

Remarks on the report of Her Majesty's Commissioners on the Poor-Laws of Scotland, presented to Parliament in 1844, and on the dissent of Mr. Twisleton from that report / by William Pulteney Alison.

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Alison, William Pulteney, 1790-1859.
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Publication/Creation

Edinburgh : William Blackwood and Sons, 1844.

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REMARKS
ON THE
POOR-LAWS COMMISSION REPORT
FOR
SCOTLAND.

REMARKS

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ON THE
REPORT OF HER MAJESTY'S COMMISSIONERS
ON THE
POOR-LAWS OF SCOTLAND,

PRESENTED TO PARLIAMENT IN 1844,
AND ON THE
DISSENT OF MR TWISLETON FROM THAT REPORT.

BY
WILLIAM PULTENEY ALISON,
M.D., F.R.S.E., &c.

PROFESSOR OF THE PRACTICE OF MEDICINE IN THE UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH,
AND ONE OF THE PHYSICIANS IN ORDINARY TO HER MAJESTY
FOR SCOTLAND.

WILLIAM BLACKWOOD AND SONS,
EDINBURGH AND LONDON.

MDCCCXLIV.

EDINBURGH, PRINTED BY NEILL AND COMPANY.

P R E F A C E.

IF I had written on the subject of the Poor-Law in Scotland with a view either to literary or scientific character, I am very sensible that I ought not to have written so frequently, nor at so short intervals. But having taken up the subject solely with a view to public measures, by which I hope and believe that an important national benefit may be obtained, I do not think it necessary to make farther apology for this seeming importunity, than by explaining the present position of the subject, and the importance of its being fully and fairly before the Public.

The General Assembly of the Church, and various other public bodies in Scotland, particularly the municipal authorities in most of the large towns, having made strong representations of the inadequacy of the existing provision for the Poor in Scotland, and Her Majesty's Government having directed an official Inquiry into the practical administration of the existing law, we are now in possession of the Report, agreed on by the majority of the Members of the Commission appointed for that purpose; of the Evidence, taken in

almost all parts of the country, on which that Report was founded ; and of the Reasons of Dissent from the practical conclusions of the Report, which have been appended to it by Mr Twisleton ; the only Member of the Commission, I believe, who had been formerly employed in official Inquiries into the condition of the Poor, and the operation of the Poor-Laws, in other parts of the country.

Having been one of the first of those who have of late years endeavoured to fix the attention of the Public and of the Government on this subject, I have naturally been led to consider, as attentively as I could, those different documents ; and it appears to me that all the representations previously made by myself and others, as to the irregularity, and general inadequacy of the provision for the Poor in Scotland, and the evils thence arising, are substantially confirmed,—the evidence on some points, indeed, being stronger than I had anticipated ; that the majority of the Commissioners, admitting the evils of the present state of things, have gone just about half the length which I had formerly represented as necessary, in advising measures of improvement ; and that Mr Twisleton has gone the whole length of those practical improvements which I had ventured to suggest,—in two particulars, indeed (as to compulsory assessments and workhouses), a little farther than my suggestions, although, in another (as to appeals to the Sheriff Courts), he does not go quite so far.

In this position of the question, and in the interval between the publication of the Report and the decision of Her Majesty's Government, upon any remedial measures, I have thought it may be of some use, with a view to the practical benefits for which the inquiry was instituted, to lay before the public, in a more compendious and accessible form than the official papers, what seem to me the most important facts that have been ascertained; and, at the same time, the reasons which convince me, that the measures proposed by the majority of the Commissioners will not meet the existing evils; and that those proposed by Mr Twisleton are alone adequate to the occasion.

I lay no claim, either to superior knowledge of this department of political economy, or to superior philanthropy; but having considered the subject for many years, with all the attention which other avocations would permit, and perhaps with less prepossession in favour of the existing system in Scotland, than may have existed in the minds of others who have lately studied it, and finding that my views have met the approbation of many men of the highest talent and character, and particularly that they are, at least generally, approved by one who has studied it, practically as well as theoretically, so attentively as Mr Twisleton, I trust I shall be acquitted of presumption in taking this step.

I beg farther to say, that I am fully sensible of the

credit which is due to the Commissioners, whose Report I am about to criticise, for their conscientious and laborious execution of the duty assigned to them. In deciding, as they have done, in opposition to the opinion which I had formed on various points, and particularly on the important point of the claims of the able-bodied unemployed poor to legislative protection, I am fully persuaded that they have been actuated by the best intentions towards the suffering poor. I do not blame them for rejecting the suggestions of Theory; nor do I accuse them of attempting to stifle the voice of Humanity; but I assert, nevertheless, with perfect confidence, that they have disregarded the lessons of Experience.

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REMARKS, &c.

THE remarks which I propose to make on the Report of Her Majesty's Commissioners, will relate, *first*, to the case of the impotent poor, *i. e.*, the aged and disabled persons, widows and orphans, who, by the law of Scotland, as at present interpreted, are entitled to relief; and to the securities proposed by the Commissioners, for the more adequate relief in future, of this class of the poor; *secondly*, to the case of the able-bodied, but unemployed poor, who have been, at least for a very long time, regarded as not entitled to claim any legal relief in Scotland; and to the reasons assigned by the Commissioners, for wishing this principle of the Scotch law to continue unchanged.

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PART I.

In regard to the treatment of the impotent Poor in Scotland, the opinions expressed by the Commissioners, as to the inadequacy of the present provision, and the necessity of its being very greatly raised, although not, perhaps, stated so distinctly, nor enforced so strongly, as might have been desired, are quite in accordance with those which have been urged of late years by myself and others. They admit, that “the funds raised for “the relief of the poor, and the provision made for “them, are, in many parishes throughout Scotland, insufficient;” “that the administration of the existing “law has been of late years of a very defective character,” demanding “remedial measures” (p. 53);—that “the amount of relief given is often altogether “insufficient to provide the commonest necessities of “life,”—and that “in many places the quantum of “relief given is *not measured by the necessities of the “pauper, but by the sum which the kirk-session may “happen to have in hand for distribution.*” They state, that, in the Highlands and Western Islands, the poor, during a great part of the year, “are forced to cast “themselves *on the charity of their neighbours, many “of whom are nearly as poor as themselves*; that in “other parts *they may get assistance from farmers, or “others of the more wealthy class, and that in towns “they generally have recourse to common begging*” (pp. 15 and 16); they admit, that, in consequence of the great extension of manufactures, the alterations in the system of farming, and other causes, “a completely new “order of things has been created, leading to a great

“ increase of vice and pauperism,” and requiring “ an
 “ adaptation of the Poor Laws to the altered econo-
 “ mical condition of the country.” They state far-
 ther, that in many parishes the poor are adequately
 provided for; they refer to the border parishes, and
 others throughout Scotland, in which “ the allow-
 “ ances are *high*, and the condition of the poor on the
 “ roll little inferior to that of the independent la-
 “ bourers” (pp. 14, 15), “ as instances of satisfactory
 “ administration.” They refer to the too small allow-
 ances to impotent “ paupers,” as “ an evil,” to which
 they have “ applied a remedy, which, they trust, will
 “ be effectual;” and by these means they hope, that “ a
 “ large mass of the wretchedness which becomes at
 “ present the prey of epidemic disorders, and through
 “ which such disorders are more widely diffused, will be
 “ taken out of the way; and the sanatory condition, and,
 “ to a certain extent, the moral tone of the community,
 “ be improved proportionally;” and they state, as one
 of the modes in which these measures will “ ameliorate
 “ the condition of the operative classes,” that they will
 thus be “ in a great measure relieved of the neces-
 “ sity of contributing to the support of relatives, ren-
 “ dered by infirmity or age, proper objects of parochial
 “ relief” (p. 53.)

All this is so strictly in accordance with the views
 which I have taken upon me, at different times, to lay
 before the public, that it may be thought that the
 only question to which I can advert, on this part of
 the subject, is the practical one, Whether the remedy
 proposed by the Commissioners for these *admitted evils*,
 is adequate or satisfactory. But, as preliminary to the
 consideration of that practical question, I think it quite
 necessary not only to reflect a little on the bearings of
 this admission of the evils, but to recapitulate some of

the facts which came before the Commissioners, as to the condition and sufferings of this portion of the poor in Scotland.

It is to be observed, that, by these admissions, the Commissioners have completely set aside many of the arguments formerly used, and still much relied on in many quarters, in support of the present system of management of the Poor in Scotland. It was said, first, that any kind of legal provision for the poor is "a curse to any country where it exists;" then, that the "excellence of the Scotch system consisted in the smallness of the allowances;" that "the more you do for the poor, the more you contribute to their increase," that it is therefore a "false and ill-directed philanthropy," which would recommend any increase to the usual allowances in Scotland; that "all sympathies must give way to general principles;" that the "sufferings and vicissitudes of the aged parents or dependents" of the labourers, in countries where there are no poor laws, are the proper stimuli of their domestic affections; and that "where poor-laws and work-houses exist, these affections, strong even in the utter abasement of the people, must be utterly extinguished" among the poor. It has even been argued, that the Scriptural injunction, "Thou shalt open wide thy hand to thy poor brother, thou shalt surely *give* him," excludes and prohibits the support of the poor by a legal impost. All these reasonings in favour of the voluntary system of management of this portion of the poor are abandoned, when the admission is made, that the legal relief now administered in most parts of Scotland, *is inadequate*, and that *evils, requiring remedies*, result from the "smallness of the allowances."

Farther, it seems to me quite clear, that in this ad-

mission there is an abandonment also of the most fundamental and formidable, and, at one time, the most confidently urged, of all the arguments against a legal provision for the poor, viz. that it fosters an excessive population. The argument was, that the burden of aged and disabled relatives, and of poverty in general, when allowed to rest on the working classes, prevented early marriages and checked population; but the Commissioners think it expedient that operatives should be "relieved of the necessity of supporting relatives, who are, from infirmity or age, fit objects for parochial assistance." Why should they not fear, that, in relieving them of this burden, they will withdraw that wholesome check? I believe the only good reason that can be given is, that the *hope* of improving or maintaining their condition in life, is found *by experience*, when duly encouraged and promoted, to be a better security for prudence and good conduct, and a better check on early and improvident marriages, than the mere *fear of want*; therefore, that the object of a good and provident government in legislating for the poor, is not merely to save from *starvation*, but to prevent destitution, and consequent *degradation*. This I have always asserted to be the general result of experience, the only sure guide in these matters; but this answer applies equally to the objections urged against the legal provision for any other form of destitution; it justifies the legal relief for the able bodied and unemployed, equally as for the impotent poor.

Again, the statements by the Commissioners above quoted, are a full and satisfactory confirmation of what I formerly stated as the general result of all the observations and inquiries which I had been able to make on the subject,* viz. that the general deficiency

* See Illustrations of the Practical Effects of the Scotch Mode of

of the allowances to the impotent poor in Scotland, is habitually supplemented, not (or only partially) by assistance from relatives or friends, but in all parts of the country by *begging*, or one form or other of mendicity, *i. e.*, by assistance given by persons who are either strangers to the suffering poor, or on whom these have no natural claim. The case of Scotland, therefore, is merely an example of the general fact which has presented itself to Mr Sadler and others on a review of many other countries, viz. that wherever an efficient legal provision does not exist for the poor, the “alternative practically found to exist, is *an extensive system of mendicity, under which there is much more misery, disorder, and vice,*” and such an extent and intensity of human suffering, as imposes a very heavy responsibility on the supporters of the voluntary system. The ample confirmation of this truth, which is contained in the evidence collected by the Commissioners, and to which they have borne testimony in the words above quoted, is an acquisition of extreme value in this department of political economy, and cannot fail to convince all reasonable men, sooner or later, of the wisdom of making the legal provision efficient in all parts of this country.

Another point established by evidence, and admitted as to large districts of the country, by the above statement of the Commissioners is, that this charity, which supplements the deficiency of the legal provision, is very often from people only a very little higher than the poor on whom it is bestowed, *i. e.*, as I have elsewhere expressed it, that “the poor support the poor; when poverty is not allowed to press as a burden on the capital of a country, it *burdens its industry*, where the pressure is both more injurious and more unjust.”

Management of the Poor, and Further Illustrations.—*Statistical Journal*, vol. iii. p. 225; and vol. iv. pp. 295–6–9, and 301.

It is a matter of less public importance, but it is likewise highly satisfactory, to those of the inhabitants of Scotland who have done what they could to supplement the legal allowances to the impotent poor, to have the full and official confirmation contained in the Report, and still more in the evidence, of that deficiency in the legal relief,—in the assistance by relations,—and likewise in the organized charitable associations,—which has made a system of “common begging” essential to the very existence of a large part of the inhabitants of this country. This, indeed, is well known already to those who have taken pains, on a scale of sufficient extent, to satisfy themselves of the real condition and resources either of the recognised poor, or of that large number of the destitute who are not recognised as paupers; but the great majority of the middle and higher ranks of society, not possessing this knowledge, are continually deceived in this matter. They have been informed of individual cases of imposture and of intemperance among the poor; they are glad to have an excuse for withdrawing their attention, and withholding their contributions, from a disagreeable and unprofitable subject; and they join in the thoughtless cry, that money given to beggars is only encouragement to idleness, and that it is a “false “and ill-directed philanthropy” which attempts to supply their wants. The answer, founded on the official statements of the Commissioners, is simple: What you say is very true, as applicable to a country where an effectual legal provision against all real destitution exists; but the institutions of this country are such, as to make, in many parts of it, “common begging,” *i.e.*, assistance from strangers, unconnected by any tie but sympathy with those whom they relieve, the only real resource of a large portion of the people; and to pro-

vide no means (on such a scale as to be effective) either for testing the destitution, or restraining the misconduct, of those who profess to be in this predicament. This being so, we, who feel the obligation of "opening our hands to our poor brethren," must necessarily run the risk of misapplying a portion of our charity; because, without running that risk, we cannot apply it to much of that misery which we *know to exist*, and which we feel it to be our duty to relieve to the best of our abilities. The fault of its being occasionally, even frequently, misdirected, does not rest with us, but with the institutions of the country, which have provided no means by which this misery—admitted to exist, and beyond the reach of the investigation or controul of individuals—may be regularly ascertained and adequately met;—but which have left it to be relieved by "common begging."

In fact, the existing system of management of the poor in Scotland may be characterised as follows:—Those who are entrusted with that management profess to administer a law which binds them to provide for the "needful sustentation" of all poor and impotent persons, and defines what is meant by that "needful sustentation," by specifying that it is that which the poor, "*of their own consent*," shall be content to receive, and "live unbeggand." They grant to the poor, in almost all parts of the country, an allowance *utterly inadequate* to their maintenance, knowing perfectly, that the only means by which this deficiency can be supplied is "common begging;" and then, on occasion of this begging proving an annoyance to the higher ranks, they punish as criminals, persons who have been reduced to this degradation by their own mal-administration of the laws designed for the protection of those

very persons. I have always expressly stated my belief that these administrators of the law have acted from the best *motives* ; but there is an inconsistency, and even cruelty, in their conduct and its results, which requires to be fully investigated.

In several parts of the Report of the Commissioners, and in many of the examinations, after full admissions of the sufferings of the poor, it is said that “their wants “have been supplied,” or that “they are supported” by relatives or neighbours, or others, &c. ; and superficial readers might suppose, from such expressions, that all had been done for them that was required, and that nothing has been proved to demand any material change of system. But those who have studied the subject will not be satisfied with this kind of information ; nor with the assurance, that even in the most distressed districts death by mere starvation is rare. Those who are aware of the duty which in every civilized, still more in every Christian country, devolves on the higher ranks of society in regard to the poor, and those who have studied the effects of destitution on the health of communities, on the character of individuals, or on the prosperity of nations, will always farther ask, what is the condition—as to food, clothing, and the comforts, or even necessities of life,—of that portion of the population which, in this, as in all countries, is dependent on some form or other of charity ; and will always be guided by *comparative* views of these matters, as observed in different countries, or in different parts of the same. If we find, on a fair comparison of this kind, that in certain districts of Great Britain, there is much less of comfort and more of actual misery ; more liability to disease, more temptation to crime, and less capacity of receiving or profiting by religious and moral instruction ; if we find

that in those districts “many have perished miserably, whom food, fuel, and clothing, would have saved,” and that the moral and physical condition of the survivors is much worse than that which is observed among a similar population in other districts, we shall feel entitled to say, that the assistance given to that portion of the population is defective. If we find, farther, that such relief as is requisite even for the support of life, is given at the expense of a portion of the higher ranks, instead of being equitably distributed over the whole,—that it is given at the expense of the benevolent members of society, while the selfish are habitually exempted,—and that it is laid as a burden on the industry of the country, while the capital of the country is allowed to escape,—we shall have laid separate and distinct and sufficient grounds for the assertion, that a change of system is required. And if we are farther satisfied, that in those districts where the poor have been most neglected, the progress of the population, in proportion to the demand for labour, has been the most rapid; and that where the provision for the poor is most effective, the known tendency of population to press on the means of subsistence has been most beneficially restrained,—then I maintain that we are fully entitled to assert, that the line of public duty and of public interest is clear; there may be, and probably will long be, room for doubt and discussion, as to the details of the arrangements by which an effective provision for the poor may be best made, and best guarded from abuse; but of the importance and beneficial tendency of effectual measures, to supply the deficiency of national charity wherever it is shewn to be deficient, and to equalize the burden wherever it is shewn to be partial, there can be no reasonable doubt.

I have always asserted, that evidence of all these points is to be found in Scotland ; and I think I can establish them all from the evidence which has been taken by the Commissioners. In submitting extracts to this effect, I beg it may be observed, that I quote, almost exclusively, such evidence as refers to *matters of fact*; considering the *opinions*, even of the most intelligent witnesses, now that so large an induction of facts is in our power, to be of much less importance.

I.—I shall first quote some of the evidence as to the general inadequacy of the legal provision for the impotent poor—their dependence on mendicity as the practical result of this system,—and their actual destitution, shewing the inefficiency of the resource. Afterwards, I shall give evidence of more specific evils resulting naturally from this state of things, and then proceed to the practical question—Whether the remedy proposed by the Commissioners is adequate to the purpose ?

It may, no doubt, be said that such evils as are now to be described exist in all countries, whether provided with poor-laws or not. This is admitted; but the question is as to the *extent* to which they exist, and the degree in which the existing laws for the relief of the poor afford a security for their mitigation. It will be observed, that the sufferings, of which examples are now to be given, are not isolated cases, or exceptions to the present rule, but are the *usual* lot of the destitute poor—from whatever cause their destitution may have resulted—in the complex state of society which exists in many parts of Scotland ; and it is particularly desirable, that those who have practical acquaintance with the condition of the native poor in England,

and the resources provided for them by law, should compare the practical results of the two systems; so far, in the first place, as the impotent poor are concerned.

