second time.

4th. The law as it regards the passing of vagrants to their places of settlement, to be invariably acted upon, and the direction to parishes to employ and maintain them, rigidly enforced. (The words of the above act are—"the parish or place to which a vagrant shall be so passed, shall employ, &c." It has been held, that under the words "parish or place," no penalty can attach to the Overseers for neglecting to comply with this direction, they not being specifically named.)

5th. The appointment of permanent Overseers, at salaries, with fixed hours of attendance daily at the workhouse, or some particular place in the parish; in regard to whom less delicacy would be necessary in enforcing penalties for neglect of duty.

6th. A discretionary power with Magistrates to pass indigent persons to their places of settlement, without previous imprisonment. The unwillingness of parishes to remove to distant settlements persons who become chargeable, frequently occasions them to commit an act of vagrancy for the purpose of being passed.

7th. That instead of the reward of 10s. now paid by the county, for the apprehension of a vagrant, that sum, or a higher one, be paid by the parish in which the offence shall be committed. The apathy of parishes on the subject of mendicity might thus be corrected.

8th. A better method to be pursued in the appointment of parochial constables, and moderate remuneration given for the performance of their duty. (The High Constables of divisions execute a most arduous duty, without salary; and it would seem, from the Police Reports of the House of Commons, that they are considered to be remunerated by supplying publicans and others with some articles of consumption, and thus are subjected to those persons whose conduct they are specially appointed to watch over. The same principle, in a less degree, extends to the Petty Constables and Headboroughs, and it cannot, therefore, be a matter of surprise that the duties required of them are generally imperfectly performed.)

9. The revival of that part of the 13th George II., which directed that in case of vagrants having no settlement, they should be passed to the parish in which the act of vagrancy had been committed.

10th. That idle and disorderly persons should, on a repetition of that offence, be deemed to be rogues and vagabonds.

11th. That it should be requisite in all cases to prove the actual asking of alms, but that known beggars stationed in the public streets for that purpose, and endeavouring, by the exposure of wounds or deformities to excite commiseration of passengers, should be liable to be apprehended, and if unable to give a satisfactory account of themselves, to be dealt with as the laws respecting vagrants direct.

# INDEX.


*ABBEY Parish, of Paisley*, management of poor in, 331.

*Aberdeen*, poor house of, 387—management of poor in, 416—

*Advantages* attending the eldership in the Church of Scotland, 38.

*Adults*, Schools for, in England and Wales, 220—in Bristol, 221—in London, 221.

*Age*, advanced of paupers, 394.

*Alloa*, management of the Poor in, 303.

*Apprentices*, acquire a settlement by three years residence, 97.

*Appeal*, no instance of, to the House of Peers on the subject of the Poor, 103.

*Assembly, General*, acts of, respecting the Poor, 17, 268.

——— respecting Elders, 28, 31, 32.

——— description of, 40.

*Assessment for the Poor*, general principle of, 107—equalizes the burden, 109—necessary in some cases, 110—tends to degrade the mind, 111—to change our ideas of charity, 113—to discourage exertion, 114—to prevent due discrimination of character, 117—to diminish the weekly collections, 119—to lessen the distinction between regular and occasional relief, 120—to weaken the influence of the eldership, 121.

*Associations, Benevolent*, leading principles of, 199—reasonableness of, 200—advantages of, 201—moral influence of, on individuals and society, 203—objections to them answered, 205—females may lawfully engage in them, 209—general rules by which they ought to be conducted, 211—Queries respecting, 212.

*Association* for relief of the poor in Stirling, 418—in Dunfermline, 423.

*BANFF*, Relief congregation in, 415.

*Bank Restriction Act*, 309.

*Barony Parish of Glasgow*, management of poor in, 24, 169.

*Beggars*, tolerated in Scotland, 22—duty of Elders with respect to, 22—prohibited and punished by law, 55—belong to parishes where born, 98—suppressed in Dunfermline, 425—regulations respecting in Holland, 463—suppressed in Hamburgh, 480.