The Rev. Dr GORDON, lately of the High Church,
Edinburgh.

“ I would say that, in general, the allowance to out-door pensioners by the Charity Workhouse is not sufficient to keep them in existence at the lowest possible rate of living. Generally speaking, it is by *private charity* that that allowance is supplemented. I am satisfied that the smallness of the allowance from the public is one of the means of increasing and propagating all those bad habits which extreme destitution creates, *i.e.*, *begging*, and using all sorts of arts to extort charity from the benevolent.”—Vol. i. p. 46.

The Rev. J. HUNTER, of the Tron Church, Edinburgh.

“ Could the poor of your parish possibly subsist on their allowances from the Charity Workhouse without other resources ?”
“ Certainly not.

“ Are you aware of the resources on which they rely ?” “ *Public begging* ; and, I fear, that leads to lying, and stealing, and imposition on the public.” “ Is it your opinion that the small allowance given by the Charity Workhouse degrades exceedingly the character of those receiving it ?” Certainly. “ And destroys their moral feelings ?” Yes. In my parish, those who have no visible means of subsistence prevail to a very considerable extent. Except by begging, they have hardly any means of eking out the little money they have from the Charity Workhouse. Some of them are *almost absolutely famished*. I visited a very poor part of my parish on Friday last, and in all the houses I found persons destitute of food, and completely destitute of fuel, without an article of furniture, without beds or bedding, the inmates lying on straw. I visited about fourteen houses, and this was the case in almost every house I was in. A considerable number of this class may be on the roll, others might be receiving assistance from the West Church or

"Canongate parish, and others might not be receiving relief from any parish." Were these persons of good character? "Some of them were of good character."—Vol. i. p. 54.

The Rev. T. GUTHRIE, lately of St. John's Edinburgh.

"Do you think the present allowances not enough?" "I think them *miserably deficient*. In many cases, people have no choice but to *steal or starve*. I may be allowed to add, that I know the system has a most injurious effect on the habits of the people; and elders and deacons are averse to go among the poor, because they have to look upon a vast amount of temporal misery which they cannot relieve. I have trembled often when I have gone, at the call of duty, to visit these receptacles of wretchedness, because I felt that I could not relieve the misery which I must look upon in such cases; and nothing but a sense of duty could compel me to visit the poor.

"Do you think those small allowances tend to promote a sense of independence among the people?" "I think the very reverse; and I shall tell you why, *because they are obliged to resort to begging*, which never can promote the spirit of independence among the people.

"Is it common for parents to leave their children under the present system?" "I find many instances in which parents abandon their children altogether." "May not that arise from the knowledge that the children will be provided for by the parish?" No; "*I think it arises from the wretchedly low state into which they have fallen—so low, that I have sometimes seen parents glad when their children died.*"—Vol. i. p. 559.

Mr D. DOUD, late Member of the Town-Council, and one of the Managers of the Charity Workhouse, Edinburgh.

"Many of the out-pensioners are absolute beggars. I have seen them on the street, persons on the regular roll. From the inadequacy of the relief from the workhouse, and their inability to work, or to get work, they *must beg*.

"Are there any steps taken by the managers in regard to the education of the children of the out-door pensioners?" None.

“ Have you any means of knowing what is the general state of their health. Is it worse than that of the general population ? “ Infinitely worse ; there is scarce a day that we sit to administer relief but two or three people make their appearance who are just “ come from the Royal Infirmary.

“ Are any means taken to afford medical assistance except in the house ? ” “ None. They fall on the medical charitable institutions, “ and on the charity of medical men.”*

The Rev. Dr GRANT of South Leith.

“ In regard to the general allowance to paupers, have you reason “ to believe that it is adequate to their wants ? ” “ I do not think it is. “ Taking into account any other sources of income ? ” “ I do not think “ it is.” Has any proposal been made to increase the allowance ? “ On “ the whole, the allowance has become more liberal since I was con- “ nected with the parish. We consider ourselves as practically pre- “ vented from raising it, *on account of the practice that obtains in “ other parishes.* If we were to give 2s. in cases where they give “ 1s., the poor in Edinburgh and St Cuthberts would migrate to “ Leith.” “ What do you consider the effects of a low allowance on “ the poor themselves ? ” “ I think they must be under the necessity of “ increasing their provision, by begging and otherwise.” “ From your “ own knowledge, do the poor in the receipt of parochial relief beg ? ” “ They do. I was going to remark, that even in cases where the “ parties have no more than 1s. or 1s. 6d. a week, they often make “ out to the Kirk-session that they have no other means of subsist- “ ence.” “ Have you no doubt that, in settling the allowance, the “ Managers and Elders are not satisfied that they have other means “ of subsistence ? ” “ That is not the general principle of management. “ They seem to proceed on the idea that *other means will be found “ in some way or other.* “ Including begging ? ” “ No ; there is “ rather an understanding that those who are on the poors’ roll do not “ beg.” “ But the practice is the contrary ? ” “ *It is very common.* “ Widows with young children are very destitute, because they are “ unable to work until their children attain a certain age.”

* That is, the burden of medical assistance to them is thrown on certain charitable citizens only.

JAMES MARSHALL, Esq., Treasurer of the Destitute
Sick Society, Leith.

“ The funds provided by the parochial assessment are extremely
“ inadequate to the wants of the poor. In scarcely any case does a
“ poor person receive more than 1s. in the week, though utterly un-
“ able to do any thing ; and that, in most cases, does no more than
“ pay for house rent ; consequently they must, either by begging,
“ stealing, or some other shift, find food and raiment.” “ Have many
“ cases of extreme destitution and misery come under your notice,
“ arising from that defective supply ?” “ I have seen many hundreds of
“ such cases of destitution.” “ And were these cases relieved by your
“ Society and other resources ?” “ Partly by our Society, and partly
“ by *private charity and begging, but not adequately.*” “ Have you
“ reason to believe that the destitution existed for a considerable time
“ previously to the relief being given ?” “ Yes, in many cases it existed
“ until they were compelled from necessity to make their cases known.
“ We have found that they have been without food almost entirely
“ for days, and without knowing where they were to find it, before
“ making application for charity.”—Vol. i., p. 226.

Capt. MILLER, Superintendant of Police, Glasgow.

“ In all cases, the relief afforded is very inadequate to the wants
“ of the poor. The allowance is scarcely sufficient in most instances
“ to pay the rent of their miserable dwellings. Indeed, a great many
“ of them are principally dependent on *public or private charity* for
“ the means of subsistence.” “ I look on those receiving relief as
“ the most destitute of the community. I speak of the aged and in-
“ firm, those receiving from 3s. to 6s. a month. When the public
“ get notice of their being on the parish roll, they say, ‘ You are
“ ‘ getting relief from the Town’s Hospital, you are not a proper
“ ‘ object for private charity.’”—Vol. i., p. 326.

“ Do you find that the habits of the begging community lead to
“ petty offences ?” “ I have no doubt of it. The youth commence by
“ begging, and go on to commit offences.

“ Is begging strictly punished in Glasgow ?” “ It has not been so
“ punished for the last few years, although cases occur occasionally of
“ punishment.

" Why are they not punished strictly ?" "*From a conviction of the distress that prevails in the community, and the small allowances granted by the parish.* A great many cases come under our notice, where the parties state that they are in receipt of 4s., 5s., and 6s. a month, which is not sufficient to keep them, and they are obliged to go out and beg.

" Then the small allowances do not tend to *raise* the lower orders ?
 " No ; *they have quite the opposite effect.*—Vol. i., p. 328.

" You refer to the report of Dr Cowan, where it is mentioned that a number of persons died from want of nourishment. Have any cases come under your knowledge of that kind ?" " Yes, if I am able to judge. Sometimes I have seen poor creatures having no bed, nor a rag to cover them, but their miserable scanty clothes, lying in a damp dwelling, and in fever. It requires no medical man to give an opinion on this : *I have seen it frequently.*"—Vol. i. p. 328.

Dr FLEMING, Glasgow.

" You have charge of one of the districts of the Town's Hospital ?
 " For six years, up to six months' ago, I had." " Your visits, so far as concerned the Town's Hospital, were confined to persons to whom parish relief was given ?" " Not entirely. We very often visit the poor, though not on the parish roll." " In the course of your visits, have you perceived a great amount of destitution ?"
 " Yes, in some parts. Very abject poverty in some cases." " Does it appear to you that the amount of allowance received from the Hospital fund has been sufficient to maintain them, either wholly, or with regard to other sources ?" " I should say that there were many cases that came under my notice in which it was *quite insufficient.* Many were in great poverty even with the Hospital allowance, *and any other sources of income that they might chance to have.* A very common expression is, ' All we get is not sufficient to pay the rent.'"—Vol. i. p. 338.

Mr JAMES STIRLING, Clerk to the Town Hospital, Glasgow.

" Are you aware that people receiving out-door relief betake themselves to public begging ? Yes, many of them do beg, notwithstanding their allowance from the Hospital."

Mr D. STOW, Secretary to the Normal Seminary,
Glasgow.

"The poor receive more from *their poor neighbours* than they do,
"or ever can, from any public charity."

Mr A. NEWALL, one of the Directors of the Town's
Hospital, Glasgow.

"A great many widows, from their inadequate allowances, send
"their children to beg."—Vol. i. p. 342.

The evidence from Greenock is particularly explicit
on the points now before us.

Mr R. STEELE, Ship-BUILDER, Greenock.

"There is *much begging* in Greenock—particularly among the
"destitute paupers. The poor get their support more from begging
"than from the assessment. I hear the complaints which the people
"make themselves, and I hear from others who are in the habit of
"visiting and seeing them, that they are in a state of great want and
"destitution, and but for begging, they would starve."—Vol. i.
pp. 530–31.

Mr HUTCHINSON, Collector of Police Funds, Greenock.

"I have known several widows on the poor's roll not able to
"keep house; they are turned from house to house (if their ticket
"is not lodged for security) every week almost, from not being able
"to pay their rent. On the other hand, when they keep their
"money to pay rent, they *must beg* for the sustenance of their fa-
"milies."

"And these are sober, well-doing persons?" "So far as I know."

"Is there neglect on the part of the elders and deacons as to the
"wants of the poor?" "I don't think there is any neglect, so far as
"their funds will allow; but they are *cramped in their means*."—
Vol. i. p. 533.

Mr J. DENNISTON, Greenock.

"Are the parish allowances sufficient for the maintenance of pau-
"pers who have no other means of subsistence?" "They are never
"contemplated as sufficient."

“ How is it contemplated that the pauper is to live, when he has
 “ no other means ?” “ Either *by begging*, or receiving something
 “ from some charitable institution.

“ Are many decent people among the destitute ?” “ Oh yes, a
 “ great many.”—Vol. i. p. 545.

Mr J. BLACK, Law-Agent, Greenock.

“ A resolution was come to lately, that an additional sum should
 “ be assessed for the loss which the poor would sustain, *from the la-*
 “ *bouring people not being able to assist them.* On my list were 23
 “ widows—only a few of these had as much as 4s. a month; they
 “ were supported by *neighbours*, tradesmen, or by their children or
 “ relations. The stagnation of trade made those who were support-
 “ ing them as poor as themselves. The allowances are still not ade-
 “ quate to their wants. The highest I have on my roll is a widow
 “ with 10s. a-month for herself and *seven* children, the eldest 14 years,
 “ the youngest 9 months.

“ Are any of those children at work ?” “ *None, for the last 12*
 “ *months.*

“ How are they subsisted ?” “ *By their mother going about en-*
 “ *deavouring to get a subsistence from the public.*

“ In ordinary years, are the allowances from the poor-funds eked
 “ out by the *charity of the neighbours* of those who have no other
 “ sources ?” “ *Frequently.*”

“ So that what the small allowances leave unsupplied falls *as a*
 “ *burden on the working classes*, who assist *their neighbours* to make
 “ up the difference ?” “ Yes.”—Vol. i. pp. 499–501.

Mr WM. MARTIN, Superintendent of the Soup-Kitchen,
 Greenock.

“ The allowances granted to the poor are insufficient for their wants.
 “ If it were not for what they get from *their neighbours*, they could
 “ not get on at all. The paupers are allowed to beg on Saturday.

“ Is that a good system ?” “ I am not prepared to say. *It is*
 “ *necessary for themselves in the mean time.*

“ Which is the best system, allowing them to do that, or giving
 “ them an adequate allowance, and not permitting them to beg ?”
 “ I should think it better not to allow begging.”—Vol. i. p. 537.

HUGH MILLAR, Esq., Provost of Ayr.

“ There is a good deal of begging in Ayr, which is suppressed as much as possible ; but it cannot be effectually put down, nor is it attempted. The reason is, that *people are quite aware that the allowances which these poor people get are not sufficient for them.* A great many of the beggars come from the neighbouring parishes of Newton and Wallace-ton, where the allowances are even less than in Ayr. There are a good many beggars on the parochial roll in Ayr, but the greater number are not.”—Vol. i. p. 693.

J. M'DIARMID, Esq., Secretary to the Soup-Kitchen,
Dumfries.

“ Are you aware that there is a good deal of begging among paupers on the roll ?” “ I have no doubt of it. When the relief from the assessment is so small, they cannot support nature without begging ; the allowances are so small, *owing to the limited assessment*, that you cannot steel your heart against them.”—Vol. i. p. 573.

Rev. Dr REID, Dumfries.

“ What is the condition of the paupers on the roll ?” I take them to be in a very poor state—generally with very scanty bedding, often lying on a little straw, and sometimes on the floor, with very few bed-clothes.”—Do., p. 571.

Mr A. FINDLAY, Inspector of Poor in Kilmarnock.

“ The poor of the town are permitted to beg on Saturdays ; and there is a good deal of begging among those who are not permitted to do so ; many of them are strangers, some belong to the town. Has a general knowledge of the condition of the poor in some country parishes in Ayrshire. Believes that, although the allowances are smaller there, they are in general as comfortable as the poor in Kilmarnock. Their cases are generally known to the farmers and benevolent people in their parishes ; they go out among them to get assistance. But for that, *many would starve on the country allowance.*”—Vol. i. p. 708.

The state of the poor in the northern towns is fully as bad.

Rev. JAMES SCOTT, Inverness.

“ I may say that I visit the poor as much as any individual in Inverness. I do not think the poor at all adequately supported, particularly the bedridden.

“ They are assisted by their neighbours ?” “ *Yes, and by charitable individuals ; and many of them have suffered almost to starvation.*”—Vol. ii. p. 464.

Dr W. WELSH FORBES, Inverness.

“ I have seen a great many of the poor receiving parish relief in a very destitute state,—their supply of food generally scanty. A poor man has perhaps a suit of clothing in 4, 5, or 6 years ; it becomes torn and worn out, and affords very little protection from cold in winter. In regard to female paupers, I have reason to know that several of them have only one shift,—and when that is washing, they have none on their persons. Their clothing is very inadequate to protect them during the winter season. They have dunghills about their houses, and a great want of cleanliness in and about them. They are very ill off as to bedding—generally they have a little straw or ferns, some, perhaps, chaff ; and in a few cases they have little of these between them and the boards. I have seen some of them lying on the floor, and only a little straw under them. Their supply of bed-clothes is very scanty. They live chiefly on potatoes, and a little milk ; sometimes a little fish. They raise their potatoes from manure collected from the roads and roadsides, and consequently accumulate quantities of this manure about their doors, which tends very much to the introduction and diffusion of fever. They have attendance and medicines, when sick, from the Dispensary, but there is no provision as regards nourishment and clothing. I have had the greatest difficulty in getting a little aid for some poor creatures, which was of the utmost importance to their recovery. I cannot say whether anything could be got for them from the kirk-session ; but it is a troublesome thing to go about, *and in urgent cases death might take place before it could be got.* During the epidemic cholera, we often could not get what was necessary for the recovery of poor patients, such things as beef-tea. I cannot conceive how many of them exist. A much more liberal provision for the poor is necessary, in order to

“support life in any comfort at all. A number of these poor creatures were the chief victims of cholera; they were in a state of destitution and debility, and seldom recovered from it. I have no doubt whatever, that if they were better provided for, fever, and the other diseases to which they are so subject, resulting from deficient nourishment and clothing, would be less prevalent among them. My professional opinion is, that the poor of those places should have a much more liberal provision.”—Vol. ii. p. 465-7.

Dr R. MANFORD fully confirms all the above,—stating that he has seen people in sickness lying on earthen floors, damp and cold, on straw, with some light rug over them, or an old blanket or piece of carpet. He adds, that their fuel is always very scanty, and that “they are obliged to carry great burdens of wood from the woods, (sometimes 5 or 6 miles off), which is often the cause of colds and other complaints.”—P. 471.

Mr W. CUMMING, Assistant Superintendent of the Poor, says farther, that “very many applications for relief are *rejected*,” and that “all that they get cannot do more than pay house-rent.”

Mr A. BREMNER, Teacher, says, that, in 1838, he surveyed and reported on 865 claims in the town and parish, of whom 644 were admitted, or supposed to be deserving of being admitted, as regular paupers, and 111 to be temporarily relieved; that of these only from 450 to 500 had formerly been receiving aid from the kirk-session; that some of them had applied, and could not be relieved; that, so far as came to his knowledge, the *want of funds was the only cause of their not being relieved*; and that the destitution did not generally proceed from misconduct or intemperance.—P. 481-2.

Mr T. M'KENZIE, Teacher, also states, that many decent families in appearance were found to be in extreme want, though not on any roll for receiving relief.

The Rev. C. FYVIE states, that he belongs to a District Visiting Society, and went into every hovel in Inverness himself; that the society *failed, from want of funds*, after a year; that the destitute persons he saw were “chiefly *reduced by old age and infirmity*,” not by misconduct.

Mr T. ANDERSON, who made a list of the destitute persons in Inverness, found *fully five-sixths to be females*.—P. 461.

This being the state of the destitute poor of Inverness, it appears, farther, that, in consequence of disputes between the advocates of assessments and of voluntary charity, from May till August 1843, *the poor got nothing at all*,—"they resorted to their old plan of *public begging*,"—many of them, it is to be observed, being *bedridden*.—P. 459.

Bailie FORBES, Aberdeen.

"You are very well acquainted with the situation of the poor in Aberdeen?" "Yes, in St Nicholas' parish." "Are they sufficiently supported by the allowance they get?" "The present allowances they receive, with very few exceptions, are *not more than half what is adequate to support them in the humblest manner*." "How is their maintenance made up?" "I have occasion to know that many receive considerable aid from relatives, and *from the wealthier inhabitants* with whom they may have become connected in the better period of their days, and also, though it is strictly prohibited, by *public mendicity*." "What kind of houses do the poor live in?" "In many cases they are exceedingly filthy and ill-ventilated, and not water-tight. In many cases the poor have only a shake-down of straw on the floor, and three or four persons sometimes sleep upon it. For bed-clothes, they have merely a coarse rug or coverlet; and frequently the principal part of the bed-clothes are their body-clothes spread over them. These, in many cases, are very tattered, and in a very filthy state."—Vol. iii. p. 599, *et seq.*

Captain GROVE, Superintendent of County Police, Perth.

"The poor here are a most miserable people—*worse than in Ireland*, where I was quartered a considerable time. Their bodily appearance is most miserable; they are fully as dirty, and, from their appearance, seem to have less food than those in Ireland. They are allowed to beg on Saturdays."—Vol. iii. p. 243.

Mr GEORGE CROLL, Kirk-Treasurer, Perth.

"Have you reason to believe that many persons on your roll are engaged in public begging? Yes, in street begging regularly on Saturdays."—Vol. iii. p. 234.

WM. ARNOTT, Esq., Heritor in Perth.

“As to those in actual receipt of relief from the poor’s-funds, are you of opinion that they receive enough?” “They are mendicants, allowed to go at large, and beg from shop to shop and from house to house, and that sometimes when getting relief from the assessment. There is no end to that begging; Saturday is the principal day, but they go about every day.”—Vol. iii. p. 230.

H. BARCLAY, Esq., Sheriff-Substitute of Perthshire.

“The relief now given, in many cases, just marks a man as a pauper, from its inadequacy, and *he is then set abroad as a beggar.*” —Vol. iii. p. 253.

Mr H. M'DONALD, Kirk-Treasurer of Stirling (where there is no assessment.)

“Some of the paupers on the roll go round to certain families once a-week, and others *beg generally* about the town. The allowance is so small, that it is necessary for them to support themselves in some other way.”—Vol. iii. p. 209.

W. H. FORREST, Esq., Surgeon in Stirling.

“Witness does not think the poor on the permanent roll here in a better state than those who have no settlement. He thinks the poor are getting more filthy in their habits, that they are more improvident, and in a worse state generally, than when he first knew them. The number of destitute persons has been yearly increasing.”—Vol. iii. p. 209.

It is unnecessary to go farther in regard to the larger towns. The following extracts are taken, almost at random, from some of the smaller towns and manufacturing villages.

Rev. G. MENILAWS, Minister of Tulliallan (not assessed.)

“The heritors and kirk-session are about to impose an assessment. The number of the poor has been increasing. A great propor-

“ tion of the property of the parish *pays nothing to the support of*
 “ *the poor* at present. Witness considers there would be some risk
 “ to life and property, if some addition were not made to the present
 “ inadequate allowances. He has seen some cases approaching to
 “ starvation ; he has seen cases in his own parish, where the poor
 “ were in greater want of furniture, bed and body clothes, than he
 “ ever saw in Alloa, Edinburgh (where he was missionary under Dr
 “ Gordon), or anywhere else.”—Vol. iii. p. 200.

Rev. WM. BURNS, late Minister of Kilsyth (voluntarily
 assessed.)

“ We have few beggars belonging to the parish, but a *great many*
 “ *strolling beggars* from other parishes.* I have peculiarly remarked
 “ destitution among single women in Kilsyth. My own conscientious
 “ conviction is, that their allowance from the kirk-session might be
 “ *tripled*, leaving full play for voluntary charity.”—Vol. iii. p. 392.

Rev. J. WATSON, Minister of Cumbernauld (voluntarily
 assessed.)

“ The allowances which we give the poor would not support them,
 “ but they are assisted by *their neighbours* ; they are not regular
 “ beggars, but go about among their neighbours. We have a great
 “ number of *stranger beggars*. I cannot say that all the heritors
 “ contribute to the voluntary assessment.”—Vol. iii. p. 390.

M. FINLAYSON, Esq., Surgeon, Campsie.

“ I have occasionally visited the paupers on the roll of the parish.
 “ In some cases, I have found them very poorly provided indeed,
 “ as to dwellings, bedding, and bed-clothes ; in others, not so ill off.
 “ I have frequently found a want of the necessaries of life among
 “ poor people (in unusual distress) ; often absolute starvation,—I
 “ believe not a morsel of food for some time. I saw from their ap-
 “ pearance that it was food, not medicine, they wanted. We ought to
 “ have a poor-law, as the sum now given to the poor is insufficient.
 “ No class of individuals can know this better than the medical men.
 “ In some cases, the allowance to the paupers is sufficiently supple-

* This is a very common complaint, easily understood, in the country parishes
 in Scotland.

“mented by private charity, in others not. Many of the poor people “*not on the roll* are very ill off for months at a time;—I mean old “people, frail people, sick people, unable to work. I think the old “and infirm should be on the permanent roll; and those disabled by “sickness should have more temporary relief.”—Vol. iii. pp. 392–3.

The case of the strictly agricultural districts in the Lowlands, and that of the Highlands and Islands, will be considered separately.

II. In the next place, it is of the utmost importance, in taking a general view of the extent and intensity of destitution, and *necessary mendicity* in Scotland, to remember that the *destitute poor*, in most parts of Scotland, greatly exceed the number of the *paupers*, who are admitted on the rolls of the parishes, and on whom the foregoing observations have been made. This is a point which I endeavoured to illustrate formerly, as furnishing the simple answer to the assertion, that the effect of the Scotch system is to keep down the number of the poor, and that wherever assessments, or an approach to the English system, have been introduced, the number of the poor immediately increases. I stated that, in such cases, it is not the number of *destitute poor* that increases, but only the number of *paupers*, *i. e.*, of persons admitted to legal relief; and that this increase, when its circumstances are investigated, is found to shew, not that the number now admitted is *too great*, but that the number previously admitted was *too small*,—comprising only a portion of those who were dependent on some form of charity. Of this I formerly gave various proofs; and I took the liberty of referring the Commissioners to the proceedings of the Committee, which took charge of the voluntary contribution in Edinburgh, called the Prince of Wales' Fund. The mem-

bers of that Committee visited and carefully reported on all parts of the town, and “found 21,600 in such a state “of destitution, that they recommended them for gratuitous assistance, besides several thousands more, “whom they recommended for assistance by the sale “of goods at reduced prices.” This proved that the destitute and dependent poor in Edinburgh, at certain seasons, amount to 16 per cent. of the whole population, although the paupers on the rolls of the parishes do not exceed 6 per cent. I stated to the Commissioners, also, that I had made notes of “333 cases of destitution, carefully inquired into by myself and two “other persons; and of these, 121 were receiving parochial relief, and 212 receiving none.” I took it upon me, therefore, to say, that in Edinburgh the paupers on the roll of the parishes are *only a fraction of the destitute poor*, who are dependent, at least during part of the year, on some kind of charitable assistance; and formerly referred, in proof of the same general fact, to the inquiries of Captain Miller at Glasgow, contained in a report, which was made part of his evidence before the Commissioners, where it appeared, that, of 1028 families, visited by himself, and found “in a state “of destitution” which excited the compassion of all who saw it, only 406 were in receipt of parochial relief.* A similar observation has been already quoted, as made, apparently with great accuracy, at Inverness. The evidence of Mr Finlayson, surgeon at Campsie, above quoted, and many others that might be quoted, are to

* I am aware that various inaccuracies in Captain Miller’s Report, of persons receiving parish relief (consequent on the frequent misrepresentations of the paupers), were pointed out to the Commissioners by Mr Thomson, the Superintendent of the Town Hospital; but these do not affect the statement of Captain Miller as to the number whom he saw in destitution, and receiving *no aid*. See Mr Thomson’s evidence, vol. i. p. 427.

the same purpose; and in Dr Watt's Report on the Census, in part of Lanarkshire, it was stated that the paupers were 463, and the destitute poor without parish aid 693. But, as this line of inquiry has not been followed out by the Commissioners as fully as might have been desired, I think it right to enumerate here the different causes (all of which were in evidence before the Commissioners) which prevent destitute persons from appearing on the rolls of the parishes; and so hinder these from affording even an approximation to a measure of the number of destitute and dependent poor in Scotland.

1. There is the large number—in some seasons and in some districts, unfortunately the excessive number—of *able-bodied, unemployed* persons, male and female, with their dependents, who hardly appear at all—in the most distressed districts never, even as occasional poor,—on the rolls of the parishes; but whose case will be considered afterwards.

2. There is another large class of persons, *temporarily disabled* by illness, and often suffering the severest privations, whose dependence, in practice, is on private charity or charitable institutions almost exclusively, not on the law.

The following extracts will sufficiently shew how generally in Edinburgh, and I believe in other towns, the case of the destitute sick, who have an acknowledged claim during their sickness on parochial aid, is transferred to voluntary charities (called into existence by the deficiency of the legal provision); *i.e.*, the relief of these persons, intended by law to be a charge on the whole community, is thrown on the charitable portion of the community only; or, the uncharitable are relieved of that burden at the expense of the charitable.

They will shew farther, what difficulty and delay are often experienced, when such cases having become tedious or incurable, in getting them on the rolls of the parishes, even as occasional poor. These extracts sufficiently confirm the statement which I made on this subject in my paper on the Epidemic Fever, p. 20.

Mr G. WILSON, Vice-President of the Society for the Relief of the Destitute Sick.

“ If a working man is sick, and has not the means of maintaining himself while sick, is he not a fit object for discretionary relief by the managers of the poor ?” “ *He is not just now*, but I say he ought to be.”

“ He is not, according to your idea of the Poor-Law of Scotland ?” “ O, dear no ! *They would send him to us*, as especially fitted for us.”

“ Suppose sufficient funds were at the disposal of the Charity Workhouse to enable them to supply the poor who are sick in a proper mannner, would your establishment be unnecessary ?” “ If the Charity Workhouse did as they ought, our Society would be of no use.” “ If they had funds, and applied them, it would take away the object of our Society.”*

“ According to your impression of the law, would not able-bodied persons, when sick, be proper objects for discretionary relief by the managers of the poor ?” “ I don’t know about the law, but *the practice is not to act in that way in Edinburgh.*”†

* Mr Wilson afterwards very properly modified this answer, and stated that a voluntary charity for the destitute sick would be very useful in various ways, although the relief of the most urgent necessities, of most of those now applying to this charity in Edinburgh, were charged on the poor-rate.

† A case in point was brought under the notice of the Commissioners by myself. A young man, with a wife, and infant child, disabled by an ulcer on the leg, could not obtain admission to the Infirmary, and had relief only for a few weeks from the Destitute Sick Society, which was discontinued. After being five months disabled for work, he had pawned all his furniture, and most of his bed and body clothing, and said that many days neither he nor his wife had food, but never applied to the parish, “ because he thought they would not give any thing to one so young.”—Vol. iii. p. 320.

“ Are there many cases of destitute sickness which don't come under your notice ? ” “ *Vast numbers.* ”—Vol. i. p. 142.

The evidence at Perth and other towns is just to the same purpose, as to the relief of destitution from occasional sickness, by voluntary charity almost exclusively.

D. FREW, Esq., Surgeon, Perth, in the Out-door
Department of the Infirmary.

“ We visit the poor who are recommended by *subscribers*, and supply them with medicines. If they require *extra diet*, we apply to the *Destitute Sick Society* ; our recommendations are attended to not fully, but to a certain extent ; the Society gives for six weeks ; if more than that is required, we apply to the Managers of the poor's funds.”—Vol. iii. p. 337.

H. M'FARLANE, Esq., Surgeon to the Infirmary, Perth.

“ We have found great difficulty in disposing of incurable cases for want of an institution in which they might be received ; we have felt a delicacy in sending them back to their wretched places, and kept them in the house, just that they might die in comfort there, rather than send them home.”—Vol. iii. p. 249.

W. H. FORREST, Esq., Surgeon in Stirling.

“ There is no hospital here, and the sick poor are relieved entirely in their houses. The Dispensary is maintained by voluntary contributions, and medicines and attendance are provided for the sick poor *from its funds*, but they are not sufficient for the purpose. During the late epidemic, witness, with the assistance of some friends, set agoing a soup-kitchen to supply beef-tea to persons recovering from fever, who had no food but potatoes, but he found the demands so numerous, *that he was obliged to give it up.* ”—Vol. iii. p. 210.

Rev. R. HENDERSON, Episcopal Minister, Stirling.

“ Knows a woman now dying of cancer, unable to be moved, who has no settlement, having been a vagrant. She is in the greatest

“ want. For such cases there is no provision in Stirling but from
 “ private charity.”—Vol. ii. p. 210.

Dr PEACOCK, Resident Superintendent of the Royal
 Infirmary, Edinburgh.

“ There is a difficulty frequently in getting parishes to receive
 “ patients who have got into such a state that medical assistance can
 “ be of no farther use to them.”

“ In order to avoid the expense of maintaining them?” “ I pre-
 “ sume so. The remark is most applicable to country parishes.”

“ Does this apply to the West Kirk parish?” “ We have seve-
 “ ral times had difficulty with the West Kirk parish.

“ I was several years in an hospital in England. We take in cases
 “ here which would not be taken in there, *which would be sent to the*
 “ *workhouse*; persons not able to work, from debility, with chronic
 “ ulcers on the legs, and other diseases, which incapacitate them for
 “ work, but derive very little advantage from medical treatment.
 “ Such cases would be rejected (and thrown on the parish) in Eng-
 “ land.”—Vol. i. p. 132.

Dr HANDYSIDE, Surgeon to the Royal Infirmary.

“ Have you any means of knowing whether, without the assist-
 “ ance of private charities (such as the Royal Infirmary, House of
 “ Refuge, and Destitute Sick Society), the poor would be sufficiently
 “ provided for by parochial relief?” “ Not adequately provided
 “ for.” “ The allowance to each individual is not sufficient?”
 “ Not sufficient.”

“ Are there any who get no assistance at all, although they re-
 “ quire it?” “ *Many—very many.*”

“ You state that there are many cases which, in England, would
 “ be relieved either by the workhouse or out-door relief, which
 “ are dependent on the Infirmary?” “ There are many who
 “ state that they have a claim on the legal charities of Edin-
 “ burgh, but cannot get their claim presented in such a form
 “ that relief follows. Others from country parishes. An en-
 “ deavour is occasionally made to provide for them by commu-
 “ nicating with their parishes; but for the most part, I regret to
 “ state, that *we fail in these attempts*, and are obliged to dismiss the

“ patients, referring them to the Benevolent and Stranger’s Friend Society, who sometimes can afford to send them to their parishes. But I can furnish cases in which, after being forwarded to their parishes, they have been returned to us.

“ We get little assistance from the Charity Workhouse; I generally decline, for one, to grant certificates for them, because I am confident that the parties will not receive relief—thinking it better they should apply to the Dispensary and Destitute Sick Society till they are able to work.”—Vol. i. p. 135-6.

Even such cases as the following occur, without deriving any benefit from parochial assistance, because considered to be objects for the charitable Associations only; or because the forms of the workhouse interpose such delays as render the application, during the time of disease, fruitless:—

“ One of my patients in the Infirmary last winter, I have no doubt, died from starvation. This was a girl of seventeen; her mother was a servant; she was found lying in one of the worst closes in the town, and was taken compassion upon by two prostitutes. When brought in she was labouring under inflammation of the lungs, her legs were extensively ulcerated, and her body in a state of complete prostration and weakness; her disease had been produced by lying openly in the cold. She died, and, with the exception of the rapid disease under which she laboured, there was no unhealthy appearance,” *i.e.*, nothing to explain the *previous* extreme emaciation and debility.—“ There was a young man of twenty-five, and a woman of nineteen, last winter, who also died of starvation; I was present at the examination of the bodies.—Mr Tait, surgeon of police, told me that, two years ago, a man, the father of three children, died of starvation. The body was brought to the police office, and there was nothing else to which death could be attributed.”—Do., Vol. i. p. 138.

The case of death by absolute starvation, although I am confident of having seen it, is rare; but that of death by disease, of which deficient nourishment is *part*

of the cause, is common, as correctly stated by one of the witnesses at Ayr.

T. GEMMELL, Esq., one of the Magistrates of Ayr.

“ Interrogated, Whether, from his experience, he thought there
 “ was any danger of persons being allowed to die of starvation in the
 “ town of Ayr ? ” “ Answers, There would be danger, in some sea-
 “ sons, of death *being hastened* by want of the means of subsistence.”
 “ Interrogated, Do you not think such danger would be met, as
 “ heretofore, by *voluntary contributions* ? ” “ Answers, It would be
 “ met to the extent of preventing starvation, but not to the extent
 “ of preventing privations which would impair the health.”—Vol. i.
 p. 699.

3. In many cases, persons entitled to legal relief, either occasional or permanent, are kept in a state of destitution for a very considerable time before their application for that relief receives any answer at all. It is a troublesome thing to go about, as stated at Inverness ; but not there only, as is shewn by the following extracts :—

Mr A. MACAULAY, Town Councillor of Edinburgh, and lately a Manager of the Charity Workhouse.

“ The difficulty of getting relief from the parish is so great, that
 “ persons have died before they could obtain it.”—Vol. i. p. 168.

Dr HANDYSIDE.

“ Two months ago, a patient (dismissed from the Infirmary, partially relieved, unable for work) asked me to sign a paper for the
 “ Charity Workhouse. She appears to have a good claim on it, and
 “ may receive relief ; but *she has not yet received an answer.*”—
 Vol. i. p. 168.

Dr GREVILLE, Manager of the House of Refuge,
 Edinburgh.

“ We have a great number of cases coming to the House of Refuge, where the parties, applying to the Charity Workhouse, have

“ been put off—say for three weeks : what they would do without
 “ the House of Refuge I cannot imagine. They are put off till the
 “ monthly meeting takes place ; but it often happens that their cases
 “ are put off from month to month, till three months, or even a
 “ longer period, elapses.”—Vol. i. p. 99.

Rev. Dr M'LEOD, Glasgow.

“ I desiderate in Glasgow an individual by whom cases might be
 “ taken up, so that I might be relieved from looking after them, and
 “ going to this director and that. When a father or mother dies
 “ of typhus, the orphans should be looked after, instead of leaving
 “ the poor creatures to fly to the streets, and wander about till some
 “ benevolent individual takes up the case. I have known people
 “ trying for several weeks to obtain relief.”—Vol. i., p. 652.

Some of the evil consequences of these delays are well
 stated in the following evidence :—

Dr ALEX. WATT, Glasgow.