*Benevolence*, necessary in elders, 43—historical sketches of, 427.

*Blackstone*, Judge, his account of overseers, 51.

*Bond of provision*, poor laws of Scotland viewed in this light, 122.

*Book of Sports*, effects of, on England and Scotland, 243.
*Bridewells*, erected in England, 50.
*Burn's* Ecclesiastical law, referred to, 76.
*Burghs*, mode of assessment in, 57, 58.

*CAUSES* of pauperism, 400——
———— in Stirling, 420.
*Census*, a new one necessary for Scotland, 187.
*Charities* of the city of Glasgow, 169, 323—of Edinburgh, 186.
*Charity Workhouse*, of Edinburgh, 184—history of, 310—plan for its regulation, 311—progressive view of, 375.
*Charles*, Mr. of Bala, his benevolent exertions, 220.
*Charters*, Dr. his opinion on poor laws, 110, 293.
*Charles V.* his regulations for the poor, 455.
*Christian* poor, claims of, 413.
*Church of Scotland*, view of the constitution of, 39—knowledge of its history and laws necessary in an Elder, 42.
*Church*, primitive, charities of, 49.
*Circumstances, external*, of Elders, 41.
*Classification of the poor*, principles by which it ought to be regulated, 160, 165, 182.
*Clergyman's* Vade Mecum, referred to, 76.
*Clergy, conduct of*, promotes poor rates, 145.
*Clothing* Society of Paisley, 434.
*Coke*, Mr. his sentiments on hospitals, 387.
*Collections for the poor*, 98, 119—early established in Scotland, 130—good effects of, 130—amount of, in Glasgow, 314—Edinburgh, 114—made by Dissenters, not tangible, 98.
*Committee of House of Commons*, their opinion of the poor laws, 126—of General Assembly on the Poor, 149.
*Communication, mutual*, among Elders, 24.
*Connexion*, religious, of the poor, 400.
*Continent*, management of the poor on the, 455.
*Contributions*, private on, 399.
*Cottage Tax*, tendency of, to promote pauperism, 142.
*Cuthberts, St.* Parish of, 383—Charity workhouse of, 375, 385, 446—management of poor in, 445.

*DEACON*, office of, described, 6—its Divine institution, 10—duties, 15, 16—mode of election, 17.
*Decision*, necessary in an Elder, 43.
*Decisions respecting the poor in Scotland*, from 1711—1816, 97—additional, 444.
*Defoe's Account of Scotland*, at the beginning of the last century, 136.
*Destitute* Poor Society of Paisley, 428.
———— Sick Society of Edinburgh 448.
*Difficulties*, of the Elder's office, 43.
*Discrimination among the poor*, importance of, 21.
*Discipline, First Book of*, 16, 26.
———— *Second Book of*, described and quoted, 15, 26.
———— *ecclesiastical*, nature of, and duties of Elders respecting, 36.

*Dissenters*, contributions by, for relief of the poor, 161—in Glasgow, 408—in Paisley, 411.
*Discontinuance*, of assessments, instances of, 295.
*Doctor*, office of, in the Church of Scotland, 5.
*Dollar*, bequest to the poor of, 115, 442.
*Drilling* on Sunday, bad effects of, 244.
*Dunfermline*, management of poor in, 421.
*Duty*, pastoral, regarding the poor, 269.

*EASTWOOD*, management of poor in, 438.
*Eden, Sir F.* his opinion of the poor laws, 112.
*Education*, of the poor, neglected, 94—benefits of, 95—attended to in Scotland, 105.
*Elder*, office of, in the church of Scotland, 6—its Divine institution, 11—obtained in the primitive church, 13—and among the Reformed churches, 14—duties of, with regard to the poor, 15—with regard to the spiritual concerns of religion, 26, 27—mode of ordination, 28—their qualifications, 31, 41—duties of people and minister to, 44, 45—names of the first Elders in Edinburgh, 260.
*Election*, of Elders and Deacons in the Church of Edinburgh, 257.
*Enactments, legislative*, tendency of, to promote pauperism. 308.
*Excuses*, for refusing the office of the eldership, 46.
*Exhorters*, office of, in the Church of Scotland, 7.
*Expense of managing Session funds*, 371.
*Extraordinary distress*, law of relief in, 100.