“ One point I beg particularly to state, that it is generally not
 “ *till the poor widow has come to the worst state of poverty that she*
 “ *is supplied with parochial relief at all.* Decent work-people have
 “ generally tolerable furniture, which exists so long as the husband
 “ is capable of working. When the husband dies, leaving the widow
 “ in this condition, she should be immediately supplied, instead of
 “ waiting till she has sold or pawned her clothes and furniture.
 “ Then she is obliged to mix with the lowest people, and in the
 “ most unhealthy part of the city ; and her children, instead of
 “ being attended to in education, and going to church as formerly,
 “ are entirely neglected, and mix with children around them of the
 “ worst description.”—(Vol. i., p. 365.)

4. Another frequent cause of the excess of destitution over pauperism in Scotland, is sufficiently explained by a sentence already quoted from the Report of the Commissioners—“ In many cases the quantum of relief
 “ given” (it might be added, the giving or refusing of relief) “ is not measured by the necessities of the pau-

“ per, but by the sum which the kirk-session may
 “ happen to have in hand for distribution.” This may,
 indeed, be said of the whole district of the Highlands
 and Islands ; and it is explicitly stated by some of the
 ministers there, that the paupers on the roll are not
 more than a third of those whom they would receive, if
 they had funds to distribute among them.

A single quotation from the evidence of a Highland
 minister sufficiently illustrates this point.

REV. D. M'RAE, Poolewe, in Ross-shire.

“ Have you ever had to pay for paupers belonging to your parish,
 “ but who were in the southern parts of Scotland ?” “ *We have*
 “ *never paid*, but we have been sometimes applied to. How they
 “ manage the matter I cannot tell ; but our answer was, *that we*
 “ *had no funds*. I remember one last year, from Dunoon, for a young
 “ man who had fallen into bad health. The answer was, that his
 “ friends could not pay, and we had *no funds*. I have heard no
 “ more about it.”—Vol. i., p. 733. See also the evidence of the
 Rev. Dr M'Leod of Glasgow, *infra* ; and that of Messrs Cumming
 and Bremner, at Inverness, *supra*, p. 21.

Even in the City of Edinburgh, the whole funds distri-
 buted by the Charity Workhouse are curtailed in this
 manner, as is distinctly stated by the Commissioners,
 by the repeated refusal of the Town Council to assess
 the town to the extent which the Managers of the
 Workhouse thought necessary.

5. Another deplorable set of cases of destitute poor,
 not admitted as paupers, consists of those *whose settle-*
ment is distant, or is disputed. This evil has fortunately
 attracted the particular attention of the Commissioners,
 and they have proposed a remedy for it, which, if *it*
shall be enforced, will, I have no doubt, be found very
 effectual, although so burdensome on some parts of the
 country that we must expect it to be strongly opposed.

But at present we are only concerned with the fact, which is thus stated by the Commissioners :—

“ The rule understood to be followed is, that the Managers of the
 “ poor are bound to relieve persons in distress, even although they
 “ have no settlement in the parish. We are satisfied, however,
 “ from inquiries, that the practice is often at variance with this rule.
 “ Some of the Managers of the poor have themselves admitted, that
 “ in such cases the destitution must be very urgent before relief is
 “ given. At one time there was a notice posted up at the door of
 “ the Charity Workhouse in Edinburgh, in which it was stated,
 “ ‘ *That no person need apply, except those who have resided at*
 “ ‘ *least three years in the city parishes.*’ This notice was only re-
 “ cently removed. The onus of proving his settlement was thus laid —
 “ on the pauper, even in the case of an application for temporary
 “ relief. If the proof required could not be produced, *all relief was* —
 “ *refused, although no doubt might be entertained of his being in a*
 “ *state of destitution.*”—Report, p. 31.

“ Our attention has been called to several cases, in which appli-
 “ cations for repayment of money advanced by way of interim relief
 “ to a pauper belonging to another parish, have been either *left un-*
 “ *noticed, or refused on the ground of want of funds.* It appears,
 “ indeed, from the statement of several of the clergy in the High-
 “ lands, that it is a common practice there *to pay no regard to such* —
 “ *applications.*”—Ib., p. 34.

The following extracts will give evidence of the wide-spread misery which results from the difficulties thus thrown in the way of admission of paupers on the rolls, during the continuance of which difficulties it is certain that the most general rule is, to refuse all relief. X

Dr GREVILLE, Manager of the House of Refuge,
 Edinburgh.

“ We frequently succeed in making a settlement good ; but in a
 “ very great number of instances the settlement is disputed ; and it
 “ is often with great difficulty that a settlement is made, even when
 “ there is no dispute in the first instance.” “ Is there difficulty in

“ making out the legal proofs ?” “ The difficulty is not only sometimes
 “ in making out the legal proof ; but our experience is, that where
 “ the legal proof is quite clear, parishes trust to the difficulty of en-
 “ forcing the claims against them, thinking that we will not be at
 “ the trouble of establishing them by having recourse to a court of
 “ law. They frequently resist the proof where the case is unde-
 “ niable. We presume that they trust to our forbearance. One or
 “ two cases are subjoined.

“ A. G., an imbecile girl, nine years of age, was admitted into the
 “ Refuge more than six years ago. She was a natural child, and
 “ her mother, a native of Edinburgh, appeared to have a regular
 “ settlement in the city. The mother died ; and though the Ma-
 “ nagers of the Workhouse never fully admitted the girl’s settlement,
 “ yet they did admit that her mother was residing in Edinburgh at
 “ the time of her death, and that she was buried by the parish. For
 “ a period of five years they refused to admit this orphan to the
 “ Workhouse, *or to allow any thing for her maintenance* in the
 “ House of Refuge. Here was an orphan child, not only friendless
 “ and destitute, but visited by one of the most awful dispensations
 “ of Providence, cast off by the guardians of the poor, because they
 “ were not quite convinced she had a legal claim.”

“ D. R., aged seventy-three, served an apprenticeship in Edin-
 “ burgh. He had been admitted into the Workhouse about three
 “ years ago, and had lately obtained permission to leave it, to try
 “ if he could earn his own support. Having failed to get any em-
 “ ployment, he returned to the Workhouse in a state of starva-
 “ tion, and was refused admission until his case had been re-consi-
 “ dered by the Managers at the next monthly meeting. The office-
 “ bearers were perfectly acquainted with the poor man’s destitute
 “ situation, as well as his claim on the parish, for these were certified
 “ in writing by one of the Managers of the Workhouse. And yet,
 “ but for the ready protection of the House of Refuge, of which the
 “ man is now an inmate, he might have died of cold at the gate of
 “ the institution which is legally bound to shelter and protect him.”

“ J. D. and his wife, both above seventy years of age, who had
 “ lived many years in the West Church parish, then in the Grass-
 “ market, within the City parish, for two years, applied for relief to
 “ the parish workhouse. The application was refused, on the ground

“ of his not having established a settlement. He remained in the
 “ same place two or three years longer, and then applied a second
 “ time for relief. He was refused, because he had constituted him-
 “ self a pauper by his previous application, though he obtained no-
 “ thing by it. Being in very great distress, he tried the West
 “ Church parish, but got for answer, that he had obtained subsequent
 “ settlement in the City parish. He then carried the matter into
 “ the Sheriff Court. We were ready to receive him if he got (which
 “ he was unable to do) the usual guarantee for board ; in a few days
 “ he returned in such a state of extreme misery, that we admitted
 “ him and his wife without a guarantee. The case was about twelve
 “ months in the Sheriff Court, and the West Church was found
 “ liable. *Both parishes united in resisting the claim.*” “ This is
 “ not a solitary case ?” “ By no means.” “ Would a statement,
 “ that it is a universal practice in Edinburgh to grant relief till the
 “ place of settlement is found out, be according to your experience ?”
 “ *Quite contrary to my experience. I could bring a host of cases*
 “ *to prove this ; some peculiarly hard, relating to the West Church*
 “ *parish.*”—Vol. i., p. 94–99.

Capt. JAMES THOMSON, formerly Treasurer to the
 House of Refuge, Edinburgh.

“ The usual way in which the matter was done, with respect to
 “ the parishes, was this. Having satisfied myself that the person
 “ required assistance, if I thought there was a claim on the parish
 “ (I was often imposed upon), I wrote to that parish. If it was in
 “ the neighbourhood, I called on the Managers to get them to
 “ recognise the claim.” “ When you had a clear case, did they
 “ listen to it ?” “ Far from it. I had generally the clearest case,
 “ but could make nothing of it. I never applied when I had doubt
 “ of the applicant’s claim.” “ There is at present in the House of
 “ Refuge a man who had both his legs amputated in the Royal In-
 “ firmary about two years ago. He was sixteen years servant with
 “ different gentlemen in Edinburgh, and during all that time *they*
 “ *say he never acquired a settlement.* I applied to the City, then
 “ to the West Church parish, and ultimately to Dunbar, where it
 “ seemed he had a settlement. After meetings of the Managers of

“ the West Church and the City parishes, his claim was refused. He
 “ had resided at Dunbar for seven years, but nothing has been done
 “ for him yet. I applied to the Sheriff through the agent for the
 “ poor, but nothing has been done. It is the duty of every body to
 “ assist the poor ; and what is every body’s business is nobody’s
 “ business.” “ There is the case of a drunken woman (with two or
 “ three children)—sent to jail—tried for an assault ; her children
 “ came to the Refuge. The City or West Church parish seldom
 “ provide for them. In Leith they provide for such children ; but
 “ *I am not aware that they would do so in any other parish.* I
 “ remember people coming from the Highlands ; the minister of the
 “ parish said *there was nothing to give them.* I have known people
 “ sent down from England to Leith ; we found they had been born
 “ in the Castle while the fathers were there as soldiers. They could
 “ have no settlement here. I have seen whole families sent to Scot-
 “ land in that way, for whom the *managers of parishes would do*
 “ *nothing.*”—Vol. i., p. 101-4.

MR GRAHAM, Governor and Treasurer of the House of Refuge, Edinburgh.

“ Lawrence Stott, a respectable man, aged seventy-two, born in
 “ Shetland, was admitted in May 1841. He has been in and about
 “ Edinburgh for the last fifty years, in the most respectable service.
 “ He lived for the last four or five years on his savings ; but falling
 “ into distress, was obliged to apply for aid. The City rejected his
 “ claim, because he had removed to the parish of South Leith. He
 “ was then thrown back on the parish of Annan, where he lived
 “ from 1822 to 1826. The parish of Annan refuses his claim—it
 “ is so far back—unless more evidence be produced. He is still in
 “ the house. I wrote twice or three times to Annan. They said
 “ there was not sufficient evidence ; and we have not power to pro-
 “ duce more. Previous to being admitted, he was receiving 1s. per
 “ week only from the Old Men’s Society in Edinburgh.”

“ Georgina Brown, aged 23, was admitted in 1842. She is al-
 “ most entirely confined to bed. She was born and brought up in
 “ Edinburgh, and lived in the Canongate for the last four years. Ap-
 “ plication was made to the Canongate parish, but the Managers
 “ discovered that part of the land in which she lived belonged to the

“ City parish, and she was refused. She is still in the House of Refuge.”—Vol. i. p. 107.

Mr J. WRIGHT, Town-Councillor, Edinburgh, and a Manager of the Canongate Charity Workhouse.

“ If a party applied to the Managers, who has not a settlement, what do they do ?” “ They never give any thing but a little meal, or temporary relief. *The Managers are rigid in turning them off.*” “ I knew a woman, born in the Canongate, and married there, but who left the Canongate, and lived with her husband in the West Church parish for four years. Afterwards she removed to the city, where her husband died. She had an infant family of three. She applied to the Canongate, and *we managed among the three workhouses to have nothing to do with her at all,*” i. e., “ the Managers struck her off, but I ultimately got her settled on the city.” “ I saw a case of an old woman from the north, who had no assistance. When I visited her with Mr A. Craig, she was living in a cellar, up to the ankles in water. She had not received a shilling from any quarter. She afterwards got aid *from the Destitute Sick Society.*”

“ But as far as you know, *the parish would have left her to die there ?*” “ Yes.”

“ And she applied to the parish ?” “ She applied to everybody ; but not having lived within St John’s Cross, the Canongate got quit of her.”

GEORGE FORBES, Esq.

“ To shew the difficulty of obtaining relief, I may mention, that application was made to the Charity Workhouse for a man of my own name, who had resided three years in Edinburgh, and was quite disabled. They referred him to Glasgow, where he had resided six years, and he was sent there. Glasgow sent him to Campsie, where he was born ; and from Campsie the poor man has been sent back to Edinburgh. *This is one instance, and there are many of the same kind.*” *—Vol. i. p. 193.

* It appears from Dr Handyside’s evidence (p. 139), that this man, at the time of his examination, was still living in Edinburgh, supported by 1s. a-week, contributed by individuals, all the three parishes having succeeded in repelling him.

Mr ALEXANDER M'AULAY, late Manager, &c.

"A man, named M'Garry, was born in Ireland, but lived in Scotland many years; he then went to England, and wasted himself in working at an unhealthy business. He returned to Scotland. A question arose with respect to his parish. With all the little influence I had, I could not obtain permanent relief for him. I took him to the Charity Workhouse, where he got temporary aid; but *they got tired of him*. The aid given was so small, that he actually, in process of time, *died for want of the necessities of life*."—Vol. i. p. 168.

I myself brought under the notice of the Commissioners various cases of relief refused on account of disputed settlements; among others, three women, all unable for work, and recently dismissed from the Infirmary, only partially relieved, who were utterly destitute. They lived together in a small room, totally unfurnished, and could not get on the rolls of any of the parishes. Being thought fit cases for parochial aid, they had hardly any assistance from the Destitute Sick Society, and all died before the second visit of the Commissioners; one of them being the first case of the peculiar yellow fever, in the stair in which she lived, and in which a great number of other cases quickly followed.—*See my Pamphlet on the Epidemic Fever*, p. 16.

Captain MILLER, Superintendent of Police, Glasgow.

"Poor persons have great difficulty in procuring temporary aid, though resident many years in Glasgow. A poor woman, who was lately sent for by the sitting magistrate, in reference to her daughter, who was charged with theft, stated, that she was unable to do any thing for her; that another child, in her arms, was in a dying state; that she had been left with five children, quite destitute, by her husband; that she had applied at the Town Hospital for relief, but was refused, on the ground, that she had no legal settlement, although resident in Glasgow, and in the Barony parish, for many years, but not for three years in any one parish. *This is one of the many cases that occur almost daily*."—Vol. i. p. 325.

"My experience here is this, that of *the poor creatures who apply for parish aid, some get relief, and many not*."

"Would the parish to which he applies not give him relief in the

“ mean time ? ” “ It might ; but in *many cases relief is not granted*,
 “ or the small relief of 1s. or 1s. 6d. to get the applicant from the
 “ door. I have known numerous cases, where the party applied to
 “ the magistrate in the Police Court. The magistrate recommended
 “ the case to the Town Hospital, and notice has been sent back that
 “ the party had no settlement ; and *even temporary relief was not*
 “ *given* ; and that person has been found living for a length of time
 “ within the city.”—Ib., p. 330.

REV. DR NORMAN M'LEOD, of St Columba Church,
 Glasgow.

“ Is there difficulty in making out claims for relief against the
 “ parish where they have a settlement ? ” “ There is *nothing so*
 “ *painful to me*. Some mornings, at the hour I see poor people,
 “ I have ten or twelve. Most of those are cases of people who can-
 “ not find work. The father, perhaps, is in fever ; and they come
 “ for advice and aid, and influence in obtaining temporary relief.
 “ The difficulty is beyond any thing I can state ; because the *onus*
 “ of proving the domicile is thrown upon us ; and every difficulty is
 “ thrown in the way of getting proof of the settlement. I have had
 “ cases lasting a year or two, of correspondence with parishes ; and
 “ *we were at last obliged to leave the poor people to shift for them-*
 “ *selves*. I can mention a case of a man Macphail, quite above his
 “ situation as a labourer. He had been eight years in Glasgow, but
 “ only as a lodger. Some time after his marriage he met with an
 “ injury, for which his leg was amputated in the Infirmary, where I
 “ saw him frequently. I visited him afterwards at his own house :
 “ the poor man had sold every thing. His furniture, which was ex-
 “ ceedingly neat and respectable, had been disposed of piece-meal, till
 “ one evening the woman told me they were utterly reduced ; the
 “ last thing was the coat, or rather the suit, in which he had been
 “ married. I had it in my power to give a few shillings. I ap-
 “ plied to the Town's Hospital for a little temporary aid for him.
 “ They would not take my report, as I was not a parish minister ;
 “ but they examined his claim at my request. But it was in vain,—
 “ he had only been a lodger. I corresponded with his native parish ;
 “ they knew nothing of him ; he had left it when a boy. I used per-

“sonal influence in the matter ; eight months after his leg had been
“amputated, they gave him 2s. 6d. a-week ; after a short time it
“*was withdrawn.*”

“I have been trying another case this week,—Widow M‘Intyre,
“from Lorn. She came six or seven years ago, with four sons fit
“for work : they took a house in a low part of the town. The man
“died after being three years resident. The sons took fever, or met
“with injuries at public works, one after the other ; and she buried
“three of them. The fourth is in bad health, living with his mother,
“who is of superior conduct and feeling. I petitioned for them, but
“could not get a farthing. All they had was pawned ; and I wrote,
“asking simply a donation of 20s. to redeem some blankets ; and
“stating, that I would help her home, and get a gratis passage. I
“was not allowed to do so, because she was too old. Then for the
“domicile of her son, I could get nothing.” “A poor woman from
“Islay, came a year or two ago, with her family, expecting to get
“them educated at the Highland Schools, and to obtain work for
“them also. They were seized with small-pox and typhus ; every
“article was sold. They lived in a cellar with a stone-floor. She
“had a daughter in the Infirmary, who was carried home and died
“there. I could get nothing for her ; she had no claim ; but all
“I wanted was a little temporary aid. I applied to Islay, and at
“last got a pound from the minister, and a letter, stating, that they
“had no assessment, and no funds, which is the general answer ; as
“if they had the form of a letter. Since the clergyman has died,
“I think I have written three letters to the kirk-session, and I can-
“not get any thing for the poor woman, either there or here. It
“is a department which comes more especially under my notice, from
“my position as a Highland minister.” “Is there not a Highland
“Strangers’ Friendly Society in Glasgow ?” “We *dissolved it last*
“*year ; it was difficult to raise funds.* We wrote, asking contribu-
“tions of L.1 from each parish ; we got not a farthing. We got
“tired of soliciting here, and pressed our applications with the view
“of obtaining something from each parish, *but failed entirely.* The
“object of the Society was to assist poor families, who had emigrated
“to Glasgow in search of work, and who, by fever, or accident at
“the public works, were reduced to difficulty.”—Vol. i. pp. 644–
647.

WILLIAM GIBSON, Esq., Surgeon, Dalry.

“ I could get no relief for patients in fever here, who had no settlement, and could not point out a place where they had a settlement. *I was obliged to beg for them*; three-fourths of the men working in the works in this neighbourhood have no settlement here; and probably no settlement anywhere except by birth. Persons of this class are often exposed to much more severe distress than paupers on the roll, who are generally known to persons in the town. Labourers from a distant parish, of whom nobody knows any thing, sometimes suffer extreme privations. The same applies to wandering beggars and hawkers when taken ill at the houses where they stay.”—Vol. iii. p. 508.

I have still to observe, in regard to this matter of disputed settlements, that, as there has been, for many years past, practically, no appeal to any accessible court from the decisions of kirk-sessions or managers of the poor, these bodies can *dispute what settlements they choose*; and in many instances, I have not the smallest doubt that they have denied relief, on this ground, which was strictly due. One simple proof of this, is, that it is a very general principle to require evidence of *industrial residence* of three years before allowing any one to be placed on the roll. I brought before the Commissioners two disabled men, of good character, with families, living on charity (and one of whom has since died in great misery), to whom relief was refused by the Charity Workhouse here, because the managers were not satisfied with the evidence that they had supported themselves three years without begging. I have had reason to believe, on subsequent inquiry, that the residence of these men had been really industrial; but supposing it were not, we have the distinct statement of Mr Dunlop (on Parochial Law), and other authorities, that it is not industrial residence, but

“haunting and resorting,” that constitutes the claim, by the law of Scotland, to parochial aid; and he quotes decisions of the Court of Session, which are unequivocal on this point. I apprehend, therefore, that there can be no doubt that those numerous applicants for parochial relief who are refused assistance because they cannot give evidence of industrial residence, are illegally excluded from the benefit of the parochial funds.

6. There is yet another large class of destitute poor who are habitually excluded from the legal provision, and therefore go to swell the number of mendicants, without ever appearing as paupers, viz., those who “are regarded, on account of their character, as unfit objects for parochial aid.” What Dr Chalmers calls “the worthless poor, who should be *kept at bay*.” I formerly quoted, from the pamphlet of Mr Scott, session-clerk at Peterhead, the case of a family from the Highlands, who, on account of the misconduct of the father, were cut off from parochial aid *after he had deserted them*. It must have been on nearly similar grounds that the family described in the following extract were excluded, and reduced to beggary:—

“Mary Scott, a widow, with five children, the eldest ten years old, visited at Pollockshaws. The room was quite bare, without an article of furniture except a few rags upon a bed in a recess. She belonged to Sorn, in Ayrshire, from whence she had an allowance paid through the treasurer of the parish where she was; but this *had been stopped in consequence of her having had an illegitimate child*. She was in a very destitute condition, and one of her children, seen subsequently in the streets, had hardly clothes sufficient to cover her.”—Vol. iii. p. 426.

In like manner, I knew a case of a widow, with two children, who was struck off the parish roll, in Edin-

burgh, because her two girls, having been beaten in the Charity Workhouse, made their escape from thence, and returned to their mother. I feel satisfaction in adding, that, although this woman (who was, or *became* intemperate) died some time since, the two daughters have been able to establish themselves in industry and independence; but this has been done by the help of charitable contributions, bearing hard on a few individuals who chanced to know the case; and is only what might have been equally well effected, at the expense of the community at large, by a well and kindly regulated public provision. To the same head belong the very numerous cases of women with illegitimate children, in regard to whom the Commissioners state, that “the parochial authorities do, as a general rule, resist all claims made on behalf of illegitimate children, from a desire to avoid encouragement to vice, by too ready advances at the public expense;”—the very common result of which in this, as in other cases, is, not that the public are saved the maintenance of those children—but that it is charged on the charitable portion of the public, to the exclusion of the uncharitable; and that it is, in general, unavoidably given in such a way, as to exclude the possibility of any attempt at reformation. The Commissioners add, that “relief on account of illegitimate children, though strongly resisted, does not appear to be anywhere denied in cases of necessity.” But in this I beg to differ from them, having myself seen various cases, in which such relief was denied, and the children died, to the best of my judgment and belief, simply from the effects of cold and hunger,—which, I presume, must be regarded as cases of necessity.

It is the more important to keep in mind these different classes of the destitute poor, who, by the practice in Scotland, are prevented from appearing as paupers, although dependent on charity, as this enables us perfectly to comprehend the reason of the remarkable difference of statements in different parts of the evidence before the Commissioners, as to the poor from country parishes becoming an excessive burden on towns in Scotland. The Commissioners give a decided opinion, that all the statements which had been made on that point have been very much exaggerated; and they have certainly shewn, that the number of old or disabled persons resorting to the towns, and throwing themselves, as soon as possible, after three years of residence, on the poor's funds in the towns, is much smaller than had been sometimes represented. They have ascertained, also, that in most of the Lowland country parishes the condition of the paupers *admitted on the rolls* is, on the whole, much better than that of the paupers in Edinburgh or Glasgow; so that there is no inducement for the regular paupers to prefer the residence in towns. (But when from these facts they infer, that the *destitute poor* from country parishes do not unreasonably burden the towns, it appears to me that they have overlooked the facts which I have now stated (and had formerly stated in Illustrations, &c., in the Statistical Journal, Vols. iii. and iv.), in proof that the destitute poor greatly exceed the numbers of the paupers in Scotland. All the statistics of pauperism are quite insufficient to inform us how far the poor from the country are an excessive burden on the towns; because it is quite possible, and is the most general fact, that those who form that excessive burden are *excluded from the*

importance of perception

rolls of the country parishes, and do not appear on the rolls of the town parishes, by reason of some of the grounds of exclusion which I have enumerated.

In fact, I formerly stated, that those who form this excessive burden, seldom resort to the towns when wholly disabled, and merely in quest of charity. "They come in quest of work; but when they fail of procuring work, or become partially or wholly disabled, they will not return to their own parishes, but remain to swell the ranks of suitors for public and private charity in the towns." (Statistical Journal, vol. iii., p. 213.)

The great mass of them belong, in the first instance, to the class of able-bodied poor, unemployed and unrelieved at home, who would, in England, have the resource of the workhouse, or of parish work, but in Scotland flock to the towns, because the demand for labour there is more variable, and offers them more chances of occasional employment than in the country; afterwards, they fall into the class of temporarily disabled poor, by sickness or accidents; who would, in England, be relieved by the town parishes, in the first instance, and the relief given, to whom would afterwards be charged on their place of previous settlement; whereas, in Scotland, they seldom appear on the parochial lists at all, on account of the difficulties and delays attending such applications, but are relieved, either by individuals or by voluntary societies, at the expense of the charitable inhabitants only. It is the *voluntary* charity, therefore, not the legal charity of the towns, that is first and chiefly burdened by this influx from the country. I have shewn, in my Observations on the Contagious Fever of 1843 (pp. 32-3), how much the Infirmary and Des-

titute Sick Society in Edinburgh would be relieved, if anything like the English law of settlement, or the English practice of charging the relief given to sick persons and their families on their parishes, were introduced here ; viz., that of 150 patients in fever, only 50, by the English law and practice, would have been a burden on Edinburgh ; and that, even under the Scotch law of settlement, if the English practice of charging parishes for charitable relief given to their poor in sickness, were adopted, 52 of the 150 would have been supported at the expense of other places ; and I consider such statements as indicating, much better than any of the statistics of pauperism, collected by the Commissioners, the expense with which the influx of poor from country parishes burdens the towns in Scotland.

*U*t is unnecessary, although it would be easy, to go farther with the evidence of the general inadequacy of the legal allowances—in many parts of Scotland the frequent denial of all relief—the state of abject destitution of great numbers of the poor—and the nature of the resources on which they must depend, especially the “common begging.”

The defenders of the present system in Scotland can hardly look forward to any abatement of the begging, even among the regular paupers ; and, accordingly, Dr Chalmers stated to the Commissioners—“In regard to “begging, I cannot say that I have the objection to it “which some people have. *If* you have a thorough “parochial system, then it may be regulated. I don’t “object to parish badges or session badges, keeping “the parties within particular walks.” He says, however, that “he thinks mendicity, or begging from door “to door, is more demoralizing than a parish allow-

“ance ; at the same time, he would prefer mendicity to an allowance, *because, under a right parochial management, mendicity would be reduced to a mere infinitesimal.*”—Vol. i.p. 373.

I beg it may be remarked here, that it is only *if* we have a thorough parochial system, that Dr Chalmers supposes that mendicity can be properly regulated ; and that his preference of this plan of relief, to the parochial allowance under a poor law, *is contingent on there being such a “right parochial management as shall “reduce mendicity to a mere infinitesimal.”* On this, I have only to observe, that “your *if* is a mighty peace-maker.” It is really not necessary to speculate on what might be the best mode of proceeding, if such a parochial management existed. Our concern is with a country in which, notwithstanding the persevering exertions of Dr Chalmers and his numerous disciples, the parochial management in most districts is such, that the great body of the poor, with whose maintenance the parochial authorities are intrusted, are in a miserable state of destitution, and are left dependent for their subsistence, either on certain voluntary charitable institutions, or, more frequently, on “*the charity of their neighbours, nearly as poor as themselves,*” or on “*common begging.*” This being the condition of the country, I have seen nothing in the evidence given to the Commissioners to invalidate, but a great deal to confirm the objections, which I have formerly urged against any of these modifications of the voluntary system of management of the poor, viz.—1. That it is much less equitable towards the higher ranks who support the poor. 2. That it is much less effectual in procuring relief and comfort for the poor themselves ;—and, 3. That it is much more injurious to their character and habits. The slightest examination of the extracts I

have already made must be enough, I think, to shew, that the two first of these objections apply to the system of chiefly voluntary relief, on which the poor are dependent, in almost all parts of Scotland. I admit that the last is not so applicable to the system of beggary carried on in the Highlands, and which is almost entirely and necessarily confined to the clansmen and acquaintances of the poor; but that this objection, as well as the others, is truly applicable to other parts of Scotland, where the population is more dense, and the structure of society more complex, is sufficiently shewn by such evidence as the following:—

The Rev. J. HUNTER, Edinburgh.

“ You would say that begging has a bad effect upon the rising generation ?” “ Nothing can be worse ; for it accustoms them to every species of falsehood and imposition, and many of them are thus trained to theft. A very large number of young persons in prison for theft, have been constantly accustomed to street begging. I have felt more grieved than I can express, to see young persons, 10 or 12 years old, sent to prison for theft.”—Vol. i. p. 57.

The Rev. Mr STRANG, Kilmarnock.

“ He sees many people begging, and believes some of them are on the poor’s roll. Does not approve of begging ; thinks it should be put down, as it leads to imposture, and encourages vagrancy, and facilitates habits of drunkenness,—because parties who receive money by begging are apt to spend it lightly,—and is a bad training for children. The most deceitful man is often the most successful beggar, and children are often taught to exaggerate, to work on the feelings of the public.”—Vol. i. p. 709.

Mr A. FAIRRIE, Member of the Superintending Committee, Greenock.

“ Has begging a bad effect on the characters of the persons begging ?” “ I think it demoralizes the character. I have known instances of widows who were respectable before losing their hus-

"bands, who afterwards *lost standing and caste*, and sunk into
"wretchedness."—Vol. i., p. 556.

Mr GRAY, Town-Clerk, Greenock.

"What is the consequence of the inadequacy of the allowances of
"the parochial poor?" "They *are obliged to beg*, and get assistance
"from their acquaintances and others."

"Do you think it a good system allowing them to beg?" "I
"don't think so. It is harassing to the feelings to see them going
"about with their families."

"Does it tend to lying?" "I dare say it does. They resort to
"that to get commiseration."

"Will they not conceal from one what they get in charity from
"another?" "They will."

"Which do you think better—begging, or a decent maintenance
"for the destitute, so as to leave them no excuse for begging?" "I
"think the latter. Some prefer begging, because they make more
"of it, and get drink."

"These beggars levy a certain tax on the community as it is?"
"They do."

"So if they were allowed a proper maintenance, the whole ex-
"pense to the community might not be greater, although the amount
"of the assessment would be somewhat greater?" "All parties
"would pay their proportion; the feeling part of the community
"pay more at present, and those who refuse to give voluntary cha-
"rity are freed."

"The deserving poor would get more, and the undeserving less?"
"Clearly."—Vol. i., p. 535.

But while mendicity is the real and admitted re-
source of so many of the poor, it is necessary to state,
as a part of the system, how frequently this mendicity
is punished as a crime.

Mr JOHN SMITH, Governor of the Prison of Edinburgh.

"Have you had any persons committed to prison who are regular
"beggars?" "Last year there were 202 committals—not persons
"committed, but committals; for several might be committed two or
"three times." "Chiefly for petty theft?" "For begging." "Sent

“ from the police or sheriff-court ?” “ From the police-office.” “ For what terms ?” “ Five, ten, twenty, and thirty days. The average sentence might be fifteen days.” “ Chiefly women ?” “ No ; aged men as well. There were 90 committals in 1841 ; 202 in 1842 ; and of these, taking in the two years, the number 60 years old and upwards was upwards of 36, and the number of committals of those 60 years old and upwards, was upwards of 76.” “ Have you knowledge whether these occasional beggars are paupers ?” “ A considerable proportion of them are out-door paupers.”—Vol. i. p. 67.

Several individual cases of these aged paupers are then given, which, however, I do not consider as by any means the cases of greatest hardship, because they would, in general, have had the offer of the workhouse. The greatest hardship and misery would be inflicted on those not receiving any parish relief (for some of the reasons already given), particularly on women with families ; and may be judged of from the statement already quoted from Captain Thomson, of the House of Refuge, that he is not aware of any parish, except Leith, where they will make any regular provision for children whose mothers are so confined.

H. BARCLAY, Esq., Sheriff-Substitute, Perth.

“ We are informed that it is common for the rural police to have persons stationed at the bridge to turn back beggars into town. Do you think that is legal ?” “ I suspect it is. Begging is a crime by the law of Scotland. Our object is to keep the parties within their own parish, which ought to support them. It is a very harsh measure to prevent parties leaving the place. It was greatly cried out against by the inhabitants of Perth ; but, *as it was greatly admired by persons living in the country, who were thereby relieved from a great annoyance, it has been continued.*”

“ Is it your opinion that a beggar from Perth going into the country may be punished for it ?” “ Yes ; and they have been punished for it. The inquiry was, why do you not apply to your parish ? On investigation I often found *the sum given was inadequate.* They supplemented the deficiency by begging. The

“ constables were instructed to check the practice ; but there have
 “ not been half-a-dozen committed (cases where there was insolence),
 “ and it was done chiefly to *strike terror among them* at first.”

“ Does there seem to you to be a difficulty in punishing an individual
 “ for begging, without giving him a right to relief ?” “ Decidedly.
 “ You will never put down vagrancy effectually, till you are able to
 “ say there is no cause for it.”—Vol. iii., p. 253.

On this I would only observe, that, while the law of Scotland makes begging a crime, it makes it also the duty of all managers of the poor to provide for all destitute persons such relief as they shall be willing, *of their own consent*, to accept and “ live unbeggand.”

Those who think themselves justified in carrying one of these laws into effect—that against the poor,—and not the other—that against the rich,—have ideas of justice different from mine ; but I am confident that I shall carry Mr Barclay himself, and many others, along with me, in asserting, that this matter will never be properly regulated in Scotland, until the Sheriffs, or some equally accessible authorities, shall be entitled to proceed equally against heritors and kirk-sessions who grant inadequate allowances, as against paupers who supplement these by begging.

Thus the old warfare of the law against the vagrants and beggars is still carried on, with various success, but uniform injustice, in Scotland ; in utter neglect of the experience of many other nations, by whom it has been long since found, that there is one mode, and only one, of meeting those antagonists, which has been uniformly successful. “ The *legal provision for the poor* prevents vagrant mendicity, which ought not, and cannot be prevented, *while destitution is unrelieved*. “ The laws of Charlemagne, prohibiting vagrant mendicity, at the same time ordered that the poor should be relieved, on condition of their labouring. Lord

“ Coke justly couples the prohibition of mendicity with
 “ the relief of the poor. In the sixteenth century,
 “ England swarmed with vagrants and beggars, and no
 “ punishment proved effectual for their suppression,
 “ until *the legislature had effectually provided for the re-*
 “ *lief of the poor.* Beating, branding, chaining, slavery,
 “ and death, and the more legitimate remedies of
 “ whipping, stocks, and the house of correction, equally
 “ failed to repress vagrant mendicity, while real want
 “ was unrelieved; and the magnitude of the evil is at-
 “ tested by the severity of the law, and the numerous
 “ statutes. But in the year 1597, the legal provision
 “ for the relief of the poor was greatly amended; the
 “ legislature at the same time passing an act (the basis
 “ of the 43d Elizabeth) for the relief of the poor, and
 “ another, the following act, for the punishment of
 “ rogues, vagabonds, and sturdy beggars. These acts
 “ were immediately carried into execution; and Lord
 “ Coke informs us, that, ‘ on the making of these sta-
 “ ‘ tutes, and for a good time thereafter, while justices
 “ ‘ of the peace and their officers were diligent and in-
 “ ‘ dustrious, there was not a rogue to be seen in any
 “ ‘ part of England.’ James I., in his speech in the
 “ Star-Chamber (20th June 1616), bears similar testi-
 “ mony, ‘ that in Chief-Justice Topham’s time, not a
 “ ‘ wandering beggar was to be found in all Somerset-
 “ ‘ shire, his native county;’ and Dalton, writing in
 “ 1618, says, that, ‘ by the joint operation of the statutes
 “ ‘ for the punishment of vagabonds, and *relief of the*
 “ ‘ *poor*, infinite swarms of idle vagabonds are rooted
 “ ‘ out, who before wandered up and down, to the great
 “ ‘ danger and indignitie of our nation.’ ”—Palmer’s
Principles of the Legal Provision for the Poor, pp. 39-
 41.

III. In the next place, I think it of great importance to fix the attention of all who interest themselves in this subject, on the special case of the usual treatment of Widows and Orphans, and deserted families, in Scotland, and the results, as to vice and crime, which are distinctly traced to that source.

Mr J. WIGHAM, lately Manager of the West Church Charity Workhouse.