*FAMILIES* of paupers, average number of, 399.
*Farming the poor*, disapproved of, 76.
*Fathers the*, testimony of, respecting Elders, 13.
*Females*, excess of, above males, 394.
*Female* Society of Paisley, 431.
*Fever*, progress of, in Glasgow and Paisley, 450.
*Fletcher, of Salton*, his account of Scotland explained, 134.
*Friendly Societies*, of Gorbals, 177—Glasgow, 322—Paisley, 350.
*Funds for the Poor*, at the charge of the Session, 24—duties of Elders in regard to them, 24—statement of the sources of these funds, 262—distribution of them, 263.

*GAMING*, money lost or won at, forfeited to the poor, 97.
*Glasgow*, Queries and replies respecting the poor of, 313—General and Kirk-sessions of, 326.—Scheme of assessment in, 328.
*Government*, church, form of, agreed to at Westminster, 16, 27.
*Grant*, Lady, her legacy, 333.
*Greenock*, management of Poor in, 435.
*Guardians of the Poor*, duties of Elders as such, 18.
*Gypsies*, account of, and laws respecting, 266.

*HAMBURGH*, management of the poor at, 475—492.
*Heritors*, rights of, in Scotland, 98, 102.
*Hill*, Principal, his view of the constitution of the church, &c. 18, 30, 39.
*Hofwyl* Institution, account of, 472.
*Holland*, state of the Poor in, 459, 463.
*Hospital* of Glasgow, 315, Paisley, 341, 353.—its erection, 354.—Lunatic ward, 356—out pension system, 357—nursing list, 359—grant to the session, 360—work of inmates, 361—their character, 362—co-operation with session, 367—regulations, 376.
*Hospitals*, erection of, in London and elsewhere, 50—tendency of to promote pauperism, 118, 124.—Expense of English Hospitals in 1775, 1781, 380—Dutch Hospitals, 465.
*Houses* of the Poor, on the, 452.
*Householders*, poor on, 401.
*Hutcheson*, Mr. his opinion on Poor Laws, 71—his Justice of Peace referred to, 71.

*ICELAND*, state of the poor in, 469.
*Illegitimate children*, law regarding, 99.
*Increase of the Poor*, causes of, 80.
———*wickedness* in Scotland, 240.
*Indefiniteness*, of the Scottish Poor Laws, 68.
*Industrious Poor*, relief of in 1816, 1817, in Glasgow, 321—Paisley, 347.
*Inspection* of the people, by Elders and Pastors, 33.
*Intemperance*, habits of, lead to pauperism, 396, 421.
*Introduction of assessments into Scotland*, causes which prevented, 128.
———causes which led to, 137.
*Ireland*, state of the poor in, 107.
*Italy*, state of poor in, 107.
*James*, Mr. of Birmingham, his Work on Sabbath Schools recommended, 237.
*Jedburgh*, management of poor in, 271.
*Jerram*, Mr. his sentiments regarding the Poor Laws, 125.
*Johnston*, management of the poor in, 336.
*Judgment sound*, necessary in an Elder, 42.
*Justices*, powers of in England, 64, 93.

*KAIMES*, Lord, his opinion on Poor Laws, 70.
*Kennedy*, Mr. of Dunure, a member of the Assembly Committee, 149—remarks on his Poor Bill, Preface.
*Kirk-session*, or *Consistory*, what 7.—Funds at its disposal, 17. Duties and rights, 18—Inspection of the morals of the people, 29.
*Knox*, John, his life and labours, 261.