“ One part of the practice of the workhouse to which I had great
 “ objections, and which is attended with great suffering and cruelty,
 “ was the treatment of widows and children. They did not give
 “ them the option of residence in a workhouse, for themselves or
 “ their children. The plan pursued was this: They told the poor
 “ people, on allowing them a small pittance, ‘ This is all we can give
 “ ‘ you, whatever be the circumstances of yourselves or your families.’
 “ There are five widows, with five children, on the pauper lists, re-
 “ ceiving only 6s. per month; and two with five children, *under* 12,
 “ with only 4s. and 5s. a-month; and there is *only one, with that num-*
 “ *ber*, receiving as much as 8s. a-month. Out of 636 widows, many
 “ of them with large families, there is only one receiving as much as
 “ 12s. per month, and only 14 receiving 8s. These very scanty al-
 “ lowances given to widows, who have not the option of going into
 “ the workhouse, struck me, from the first, as attended with great suf-
 “ fering and cruelty. I took steps to get all the conveners of the
 “ committees together; and they were of my sentiment, that the
 “ regulations ought to be altered; but when we came to a general
 “ meeting of managers, they would not accede to it. I made an ef-
 “ fort to bring it before a general meeting of heritors; but there also
 “ I lost it. I shewed them that a halfpenny a pound on the assess-
 “ ment would enable us to give all the widows double their allow-
 “ ance; but all would not do. I believe that serious results arise
 “ from the extremely limited manner in which widows are supported,
 “ not only in St Cuthbert’s parish, but all over Scotland. I fre-
 “ quently find women going about begging, and they tell me that all
 “ they receive is 1s. a-month. I have found women having children,
 “ with 3s. and 4s. a month, going about begging; they said they
 “ could not support their children without begging; and the conse-

“ quence is, that the children are first beggars, then they steal, and
 “ are sent to prison in great numbers.”—Vol. 1., p. 122,

Mr J. WRIGHT, Town-Councillor, and Manager of the
 Charity Workhouse in the Canongate.

“ The Canongate has tried to get rid of paupers with 6d. a-week,
 “ —1s. and 1s. 6d. to those with large families. We were very
 “ anxious not to get them on at all, if we could avoid it. A widow
 “ with a family has some families who give her washing at 10d. or
 “ 1s. a-day when employed. *To get quit of this woman*, we offered
 “ the workhouse—she declined. Another, having children of 12 or
 “ 14, would not go in, because she would then leave her family to
 “ starve, or acquire bad habits; and the consequence was, that *the*
 “ *workhouse was relieved of the burden.*” “ The offer was made,
 “ knowing that she would refuse.” “ Sometimes we say, ‘ This
 “ ‘ woman is going to be a burden. If she will not accept, we get
 “ quit of her; if she accept, we refuse, giving her something,—for
 “ we cannot take many in.’ ”

“ Then it is illusory on the part of the committee to offer the work-
 “ house, as they have not accommodation?” “ Undoubtedly.”—
 Vol. i. pp. 174–5.

The Very Rev. Principal LEE, formerly Minister of
 the Canongate.

“ The Charity Workhouse (in the Canongate) was shut up at one
 “ time—the aged people were boarded—the children sent to the
 “ country. But it was ascertained, after very diligent inquiry, that
 “ the children were altogether neglected—brought up rather like
 “ inferior animals than human beings—set to sleep in stables—not
 “ sent to school. *Some sustained injuries during that period which*
 “ *rendered them unfit for labour.*”—Vol. iii., p. 857.

Dr GREVILLE, Manager of the House of Refuge.

“ Is it your conviction that the smallness of the allowance granted
 to the poor on the roll leads them to maintain themselves by begging
 and theft?” “ I have no doubt whatever that such is the fact.”

“ Do you think their destitution has a bad effect on their moral
 “ habits?” “ Not a doubt of it. Within my experience the moral

“ character has become worse, and the general distress far more
 “ aggravated. I see, in my intercourse with the poor, that from
 “ causes perfectly patent, they are reduced to pawn their clothes, sell
 “ their furniture, and turn beggars, and sink into the deepest wretch-
 “ edness. And I have certainly seen some families who added to
 “ this, dissipation and depravity, which I conceived to be the almost
 “ iuevitable consequences of their hopeless wretchedness.”—Vol. i.,
 p. 99–100.

I am aware that some have denied altogether the principle which I have often asserted, that destitution is often a cause of intemperance and immorality ; but I have seen and watched the progress of too many cases, in which the sequence of events was as stated in the last sentence by Dr Greville, and in the evidence of Mr Smith of the Calton Jail, Mr Brebner of the Glasgow Jail, and others, to be quoted afterwards, to be in the least staggered by the incredulity of less experienced observers. I have repeatedly seen the reverse process—widows and others, who have become reckless, intemperate, and even dishonest, during extreme poverty, but have recovered themselves completely as they have been gradually “ lifted up by charity,” and especially as by their children’s labour they have been enabled to regain comfort and respectability.

THOMAS FAIRRIE, Esq., Merchant, Greenock.

“ A vast number of widows are left with infants, and are perfectly
 “ unable to do any thing for themselves, having to take care of their
 “ infants and young children. The provision made for them from
 “ the poor-rate is not at all adequate. I have, in consequence, felt
 “ called on to lay out sums which it does not become me to mention,
 “ to advance their interests, and help them on. *I have seen the*
 “ *blessings of it.* By giving a poor widow of decent and respectable
 “ character 5s. or 6s. a week, *immediately after her husband’s*
 “ *death, she has been able to rear her family creditably.* There are
 “ *instances of families brought up in this way, who are a credit to*

“ *Greenock.*” * “ For a number of years I employed 200 women and girls making shirts, which I sent abroad and sold as I best could. In an investigation fifteen years ago, it was found that not less than $4\frac{1}{2}$ to 5 per cent. of the householders in Greenock were widows (often of sea-faring men). These, as I have often experienced, *were dealt with in severe terms, because the cry was through the town as to the amount of the poor-rates*; and poor respectable widows have been treated in a way which was very unpleasant, and which tended to *break down their spirits*. To this day I feel myself constrained to continue the same system when in my power.”

“ At what age do they reckon in the parish that a child should be able to maintain itself ?” “ That is one of the most melancholy subjects connected with the town. Attending as much as possible to the education and religious instruction of the children, I must say one of the most melancholy things is, the throwing them off at an age so young, that few escape contagion. Boys are sometimes got rid of by stowing them away in ships, and girls, if they have no friends, *are left to themselves, and often become miserable objects of disease, poverty, and crime*. They are thought to be able to maintain themselves at 14; many are carried away as servants, but *many are kept in abandoned houses, where they can get refuge*. There is no general employment here for girls, except lately in a cotton-mill; they should not, in general, be turned adrift till they are sixteen or seventeen years old.”

“ Cannot they earn their own subsistence in a cotton-mill before the age of ten ?” “ The cotton-mill here is a private concern; and I cannot tell much about this.” †—Vol. i. p. 558.

* This gentleman has exactly done for some, what, on a proper system of protection of the poor, would have been done for all the destitute orphans belonging to Greenock; and there is no reason for doubting, that, under a plan of inspection and care, such as may be expected in an enlightened and Christian country, similar results would be rendered general. Mr Fairrie, I am fully convinced, would only have farther to attend to the conduct of the persons thus *kept up in the world*, at the time of marriage, to be convinced that such care bestowed on them is, generally speaking, rewarded by such prudence of conduct, as removes all apprehension as to the alleged effect of an effectual provision against destitution, on the principle of population.

† It should be added, that the demand at the cotton-mill is always limited, and sometimes fails altogether; and, of course, it is not a resource that can be relied on.

Mr J. URQUHART, Aberdeen.

“ When we cannot get relatives to take care of orphans, we board them out with strangers, making the best bargain we can.”

“ Do you visit them ?” “ A Committee of the Managers bring them before them twice or three times a-year, to see the state they are in, and order clothes for them. A committee at one time visited them at their lodgings *once a-year* ; but I believe they *have not been visited in that way these two years.*”

“ Do you think they are taken care of in a satisfactory way ?” “ *No, I do not.* We found that parties with whom some of them were boarded were using them for the purpose of begging. There are several flagrant instances of the neglect of orphans by those with whom they are boarded, which never come before the Board of Management. I have had reason to believe that an individual who had charge of an orphan was in the habit of sending him out, and putting him in the way of stealing for her benefit.”—Vol. iii., p. 649.

Mr GEMMELL, Superintendent of the Poor, Dumfries.

“ Are steps taken for the education of orphan children ?” “ That is more done than it was formerly. It was chiefly for the education of these children that I recommended to the Board to send them to the country. They have much better education there.”

“ The cholera left us with sixty orphans ; we might have had six or seven before that.”

“ How are these orphans provided for ?” “ Their education is now looked after. *It was totally neglected then (i. e. after 1832).* *The principal girls on the street were our orphans, whose education and moral training were altogether uncared for.*”—Vol. iii., p. 556.

Dr J. Campbell, formerly District Surgeon in the Barony Parish, gives evidence which exemplifies, as strongly as could be desired, first, the usual denial of relief in cases of disputed settlement, and its effects ; next, the neglect of orphans ; and, lastly, the ulterior consequences of these evils in the extension of contagious fevers.

Dr JAMES CAMPBELL, Glasgow.

“ Were you called of late to visit a person named Leech, when fever was in the house in Silver Grove ? ” “ I was not called ; but Mr Black, the district surgeon, asked me to go down with him as a friend.” “ What did you find when you went there ? ” “ Twenty-two children affected with *febricula*, or common fever.” “ And how many rooms were appropriated to their use ? ” “ *One.* ” “ What was its size ? ” “ *About 14 feet square*, judging according to appearance.” “ Have you been in that house before ? ” “ I have, but never in that room. It has been but lately added to Andrew Leech’s establishment.” “ Had disease made considerable progress with the children when you saw them ? ” “ It had.” “ Who was taking charge of the children when you went in ? ” “ Mrs Leech and one of the women paupers.” “ While you were a district surgeon, were you accustomed to visit in Leech’s house ? ” “ Yes.” “ What is the number of children you have previously seen there on the occasion of your visit—what is the greatest number ? ” “ *Thirteen children and four women in one room.* ” “ What was the size ? ” “ *About 12 feet square.* ” “ Was that before the room which was lately added to Leech’s establishment ? ” “ Yes.” “ Was there fever among them at the time ? ” “ *There was.* ” “ What kind ? ” “ *Typhus.* ” “ How long is that ago ? ” “ June 1841.” “ Were there any deaths ? ” “ *There were removals to the hospital, and deaths took place there.* ” “ Did you find any fever after that period, June 1841 ? ” “ *It took every individual, with the exception of Andrew Leech himself.* ” How do you account for its being so prevalent in the house at this time ? ” “ There are four or five children of a woman named Jeans, a parishioner of the Barony, who had been refused parochial relief, though she had these five children under ten years of age. She was at last obliged to take shelter in the *Night Asylum*, where she caught typhus, whence she was removed to the Glasgow Royal Infirmary, where she died. The youngest, a child at her breast, was affected ;—the children were taken to Mr Maclaren’s office, who sent them all out to the house of Andrew Leech, and the contagion spread through the whole house. The woman had been once a most respectable person.” “ How do you know that they were sent to Leech’s house by the Barony parish ? ” “ 1st, They

“ were patients of mine ; 2dly, They were tenants in a property of
 “ which I have the charge ; 3dly, The authorities of the Barony
 “ parish shewed me a letter from Aberdeen, setting forth the woman’s
 “ claim on the parish, and inquired whether the woman’s claim were
 “ correct, when I answered it was. The woman, with her husband,
 “ had resided in Bridgeton, Barony parish, for fifteen months ; in
 “ the same land with myself in the Barony parish for twelve months ;
 “ and in the land adjoining for twelve months, making in all three
 “ years and three months. She and her husband removed to Gor-
 “ bals, where he died of consumption. She returned to her native
 “ place, Aberdeen, and applied for parochial relief, her husband hav-
 “ ing once been a merchant there. Her claim was refused by the
 “ parish of Aberdeen. The authorities in Aberdeen transmitted a
 “ letter to the parish of Barony, setting forth the statement which I
 “ have now made, which letter was shewn to me. *They still refused*
 “ *her claim* ; and early in the month of March or April 1841, the
 “ authorities of Aberdeen sent the woman through from Aberdeen
 “ to Glasgow, when she called at my house for a certificate of her
 “ residence in the Barony.” “ And there was no doubt, from the
 “ statement you make, that she had acquired a right to relief once
 “ in the Barony parish ?” “ It was stated to the relieving-officer, in
 “ the letter that was sent from Aberdeen, that he had only to apply
 “ to me and to another for the truth.” “ And what ground did he
 “ assign for the refusal ?” “ None.” “ During the time you have
 “ been district surgeon in the Barony parish, have you seen many
 “ cases of fever where they boarded orphan children ?” “ *Yes.*”
 “ Were they more prevalent among them than among other chil-
 “ dren in the neighbourhood ?” “ *Yes.*” “ To what cause do you
 “ attribute that prevalence ?” “ To the general causes that give
 “ propagation to fever, viz. over-crowding, want of ventilation, &c.”
 “ Are the houses of an improper description ?” “ *Of a very inferior*
 “ *description ; in many cases they are small, low-roofed, damp.*”
 —Vol. i. pp. 655–657.

The following extracts bear more specifically on the
 effect of the imperfect provision for widows and orphans
 in the production of *crime*.

Mr J. WIGHAM, Member of the Prison Board, and lately
Manager of the West Church Poorhouse.

“ As member of the Prison Board, has any thing come under your
“ notice in regard to the provision for the poor ? ” “ The impres-
“ sion on my mind is, that the poor laws, as administered in Scot-
“ land, are very much calculated to fill our prisons. In Captain
“ Rose’s time, I asked him to call up three of the youngest boys,
“ taking them promiscuously. He did so. I found on questioning
“ them, that two of them belonged to Leith. *Both their mothers*
“ *were widows.* They acknowledged that their mothers had some-
“ thing from the parish; but they were sent out to beg, while their
“ mothers went out to wash. They acknowledged that they had be-
“ come pilferers, and in consequence were sent to jail. I thought I saw
“ clearly, that if these children had been in a workhouse and cared
“ for, they would have been saved, and there would have been a great
“ saving of expense. I often wonder that kirk-sessions lose sight of
“ this, and allow their widows and children to go about begging. If
“ we had a good poor law, and workhouses on a right footing, and an
“ appeal to the Sheriffs, which would enable them to put a stop to
“ begging, I should expect a new era in this country.”—Vol. i.
p. 124.

Mr J. SMITH, Governor of the Prison of Edinburgh.

“ The education of the children of out-door paupers is very defec-
“ tive. They are often left at home by the mother when she is out
“ washing, and are allowed to associate with thieves, and grow up in
“ ignorance and crime. *Many widows so left, after struggling on for*
“ *a time, get disheartened, become reckless and intemperate,* and shew
“ their children an example of all kinds of wickedness. In many
“ cases the children are sent out by their parents to beg; and it ends
“ in their becoming confirmed thieves. Many youths have grown
“ up to the higher class of offences, who were left destitute or or-
“ phans, the father dying or deserting; and in consequence of no at-
“ tention being paid to them by the parish, or by their mothers, they
“ fall into crime. Two cases suggest themselves to my memory just
“ now; one of a family from Leith, whose father deserted ten years
“ ago. He left five children, three boys and two girls; we had the

“ whole five in the jail at the same time. The two girls were transported. One of the boys was in for stealing, and the two younger for begging, all at the same time. The mother of these children got 2s. 6d. a-week, out of which she was to support them. She was obliged to go out to work ; they went out to beg, and became thieves and prostitutes. The mother *became* intemperate. In another case, a family,—the mother, daughter, and two sons, were in the prison. According to the mother’s statement, her husband, an Irishman, eight years before, fell into bad health. The parish gave him a gratuity of L.5 to get him away. He went to Glasgow, and died there. She came back, and the parish would do nothing more. In consequence, she and the others fell into crime. One of the sons was transported, the others were got into the penitentiary, the daughter went on the town, and the mother is drunken and very worthless.”—Vol. i. p. 65.

The following extract from my own evidence before the Commissioners is to the same purpose.

“ I can point out three women (living at the time in the same close), one a widow, two deserted wives, for whom I applied to the Charity Workhouse for relief, and was refused. Two of them have since, however, got on the roll. These women had all children, who were sent out to beg. Two of them have been transported for theft, and a third is now in confinement (since transported.) I am very confident, that these three women were of such character, that they would have brought up their children respectably, if they could have done it. They were forced to send out their children to beg ; and they came to associate with young thieves. I have seen letters from the two that were banished, which shew that there is no want of affection on the part of the children ; and, no doubt, their crime was very much to be traced to the destitution of their parents. This contrasts strongly with the state of this matter in Manchester, where Sir Charles Shaw states, that there is little or no crime which can be traced to destitution.”—Vol. i. pp. 76–7.

Bailie FORBES, Aberdeen.

“ It has come painfully under my observation as a magistrate, that in consequence of the insufficient provision for the poor in this

“ city, their children are often trained up in improper habits ; being
 “ sent out by their parents, ostensibly to beg, but indirectly counte-
 “ nanced in the commission of petty thefts, so that, before they ar-
 “ rive at maturity, these children have become confirmed thieves,
 “ This I have particularly observed, particularly when the father
 “ has deserted his family, and the allowance from the poor-funds
 “ is insufficient to procure the absolute necessities of life.”—Vol. ii.
 p. 607.

WM. WATSON, Esq., Sheriff-Substitute, Aberdeen.

“ I got a return some years ago of the number of juvenile beggars.
 “ There were 280 known to the police, who had no way of living
 “ but by begging.”

“ Are the delinquencies chiefly among the juvenile beggars ?” “ In
 “ my department, in almost every instance, the offences are com-
 “ mitted by those of intemperate habits, by a set of notorious
 “ thieves, *or by the juvenile vagrants.*”

“ Are they those that receive parochial relief ?” “ After obtaining
 “ that return, I induced the inhabitants to subscribe a small sum to
 “ take those children off the streets and educate them. We found
 “ that a considerable number of the children attending that school
 “ were the children of parents receiving parochial relief. It was pro-
 “ posed to discharge them ;* but it was found, on inquiry, that the
 “ rates allowed them were so small, that *they could not maintain their*
 “ *children without sending them out to beg, and therefore the pro-*
 “ *posal was not carried.*”—Vol. ii. p. 629.

Captain J. J. GROVE, Superintendent of County Police,
 Perth.

“ Do you think, from your experience here, that the vagrancy and
 “ destitution of the poor are often the causes of crime ?” “ In very
 “ many instances. A man told me that they must either beg or
 “ steal, having no employment or means of subsistence.”

“ Are the children on the streets of Perth the children of beg-
 “ gars ?” “ Yes ; and of persons committed to prison for various

* This is another illustration of what I stated as to the practice of cutting people off the roll on account of immorality, and thereby burdening the community with them as beggars exclusively.

“ offences. I found two children the other day, whose father was
 “ tried at the last Circuit, and committed to the penitentiary. They
 “ were left *motherless and destitute*, and are *picking up a living the*
 “ *best way they can.*”—Vol. iii., p. 243.

HUGH BARCLAY, Esq., Sheriff-Substitute, Perth.

“ The father of a family from the Highlands was in prison here ;
 “ his wife and a large family came here, they had no claim on the
 “ town, and one of the daughters was brought before me for stealing
 “ bread from a baker’s shop. I cannot specify any more than that
 “ and a similar case, where stealing *directly* arose from destitution,
 “ though in many it *indirectly* arises from that cause. The parties
 “ lose character, have no house,—no home,—acquire habits of va-
 “ grancy,” &c.—Vol. iii., p. 253.

Mr F. HILL, Inspector of Prisons in Scotland.

The Chaplain of Dumfries prison says,—“ There is at present a
 “ band of about 20 boys in town (two of them now in prison), who,
 “ I believe, depend almost entirely on begging and petty thefts for
 “ living. In most of these cases, the parents are either dead, or
 “ quite neglect their children.” The Chaplain of Inverness prison
 says,—“ I find that many of the boys who are sent to prison are
 “ either the children of widowed mothers, or that their fathers have
 “ deserted both them and their mothers.” The Chaplain of Glasgow
 prison says,—“ Of the youthful criminals of both sexes, nine out of
 “ ten are without one or both parents, or have deserted their parents’
 “ house, or been driven to crime by them.” In a late inquiry at
 the General Prison at Perth, it appeared that of 87 below 17 years
 of age, 51 had lost one or both parents.—Vol. iii., p. 882, *et seq.*

Captain MILLER, Superintendent of Police, Glasgow.

“ I believe that some better provision for the poor in Scotland is
 “ imperatively necessary, not only on the ground of humanity, but
 “ also as a means of repressing crime. I am of opinion, that ex-
 “ treme poverty affects very materially the moral condition of the
 “ working classes.”—Vol. i., p. 322.—See also his Evidence already
 quoted, p. 15.

W. BREBNER, Esq., Governor of Glasgow Prison.

“ Three-fourths of those who inhabit this place are idle from infancy, brought up as beggars. Boys sent out to beg become thieves, and the girls are generally prostitutes.”

Mr A. FAIRRIE, Greenock.

“ I know instances of orphans being put into the hands of persons, who ought not to have the charge of children. At the age of 14 *they are thrown off* by the guardians of the poor ; and this is the most dangerous period of their lives. There is no attention (unless it may be by private charitable persons) to see those orphans settled in the world ; and *thus many of them go wrong*. When I was a magistrate, I discovered repeatedly that parties before me had been parish orphans, whose misconduct, I concluded, had been owing to neglect in their education. If the parish orphans could be kept under the superintendence of the kirk-sessions till they were settled in the world, it would be a most important benefit to the community.”

“ When parties are of good character, have you found, in ordinary times, any cases of extreme destitution among them ?” “ Yes ; I have found *many wretched cases among those receiving parochial relief*, many cases of *decent and respectable widows with families*.” —Vol. i., pp. 550–2.

Mr J. DENNISTOUN, Greenock.

“ I think a separate establishment should be provided for orphans, of whom we have a great many ; at present they are boarded out at a cheap rate. Although pains are taken to board them with respectable families, yet there is no superintendence of them. Their schooling is often neglected ; no charge is taken of them, whether they attend school or not. In the town they are scarcely ever visited at all, and no exertions are made to learn them a trade ; and when the period comes when they cease to have a claim on the parish, *they are turned adrift, without any one to look after them*. Many of them have come before me in the Police Court,—*they had no place where to lay their heads, but in the resort of thieves*. *The state of orphans in this country is most melancholy*.” —Vol. i., p. 547.

I only add to this last statement, that in England, or other countries where the right of relief does not ex-

pire at the age of puberty, no such complaint can be made, and crime, owing to destitution, is comparatively rare.—See my own Evidence, on the authority of Sir Charles Shaw, *supra* ; and the Evidence of P. Hill, Esq., *infra*.

IV. The next topic to which I wish to direct particular attention is, the state of Medical Relief for the poor in Scotland, as to which I shall take the liberty of quoting a portion of my own evidence before the Commissioners.

“ The medical aid to the poor I believe to be generally very
 “ deficient ; and where it is sufficient for them, it is a heavy and
 “ unjust burden on the medical men, who devote often, I believe,
 “ a larger portion of their time and money to the service of the
 “ poor than any other class in the community. I remember a
 “ very excellent man, a practitioner in the Grassmarket here, who
 “ told me that he had sometimes given away in a day, among the
 “ poor in the Grassmarket, more than he had earned on that day.
 “ In most towns there are dispensaries, by which medical men are
 “ relieved of great part of the expense of medicines for the sick
 “ poor, and in some of them, I believe, the duty of visiting the
 “ sick poor is very carefully performed ; but being always on the
 “ voluntary principle, there is no security for its being regularly
 “ or uniformly performed,—for the persons employed to visit
 “ being regularly instructed,—or for that early attention to cases,
 “ on which the success of treatment, in most cases admitting of
 “ successful treatment, depends. For example, in Edinburgh, for
 “ thirty years before 1815 there was a public dispensary ; but it
 “ was opened only twice a-week, and it was no part of the duty of
 “ the medical officers to attend the sick poor at home. Any
 “ other medical aid which the sick poor had at home was private
 “ charity on the part of the medical men. Since then the
 “ duty of attending the sick poor at home has been undertaken by
 “ several dispensaries ; but the assistance given in this way is not
 “ so regular nor effectual as it ought to be. During the present
 “ epidemic, many of the young men, students, on whom the duty
 “ of visiting chiefly devolves, have been deterred from attending

“ the dispensaries by the fear of having their studies interrupted
 “ by attacks of fever. I saw a man lately, the father of a family,
 “ just dead of this yellow fever; his widow assured me that she
 “ had sent ten times to different dispensaries for advice during his
 “ illness, and had received none. In the Canongate, the dispensary
 “ aid to the sick poor came to an abrupt close in the middle
 “ of the epidemic, in consequence of the death (by fever) of Dr
 “ Finch, one of the medical officers, who had served as treasurer
 “ to the institution. In order to have the dispensary relief made
 “ effectual and regular, it would be necessary to have the town
 “ divided into districts, each dispensary taking charge of a limited
 “ district, and each medical officer of a portion of that district.
 “ He would then go through the business regularly, would know
 “ the people of the district, and acquire their confidence; and, having
 “ one or two assistants, could do the duty without interfering
 “ materially with profitable avocations. Such a division of the
 “ town has often been proposed, but always met by the objection,
 “ on the part of each dispensary, that, if they were to limit themselves
 “ to districts, their subscribers would be equally limited;
 “ and that they must shew themselves in all parts of the town, to
 “ keep up their subscriptions. This illustrates the evil of leaving
 “ an object of such importance to the voluntary system of charity.
 “ Farther, by the zeal of individual medical men, more dispensaries
 “ have been founded than would have been required, if there had
 “ been a fair division of the town; and the money expended at
 “ them, besides being levied from a small portion of the public, is
 “ partly wasted in maintaining unnecessary establishments. I
 “ have no doubt that the system of medical relief to the poor by
 “ medical officers, appointed and paid by the managers or guardians
 “ of the poor in each district, and responsible to them—allowed also
 “ some remuneration by students advanced in their studies, and
 “ acting as their assistants, might easily be made much better for
 “ the interests of the poor, and more uniformly efficient, as a
 “ means of medical instruction, than the system of voluntary relief
 “ from dispensaries, such as exist here. There can be no doubt,
 “ that, by a well-regulated system of medical relief, particularly
 “ adapted for the early stage of inflammatory complaints, to
 “ which the poor are liable, and by judicious measures of medical
 “ police, many of the working-classes, who are now reduced to

“ pauperism by disease, by premature old age, or by the death of
 “ relations, might be enabled to maintain themselves in independ-
 “ ence. I beg to refer to Mr Chadwick’s Report on the Sanatory
 “ Condition of England in illustration of this truth ; and particu-
 “ larly to the 7th chapter of his first Report, for a distinct state-
 “ ment of the advantages which might be derived from a regular
 “ organization of district medical officers, such as exist in England,
 “ with a few superintendent physicians of standing and experience,
 “ a part of whose duty would be to examine the registers of mor-
 “ tality, and inquire into the causes of any unusual mortality, at
 “ particular times or places, or in persons engaged in particular
 “ occupations,—and then, sometimes by advice to the poor them-
 “ selves, sometimes to their employers, sometimes to the proprie-
 “ tors of the houses in which they live, sometimes to the magis-
 “ trates, or even to the legislature, to endeavour to correct the
 “ causes of such unusual mortality. That much national advan-
 “ tage may be derived from such arrangements, and much desti-
 “ tution and misery, and ultimate expense, be prevented, I think
 “ cannot be doubted ; but I think it equally certain that the na-
 “ tion can have no security for such advantages, as long as the
 “ care of the sick poor is entrusted to the voluntary system of
 “ charity.”—Vol. iii., p. 907.

I add the following extracts from the Evidence, in
 confirmation of these statements ; premising only, that
 although there are some towns and districts—chiefly
 those long assessed—in which payment to the medical
 men for attendance on the poor is made from the pa-
 rochial funds, the following descriptions of the state of
 the medical relief to the poor will be found to be appli-
 cable over by far the greatest part of the country.

ANDREW ROBERTSON, Esq., Surgeon in Girvan,

“ Has practised in Girvan seven years,—his father has prac-
 “ tised there fifty years, and he has a brother, also, a surgeon ;
 “ and most of the sick poor apply to them. Except in one or two
 “ cases, *neither he nor his father ever received any remuneration*
 “ *from the session, or from any other quarter, for attending the*

“ poor. By reference to his books he has seen, that sometimes,
 “ in a single case, they expend 15s. for medicines, besides giving
 “ their attendance gratuitously ; and, taking into account attend-
 “ ance and medicines, he thinks his father, brother, and himself,
 “ expend L.100 a-year on the poor. The parish allowances are
 “ perfectly inadequate. One man, confined 16 years by paralysis,
 “ received, during that time, 1s. a-week. Witness has been at-
 “ tending for three weeks an old woman, 76 years old, a native of
 “ the parish, who got herself much injured by a fall ; she receives
 “ 5d. a-week from the session, and has 6d. to pay for rent. She
 “ is entirely dependent on the charity of *her neighbours*. She has
 “ applied for additional supply from the parish, but has not re-
 “ ceived any as yet.” “ A woman from Ireland, who had been here
 “ with her husband for a fortnight digging potatoes, applied to
 “ witness for advice, her husband being laid up with fever ; wit-
 “ ness told the session, that if they would furnish medicines, he
 “ would attend the case gratuitously. The woman applied to
 “ the clergyman for assistance ; but she has not yet received
 “ any. A man died of fever lately, accompanied by erysipelas
 “ of the feet, which witness thinks might have been checked,
 “ if he could have procured for him the proper applications.”—
 Vol. iii., pp. 442–3.

WILLIAM GIBSON, Esq., Surgeon, Dalry.

“ I have practised in Dalry 28 years,—and have had very
 “ many opportunities of visiting the paupers. The sum which I
 “ have received during that time, from the session or poor com-
 “ mittee, has not exceeded 1s. a-year. The paupers are very scan-
 “ tily provided for in health ; and their allowances are not much
 “ increased in sickness, when they need help the most. If I did
 “ not apply in their behalf for aid to opulent inhabitants, they
 “ might starve, so far as their allowances are concerned. I never
 “ applied to any *individual* heritor without obtaining what I re-
 “ quested ; but I cannot say that of the heritors collectively ; *and*
 “ *it is placing me in a very disagreeable position, to oblige me to*
 “ *go and beg for poor patients*. Nutritious diet for the sick must,
 “ in general, come from private sources. I have frequently had
 “ a difficulty in treating poor patients properly, from not being
 “ able to supply them with nutritious diet. No provision is made

“ for supplying medicines, either from a dispensary or otherwise.
 “ *I just pay for the medicines myself.*”—Vol. iii., p. 509.

THOMAS M‘MILLAN, Esq., Surgeon in Wigtown.

“ He has attended the poor in seven parishes, and never got a
 “ farthing from the kirk-sessions of any of them. *He never got any*
 “ *thing for medicines in any of the parishes, except one year in*
 “ *Wigtown.* They had a dispensary, for which he furnished the
 “ medicines; and he was paid the first year by subscription. The
 “ second year he furnished medicines; but *the subscriptions fell off,*
 “ *and he received no payment.* He has no means of getting pro-
 “ per food for pauper patients; he has often supplied them with
 “ wine and food himself. He prefers doing that, to asking it from
 “ the parishes. He would only get referred from one to another;
 “ and his time does not admit of that.”—Vol. iii., p. 536.

JOHN GIBSON, Esq., Provost of Lanark.

“ Witness attended almost all the poor *twenty years, and never*
 “ *received any recompense.* It is only in extreme cases now, if at
 “ all, that any thing is paid for medical advice. Witness, some
 “ years ago, attended a blind woman, a stranger in this parish,
 “ who fell and broke her arm, and paid for her lodging and ali-
 “ ment during her confinement; and being refused any recom-
 “ pense, brought an action before the Sheriff for a guinea and a
 “ half as his fees, who decided in his favour; but the heritors
 “ having suspended the decreet, witness declined to proceed with
 “ the case in the Court of Session, and *was obliged to pay L.5 for*
 “ *a portion of the expenses.*”—Vol. iii., p. 403.

Dr JOSEPH BELL, Surgeon at Barrhead, in Neilston.

“ I am in the habit of visiting the poor when sick. There is
 “ no medical attendant appointed by the parish. *I do not receive*
 “ *any remuneration,* either for my attendance or the medicines I
 “ furnish; and the other medical gentlemen in the place are pre-
 “ cisely in the same circumstances. I consider that the poor suf-
 “ fer a great deal from the want of regular medical attendance.
 “ Deaths frequently occur, without any medical man having seen
 “ the person. I am seldom called to see a poor patient, until

“ they have been several days lying ill ; and from that delay the
 “ disease has often attained a greater height than it would have
 “ done, had medical advice been earlier obtained. In cases of in-
 “ fectious diseases, the evil is aggravated, by no means being taken
 “ to prevent the spread of contagion. But when the poor do ap-
 “ ply to a medical man, it is completely at his option to visit them
 “ or not ; and if the medicines proper for the complaint are ex-
 “ pensive, it is hardly to be expected that he will furnish them
 “ out of his own pocket. I find that the recovery of patients is
 “ frequently retarded for want of a proper supply of cordials and
 “ nutritious diet. I have had either to supply them myself, or trust
 “ to the charity of individuals. But *within the last three months*, a
 “ change has taken place in this respect ; the parish authorities
 “ have given directions that the medical men should, in cases of
 “ destitution, accompanied with sickness, be empowered to give
 “ orders for provisions or wine, if necessary.”—Vol. iii., p. 419.

JOHN CLARK, Esq., M.D., Surgeon at Scone.

“ I attended a young man, a native of this parish, before he
 “ became a pauper. When he fell into poverty (from disease), he
 “ was first allowed to board in the town of Perth, at 5s. or 6s.
 “ a-week, and his friends were perfectly pleased with the attention
 “ and accommodation he received there. But the session de-
 “ manded that he should live and board in Scone. He was, ac-
 “ cordingly, brought out, much against the wish of himself and his
 “ friends, and put into a lodging-house, kept by a woman known
 “ by the name of ‘ Dirty Meg.’ (I have been in the house, and
 “ could not conceive anything more wretched.) He left it in a
 “ very few days after being placed there. He went through the
 “ village shewing his person, declaiming against the filth of the
 “ place, and declaring that he would not return. He made several
 “ efforts with the elders, to prevail on them to let him return to
 “ his old boarding-house in Perth. On a Sunday *he thrust a pen-*
 “ *knife into his throat, and died in a few weeks afterwards.* He
 “ destroyed himself, as he declared he would do, rather than re-
 “ turn to the dirty lodging-house.” “ Had you observed marks
 “ of insanity about him previously ?” “ No.”—Vol. iii., p. 863.

“ I attended Elizabeth Innes in a very bad fever. She became

“ very delirious, and was in a very dirty state. I applied to the clergy-
 “ man, stating that I had had charge of this poor parishioner for
 “ some weeks, but that the case was now too heavy for my single
 “ management; and requesting to be provided with a nurse and
 “ cordials: *they were refused*. The minister and elders visited,
 “ *but did nothing*. There was a report of this poor woman having
 “ money in the Savings Bank, which she absolutely denied. The
 “ little assistance I asked—a nurse and some food—was pointedly
 “ and positively refused. One of the neighbours said, if I would
 “ give my attendance, she would act as nurse. I could not de-
 “ cline the offer, which was a generous one. The patient re-
 “ covered. The woman acting as nurse—the mother of a large
 “ family—fell a sacrifice to her generosity: she died of the same
 “ fever. I have even been reprimanded in addresses, delivered
 “ publicly, for recommending paupers to attention. A great deal
 “ was said about breaking down the spirit of Scottish independ-
 “ ence,” &c.—Vol. iii., p. 862.

L. M. MATHESON, Esq., Surgeon in Portree, Skye.

“ Sees paupers in this part of the country almost every day, *to*
 “ *his serious loss*. Is obliged to give them medicines as well as
 “ attendance; has no other way of getting medicines for them.
 “ Some are vaccinated, but those medical men vaccinate gratui-
 “ tously. Has seen many children of the poor living on charity
 “ almost naked. Has frequently seen diseases brought on among
 “ the poor by want of proper food. Many support themselves
 “ during the summer on shell-fish—limpets. All the poor are
 “ very ill off for medical attendance; and it is impossible that men
 “ in practice can afford to attend to them properly. Dr M'Leod and
 “ he are *the only practitioners in Skye*;—*they could not give suf-*
 “ *ficient time to the poor*, unless they were independent of other
 “ practice. It is impossible they can be furnished with proper
 “ medicines, unless some funds are provided for that purpose.
 “ Every day he is exposed to expense for medicines and *necessary*
 “ *nourishment*.”—Vol. ii., p. 395.

The Rev. C. M'KENZIE, Shildag, in Ross-shire.

“ What becomes of able-bodied men who fall sick in your parish?”
 “ *They are left in the hands of Providence*.”—Vol. i., p. 724.

V. The next point for special consideration is the treatment of the Lunatic Poor in Scotland. On this subject the following extracts speak for themselves :—

Extracts from a Report on Lunatics confined in Arran, by Dr HUTCHESON, Glasgow.