*LAW* respecting the poor in England, better than the practice, 91.
*Legislation*, excess of, injurious, 90.
*Licence*, form of, for selling spirits, &c. 245,
*Lyons*, Hospital at, 125.
*Lyttleton*, Lord, his speech on the Poor Laws, 70.

*MAINTENANCE*, full, not held out by the Sessions, 398.
*Malthus, Mr.* his opinion of the Poor laws, 112.
*Manufactories* for Poor at Hamburgh, 477.
*Manufactures*, influence of, in promoting pauperism, 138.
*Management of the Poor*, in the town of Paisley, 156—in the city of Glasgow, 162—in the Barony parish of Glasgow, 169—in the parishes of Gorbals and Govan, Glasgow, 174—in the town and parish of Ayr, 178—in the parish of Kirriemuir, 181—in the city of Edinburgh, 183.
*Manheim*, management of the Poor at, 470.
*Marriages*, fees at, law respecting, 100.
*Mendicity*, state of, in Scotland at the end of the 17th century, 135—state of, in London, 492.
*Milan*, city of, state of charity in, 108.
*Militia Act*, tendency of, to promote pauperism, 143.
*Ministers*, duties of, 8—in regard to their Elders, 45—neglect of, in not sending representatives to church courts, 45—not liable to pay rates, 98.
*Moncreiff, Sir H.* his view of the church of Scotland, 18, 29—his opinion of the Poor Laws of Scotland, 138—Chairman of Assembly Committee, 150.
*Montrose*, management of the Poor at, 402.
——— Address to the Inhabitants of, 405.
*Mortifications* for the Poor, in Paisley, 352.
*Mortcloths*, laws respecting, 100.
*Moral History*, of Scotland, illustrations of, 72, 129, 134.
——— *Character* of Scotland injured by certain causes, 240—by growth of population, 240—by public works, 241—by modern infidelity, 242—by political fanaticism, 242—by neglect of the Sabbath, 24[illegible]—by prevalence of intemperance, 245.
*Musselburgh*, Poor house of, 386.

*M'Dermid, Rev. John*, Letter from, on the state of the poor, 414.
*M'Farlan, Dr* of Canongate, his Work on the poor, 185—his objections to Hospitals, 378.
*M'Gill, Dr.* his remarks on prisons, 452.

*NAPLES*, charities of, 466.
*Non-residence* of clergy, injurious, 79.

*ORDINANCES, religious*, purity of, watched over, by Elders, 34—mode of doing it, 34, 35.
*Overseers of the Poor*, nature of their office, 24—duties of, in England, 64, 69.

*PAISLEY*, poor of, 338.
*Parents*, the proper guardians of children, 228.
*Parochial courts*, importance of, 74.
*Paris*, Philanthropic Society of, 468.
*Parliament, Acts of*, in favour of the Church of Scotland, 30, 31.
*Pastor*, office of in the Church of Scotland, 5.

*Patronage, abuse of the law of,* promotes pauperism, 144.
*Paupers,* number of in England, at different times, 53.
*Peculiarities,* in the management of the Poor, 299.
*People,* duties of, to their Elders, 45.
*Perseverance,* patient, necessary in an Elder, 44.
*Pitt, Mr.* his sentiments on the poor laws, 112.
*Pluralities,* injurious, 79.
*Pollock, Dr.* of Govan, his tract on Sabbath Schools noticed, 237.
*Poor,* care of, not the whole duty of an Elder, 2—duties of Elders with regard to, 14—*regular* and *occasional,* 21—moral and religious interests attended to by the Elder, 25—various classes of, described in the acts, 58—Laws regarding, 61, 83—Decisions respecting, 96—their management in Scotland, 103—on assessments for, 107.
*Poor laws,* in England and Scotland, history of, 48—differ in point of object, 61—in the manner of raising funds, 64—in their mode of applying the funds, 65—with regard to settlements, 66—in degree of definiteness, 67—in the duties of overseers, 68—in their respective modes of application, 69.
*Population,* of England, in 1811, 54.
*Presbyteries,* duties of, as to the poor funds, 268.
*Presbyterianism,* influence of in Scotland, 101, 133.
*Preventing the growth of pauperism,* means of, 147.
*Principles, leading,* in the management of the poor in Scotland, 103.
*Prison,* New, and Bridewell, for the County of Renfrew, 440.
*Private duties* of the eldership, 36.
*Private charity,* defined, 188—arguments for it, 188, 189—checked and perverted by ignorance, 191—by indolence, 192—by want of opportunity, 194—by passion and caprice, 194—apt to be unequal and partial, 195.
*Proveniers* in Holland, 465.

*QUARTERS,* Elder's, what, 20—Duties in regard to them, 21, 28—division of parishes into, 74.
*Qualifications* of Elders, 41.

*RAIKES, Robert,* founder of Sunday Schools, account of, 216.
*Rates, poor,* amount of, at different periods, 53.
*Rate of assessment,* different modes of, 57.
*Readers,* office of, in the Church of Scotland, 7.
*Reformation,* established in Scotland, 1560, 3.
*Register* of the poor, 402.
*Religion, interests of,* committed to the charge of the Elders, 32.
——— *personal,* necessary in an Elder, 42.
——— decline of, promotes pauperism, 146.
*Reluctance* of Kirk sessions in Scotland to go to law on the subject of the poor, 103.
——— to apply for charity, lessened, 122.
*Removals,* doctrine of, unknown in Scotland, 22.

*Report of the Assembly*, 1817, respecting the poor, 150.
*Residence*, law respecting, 97.
*Revenues of the Church*, plan for their appropriation made by the reformers, 54.
*Rich*, conduct of, promotes poor rates, 144.
*Rise, progressive*, of assessments, 164.
*Romantic*, influence of the, on Charity, 197.
*Rumford, Count*, his Soups and Boilers, 479.

*SABBATH*, purity of, watched over by Elders, 35—laws of Great Britain regarding its observance, 35—increasing profanation of, 243.
*Sailors*, good custom amongst, 406.
*Saunders, Mr.* his observations on the poor laws, 66.
*Savings Bank*, Glasgow, 168, 321—Paisley, 349.
*Schools, importance of*, 80.
——— of industry at Hamburgh, 477.
——— parochial, of Scotland, 80, 94—influence of in preventing poor rates, 131—abolished and revived, 135—ought to be encouraged, 147.
——— *Sabbath*, history of, 216—Society for, 217—Union, 218—established in Scotland, 222—at Brechin, 223—at Edinburgh and other places, 224—in Ireland, 225—the continent and America, 225.—effects of, 226—objections answered, 228—testimony of Assembly Committee to their usefulness, 239.
*Scrutiny* of the Poor in Glasgow and Paisley, 388.
*Scriptures, circulation of*, in Scotland, coeval with the Reformation, 131—good effects of, 132.
*Secular* and civil duties, devolved on Ministers and Elders, 37—disadvantage of this, 37.
*Settlements, law of*, in Scotland, 22.
——— in England, 52.
——— expences of, in England and Scotland, 67.
*Seville*, city of, poor in, 108.
*Sewing School Society of Paisley*, 435.
*Smith*, Alderman, his bequest to the poor of Ayr, 178.
*Society* for suppressing begging, 208—Paisley Female Benevolent, 212—Sabbath School Society, 234.
*Sornares*, who, 55.
*Spain*, state of the poor in, 467.
*States-General* of Holland, laws of, respecting the poor, 459.
*Statutes regarding the Poor*, from the reign of Richard II. 50—from the time of the Reformation, 51—respecting overseers, 84—poor's rate, 85—maintenance of relations, 86—ordering of the poor, 87—settlements, 88—vestries, 89—education of Poor, 90.
——— *Scottish*, previous to the Reformation, 55—in 1579, and afterwards, 56.
*Stipend*, of Scottish clergy at the Reformation, 55.
*Stirling*, state of poor in, 115.
——— management of poor in, 417.
——— Hospitals of, 419.
*Strangers*, provision for, 59—late incursions of, 138.
——— influx of, one cause of pauperism, 395.

*Sunday School Society for Ireland*, 95.
*Superintendent*, office of, in the Scottish Church, 4.
*Superintendence, Clerical*, want of, in England, 92.
*Support*, means of, enjoyed by the poor, 397.
*Sympathies, social*, of men ought to be engaged in charity, 200.
*Synod* of Glasgow and Ayr, discussion in, regarding Sabbath Schools, 238.

*TAIT'S* Justice of Peace, quotation from, on the Poor, 261—and on vagabonds, 265.
*Taxation*, rapid growth of, 142.
*Testimony* of the Church of Scotland on assessments, and on the management of the Poor, 274—Kilmarnock, 275—Mauchlin, 275—Neilston, 276—Dalserf, 277—Burntisland, 277—Selkirk, 278—Coldstream, 279—Portmoak, 280—Caerlaverock, 281—Paisley, 282—Abbey of Paisley, 283—New Kilpatrick, 283—Walston, 284—Yarrow, 284—Dundee, 284—Melrose, 285—Kinnettles, 285—Wick, 286—Dunnottar, 286—Westerkirk, 286—Cargill, 287—Borthwick, 287—Primrose, 288—Bothwell, 288—Longforgan, 290—Kilmadock, 291—Hownam, 292.—Wilton, 293.
*Theocracy, Jewish*, provision for the poor under, 121.
*Thoughtlessness* with regard to the poor, 405.
*Townsend's, Mr.* Dissertation on the Poor laws, 67.
*Transportation of stranger poor*, law respecting, 59.

*VAGABONDS*, laws regarding, 265.
*Vagrant act*, remarks on, 267—does not extend to Scotland, 267.
*Visitation of the sick and poor*, duty of the Elder, 23.
——— pastoral, nature of, 36.

*WAGES, rate of*, as affected by the poor laws, 78.
*Want of places of public worship*, in our great towns, 141.
*Warden, Church*, office of, in England, 76—suggestions respecting, 76.
*Wardlaw, Mr.* his Essay on benevolent Associations referred to, 54, 75.
*Wardlaw, Mr. W.* his Hints to Sabbath School teachers noticed, 237.
*Work-houses*, ordered to be erected in every county of Scotland, 56.

*YATES, Mr.* of Birmingham, remarks on his Sermons on intemperance, 249.

FINIS.

YOUNG, GALLIE, & Co.
Printers, Glasgow.

## *Lately Published by the same Author;*

I. An Essay on the Propagation of Christianity in India, occasioned by the late renewal of the East India Company's Charter; containing a view of the Brahminical Religion, &c. &c. 8vo. price 2s. —Second edition, 1813.

II. Illustrations of Divine Providence in Late Events: a Sermon preached in the Low Church of Paisley, on Thursday, Jan 13, 1814, being the Day of Public Thanksgiving, for the Successes of Great Britain and her Allies.—Second edition, price 1s. 6d.

III. A Letter to the Rev. Dr. Chalmers of Glasgow, on the Distinctive Characters of the Protestant and Roman Catholic Religions; occasioned by the publication of his Sermon, for the benefit of the Hibernian Society, 1818.—Price 2s 6d.

IV. An Essay on the Office and Duties of the Eldership, in the Church of Scotland, 1818. 8vo.—Price 1s.

*Directions to the Binder.*

PART II. No. XXI. "Plan of Register of the Poor," to front page - 402
—— III. No. XIII. "Receipts and Expenditure of the Poor of Hamburgh," to front page - - - - - - - 488

The Reader is particularly requested to correct the following Erratum:
P. 148, l. 13, for independence read *dependence*.

36
57

LONDON SCHOOL OF HYGIENE
LIBRARY
9 JAN 1970
AND TROPICAL MEDICINE