“ Duncan Cook has two patients, a male and a female. The
 “ male patient, James Duncan, was sent by the Barony parish,
 “ and has been here about ten months. He was formerly a shoe-
 “ maker in Glasgow. He labours under melancholia, and fancies
 “ he is haunted by spirits. He sleeps under the roof, on the turf
 “ covering the apartment below. He has no bedding, but some
 “ bed-clothes. The place was very filthy, and ill ventilated. The
 “ height of the roof was four feet eight inches at the highest part,
 “ diminishing to nothing. The female patient, Jane M’Pherson,
 “ a widow, sent by the Barony parish, has been here twelve
 “ months. She is paralytic, imbecile, and very excitable. She
 “ complained loudly of her treatment, which was confirmed by
 “ others. She had run away in consequence, and had been sub-
 “ jected to worse treatment since. I learned from several sources
 “ that a Miss M’Nab, a very old woman, formerly in good cir-
 “ cumstances, who had been reduced to poverty, and had become
 “ insane, had been sent to Duncan Cook. In consequence of ill
 “ usage, she ran away. She was brought back, shaken, and
 “ beaten with a stick, and shortly afterwards died.

“ Euphemia Rowand is in very bad health, and dropsical ; not-
 “ withstanding which, she is lodged in a small closet next the
 “ cow-house, five feet ten inches long, four feet two inches broad,
 “ with an earthen floor, and without any means of ventilation, except
 “ the door. Her bed consists of a few boards, a very little filthy
 “ straw, and no bed-clothes. Isabella Ross bites and raves in-
 “ cessantly. They were anxious to have some means of securing
 “ her hands behind her back. She sleeps in a closet next the cow-
 “ house, six feet three inches long, and three feet nine inches
 “ broad. Her bed was a box four feet ten inches long, and one
 “ foot ten inches broad, containing a little straw, and a filthy rug.

“ In this wretched place, without anything like ventilation, she is
 “ confined when more than usually violent.

“ Widow Currie has two patients from Govan parish—William
 “ Wallace and William Ross. The closet in which they sleep is
 “ five feet ten inches long, and five feet eight inches broad, and six
 “ feet two inches high, without light and ventilation. The bed is five
 “ feet four-and-a-half inches long, and three feet five inches broad,
 “ being both too short and too narrow for the patients. The place
 “ was wretched, and the patients declared themselves to be miser-
 “ able.

“ Archibald Murchie has at least eleven patients. The exact
 “ number we could not ascertain, as every effort was made to mis-
 “ lead and conceal. Respecting Murchie’s treatment of the pa-
 “ tients, the most distressing reports were prevalent as to his
 “ striking, kicking, and starving them. Some instances of ill
 “ usage were mentioned to me as having been witnessed by re-
 “ spectable individuals. It is also reported that he acts as agent
 “ in farming out patients, and receives gratuities from those for
 “ whom he procures boarders from the parishes.

“ Neil M’Kenzie has two patients. We learned that in this
 “ house a man had died of cold and starvation. He had no clothes,
 “ was kept in an outhouse in winter, and had a scanty supply of
 “ refuse victuals. His health was bad, and he required care and
 “ nourishment.

“ John Campbell, about seventeen years of age, is paralytic ;
 “ has been here about eighteen months. He was transferred
 “ by Archibald Murchie to M’Kinnon. He has been subjected to
 “ the most cruel usage—beaten with ropes and sticks, both by
 “ M’Kinnon and by his wife ; and when we went in he was in tears,
 “ having just been subjected to the same discipline. Mrs M’Kin-
 “ non attempted to deny this ; but, on being confronted by a neigh-
 “ bour who had frequently witnessed the ill usage, she could not
 “ deny it. When we were out of hearing, she said she did not
 “ care a damn for what we had said ; we would soon be away, and
 “ then she would work him. The instrument with which he was
 “ flogged we did not see ; but we learned it was a cat-o’-nine-tails,
 “ made of rope, and that he had been flogged till the blood ran
 “ down his legs.

“ Mary Galbraith is idiotic, and raves incoherently. She is
 “ filthy in her habits. She sleeps in a hole five feet nine inches
 “ long, and two feet four inches wide. She has nothing but straw,
 “ and a cover. The place is dark, and not ventilated.

“ Donald M'Donald, a paralytic imbecile, has been here twelve
 “ months. He sleeps in a closet six feet long, five feet ten inches
 “ wide, and six feet seven inches high. His bed is five feet eight
 “ inches long, and three feet three inches wide. He has no bed-
 “ clothes, and no bedding, but filthy straw. The floor was wet,
 “ the walls, damp; and there was neither light nor ventilation.

“ In an appendix, I have given a list of persons of unsound
 “ mind resident in Arran, amounting to 118, of whom I received
 “ intelligence during my investigation, as well as of five more,
 “ since admitted by the parish authorities to have been placed
 “ there, making in all 123. I am convinced, however, that the
 “ number is much greater.

“ In procuring the above information, I encountered many dif-
 “ ficulties. The paper furnished by the Barony parish contained
 “ only the names of the individuals with whom the insane were
 “ boarded. *Some parishes furnished no accounts at all, and others*
 “ *very inaccurate lists, of the patients.* I had not proceeded far in
 “ my investigation, before it became apparent that various means
 “ were used to mislead me, and defeat the object of my mission.
 “ Communications were rapidly made by one party to another;
 “ the patients were prepared, threatened, or cajoled; beds never
 “ occupied by them were shewn to me as theirs; and but for
 “ hints furnished me by individuals (from various motives), much
 “ of the misery, neglect, and cruelty to which the insane are
 “ exposed would have remained hidden. Enough, however, was
 “ ascertained to shew that those who undertake the care and ma-
 “ nagement of paupers of unsound mind in Arran are, with very
 “ few exceptions, ignorant, poor, and quite unfit for the task,—
 “ that many of them are on the verge of pauperism,—that the
 “ lunatic paupers in Arran are *wretchedly fed*, their diet being in
 “ general the refuse of the potato crop and butter-milk,—*ill clad*,
 “ *miserably lodged, and subjected to neglect and ill usage*,—that the
 “ *medical attendance is merely nominal*,—that even in severe bo-

“ dily affliction they seldom receive any medical aid, *many dying*
 “ *without any attempt being made to alleviate their sufferings.*

“ Except fourteen, who are at large, all the patients are detained,
 “ in direct violation of three Acts of Parliament, 55th Geo. III.,
 “ cap. 69 ; 9th Geo. IV., cap. 24 ; and 4th and 5th Victoria,
 “ cap. 60. They have been sent to the island without medical
 “ certificates, and without the warrant of the sheriff of the coun-
 “ ty, and are confined in unlicensed houses ; consequently all the
 “ persons concerned in sending or harbouring them are liable to
 “ the penalty of L.200, or three months’ imprisonment, for each
 “ offence.

“ So quietly, however, has the business been managed, that not
 “ only the sheriff and other authorities of the district were igno-
 “ rant of it, but the Duke of Hamilton’s factor, who is resident
 “ on the island, was wholly unaware of there being more than a
 “ few imbeciles boarded in the district.

“ Of the 123 patients named, I consider 42 *to be dangerous to*
 “ *the lieges, and consequently unsafe to be at large.* A letter from
 “ Mr M’Kinnon, a respectable inhabitant of the island, gives some
 “ account of the annoyances to which people are exposed. From
 “ all this, it appears that there has been a deliberate and system-
 “ atic *violation of the law, perpetrated both by parishes and indi-*
 “ *viduals*, perpetuating the evils it was intended to guard against ;
 “ and that it is absolutely necessary, for the safety of the com-
 “ munity, and the cure, comfort, and protection of the insane, that
 “ some comprehensive and stringent measures be adopted to put
 “ an end to a system contrary to sound policy, and repugnant to
 “ every feeling of humanity. The attention of the authorities has
 “ been directed to the evil ; the offending parishes have been com-
 “ pelled to agree to the removal of their pauper lunatics, now in
 “ Arran, to the Glasgow asylum ; *but it was only the heavy penalties*
 “ *to which they had subjected themselves that made them yield ; and*
 “ *some have declared their intention of finding means to evade the*
 “ *law, asserting that they will not consent to the increase of the rates*
 “ *for the support of the insane poor.* Many pauper lunatics are
 “ confined in other parts of the country, and are, I am informed,
 “ as ill treated as those in Arran.”—Vol. iii., 959.

Dr BROWNE, Medical Superintendent of the Crichton
Institution, Dumfries.

“ From the state in which pauper lunatics are brought to your
“ asylum, have you formed any opinion as to the mode in which
“ they have been treated previously ?” “ I have ;—that it was
“ entirely inconsistent with their comfort and cure, and with the
“ dictates of common humanity. They were generally brought
“ bound, galled, in a state of shocking filth ; crouching, with their
“ limbs contracted, shewing that they had long been confined, or
“ that they had been long in bed.”—Vol. iii. p. 604.

“ It will be found that this affliction establishes a barrier be-
“ tween those most intimately united by blood, or interest, or
“ fellow feeling, and dissolves the contract of duty, affection, or
“ honour.” “ I have seen a maniac bound and cut by his bands,
“ who had been crushed and confined in a small hole beneath a
“ stair, where, although deprived of every means to inflict injury,
“ he was shunned by his relatives, as the plague-stricken were
“ formerly shunned. I know that at this moment there are lu-
“ natics immured in cellars, closets, lofts ; others allowed to wan-
“ der nearly naked ; that a female who had only exhibited much
“ vacillation of purpose, and lethargy, was locked up for nine
“ months in a garret, and deserted, her bed unchanged for weeks,
“ and her food only pushed within her reach.”—Vol. iii., p. 962.

The following facts, collected by Dr Browne, in
1840, in a single county town, illustrate many of the
evils that result from the absence of a proper provi-
sion for the insane poor.

1. “ Two respectable tradesmen, whose only crime is insanity,
“ are confined in the jail among felons.

“ 2. A woman, still young, has become completely paralytic
“ from having been heavily ironed by her parents for at least ten
“ years.

“ 3. A young man, of great muscular strength, is allowed to run
“ about the streets to the danger of the inhabitants ; and another
“ powerful young man, although partially disabled by the loss of

“ a limb, is allowed to go at large, and often assaults women and children.

“ 4. A woman, the mother of a family, is allowed to run about the country in a state of utter destitution, and often appears in the streets in a state of nudity.

“ 5. A man seventy years old has been chained to his bed for a large portion of that time, and his daughter, who has been insane three years, goes at large quite unprotected.

“ 6. A woman has been confined in a room above fifteen years ; and during all this time her cries, said to be dependent on hunger, have been such as to prove painful and offensive to persons in the street.”—Vol. iii. p. 963.

I need only add some general statements of the Commissioners.

“ In some of the parishes we visited, we found cases of pauper lunatics under the most improper treatment.” “ Sheriff Cameron, at Tain, states that lunatics and fatuous people are allowed to go about till they become dangerous. This we believe to be the custom over a great part of Scotland. The desire on the part of the parochial authorities to save expense is, no doubt, part of the cause which prevents their being sent to an asylum.”—Report, p. 30.

Surely the greatest admirers of the “ discreet and worthy men” who have hitherto exercised a nearly irresponsible power over the poor in Scotland, must admit that the review of their proceedings, in this department of their duties, was not idle nor premature.

I shall afterwards consider how far the remedies proposed by the Commissioners for the defective provision, either for medical relief, or for the care of lunatics, are likely to be effectual. At present it is right to state, that the lunatics confined in Arran having been placed there clandestinely, and in neglect or defiance of the law, the inquiries of the Commissioners have fortunately led to such an application of the existing law as

has been effectual, for the time, in breaking up all these establishments, and the lunatics are now in the asylum at Glasgow. But against such treatment of pauper lunatics as is described in Dr Browne's evidence, or such treatment of others of the sick poor as is recorded in Dr Clark's, I apprehend that the existing law affords no security whatever.

VI. In the next place, I beg it may be observed that all these evils, resulting from poverty, and so imperfectly met by the irregular and inadequate allowance to the poor, are found to exist, certainly not exclusively, but in full perfection, in those parishes and districts where there are *no assessments*. The common, and, as I have repeatedly shewn, very superficial way of deciding on the expediency of assessments in Scotland was to observe, that, whenever these were introduced, the number of paupers rapidly increased; and then to conclude, that the increase was the effect of the assessments, leading to a relaxation of the frugal and provident habits of the poor. I formerly explained the "transparent fallacy" (long since pointed out by the late Dr A. Thomson) which attends such observations,—the increase being, not in the number of *destitute poor*, but only in the number that *appear on the rolls* of the parishes, gradually increasing as the benefits of the legal provision become known.*

* The following evidence at Aberdeen (recently assessed) illustrates this point:—

T. C. COCHRAN, Esq., Collector of Assessment in Old Machar.

"To some extent the assessment may have given rise to claims which would not otherwise have been made?" "I have no doubt that there may be instances of parties brought forward as claimants in consequence of the addition of managers, who would not otherwise have been brought forward." "Have any been *improperly* brought forward?" "I am not aware of any."

The Commissioners state, certainly quite correctly, that all the evils which have been described exist in parts of the country which have been long assessed, *e.g.*, in Edinburgh, Glasgow, Aberdeen, and Dundee. They do not, indeed, ascribe in any degree their prevalence to the assessments; but as this idea still lingers among many intelligent persons, it is important to state the evidence which now exists, to prove that the assessments, instead of being the *cause* of the evils in question, have always been their *effect*; they have been called into existence by the prevalence of extreme suffering on the part of the poor on the one hand,—and the tried irregularity and inefficacy of the voluntary system of relief, and its obvious injustice towards the higher ranks, on the other. They have very generally mitigated the evils for a time; but, as the extracts already given sufficiently prove, they have never been applied, except in a small district of the country, in such a way as to enable us to judge of their real efficacy. It is only by observing the state of the poor in Berwickshire and Roxburghshire, where the allowances as such as to take away the necessity of mendicity,—and in England, that we can judge of the power of the remedy; and on that point I shall make some observations presently. But we have it fortunately in our power to judge of the circumstances which have led to its application,—not, indeed, in the larger towns, where it has been longest in use, and where the record of these circumstances has generally passed away, but in several towns and districts which are now in the *transition state* from the simply voluntary system to that of assessments; and the evi-

“ You think they *ought to have been on the roll* before the additional managers were appointed ?” “ *I have little doubt of it.*”—Vol. II. p. 613.

dence from these places is quite decisive as to the evils by which they have been “forced into existence.”

Thus I have already quoted the evidence at Inverness,* at Stirling, and at Tullyallan, (or Kincardine,)+ as to the miserable state of the poor, and the still increasing demands on the charities, public and private, at the period immediately *preceding* that change of system,—all attesting the inefficacy of the old system, even in places where no peculiar deficiency or irregularity in the demand for labour could be assigned as a cause for the distress.

It is worth while to state here a few more specific facts as to the state of things in Stirling, where the assessment is only contemplated.

W. H. FORREST, Esq., Surgeon.

“Does not think the poor on the permanent roll are in a better state *than others who have no settlement*. A good many Irish come here, and soon become paupers; a number come from country places when their occupations have failed them. Generally, *there is now less reluctance in making demands for public assistance*.”—Vol. iii. p. 210.

“The number on the roll is 161, with 100 children or dependents, making 261, or 3·1 of the population. The average amount of relief is 1s. 1½d. a week. The average earnings of the paupers, including relief from all the (voluntary) charitable institutions, is 6½d. a week, making the amount of support for each pauper 1s. 8d. a-week; but, deducting rent, which averages L.1, 9s. a-year for each pauper, we have only 1s. 1¼d. a-week for each pauper, or *something less than 2d. a-day*, for food, fuel, and clothing. *It is quite impossible for the town to meet the great and increasing demands of the poor*. Many persons come here as paupers, live a few years in the town, and acquire a settlement. Of the 161 persons receiving relief, *only 59 belong to the parish*; the rest are from other parishes, in Scotland and

* *Supra*, p. 20-21.

† *Supra*, p. 23.

“ Ireland, and very few indeed of them have ever had an industrial residence. The causes favourable to the production of fever continue unabated, and *are rapidly acquiring fresh vigour from the increasing wants and privations of the poor.*”—Report on the State of Pauperism in Stirling, in Vol. iii. p. 972.

The following extracts will shew, that in different and distant parts of the country, the circumstances under which this change of system has been rendered inevitable have been nearly the same ; and I beg particular attention to the fact, that in all these towns they complain of the large importations, not indeed of paupers, but of *destitute poor*, from Ireland, or from the Highlands, or other *unassessed* districts in Scotland.

Town of Thurso.

Population in 1841,	. . .	4774.
Paupers relieved in 1842,	. . .	173.
Sums distributed,	. . .	L.115.

Assessments were contemplated at the time of the visit of the Commission, and have since been ordered.

REV. WALTER ROSS.

“ There are some heritors in the parish *from whom I never receive anything* ; but all voluntarily assess themselves for the support of three lunatics. There is begging among the paupers on the roll,—*many of them could not possibly subsist without this resource.* Saturday is set apart for begging. We do not give any badges, nor take cognizance of the begging one way or the other.”—Vol. ii., p. 346.

WM. SMITH, Esq., Banker.

“ Much is done by private charity ; but the fact, that we have large importations from the highland districts, and from the estates of absentee proprietors, renders it impossible for the wealthier classes to meet by private charity the demands on their benevolence. Begging has been a good deal discouraged,

“ but is, in fact, in the case of many, a necessary means of sustenance. Since attempts have been made to suppress begging, *the poor are often repulsed when they ask charity, and desired to apply to the kirk-session, who have no funds adequate for their relief*; and in this way I find they are often insufficiently supplied even with food, and that there is a like deficiency as to clothing and comfortable lodging. I think an assessment the fairest and most equitable mode of providing for the poor. Under the present system absentee proprietors escape altogether from bearing a proportional share of the burden; and, under a properly regulated assessment, there would be a better provision for the poor than they enjoy at present.”—Do. p. 347.

H. DAVIDSON, Esq., Chief-Magistrate of Thurso.

“ The allowances from our kirk-session (averaging, it will be observed, 13s. 4d. per annum to each pauper) are more liberal, I believe, than those from most other parishes in this part of the country; but the comfortable condition of our poor is mainly to be ascribed to the great liberality of the resident proprietor, Sir G. Sinclair. Notwithstanding this liberality, however, there is a good deal of begging among the paupers; and when I speak of their comparatively comfortable condition, I take into account the alms which they receive in going from house to house. I do not think this has a good moral effect on the poor. It leads to idleness and imposition, or exaggerated accounts of their destitution. I would approve of an assessment in preference to the precarious provision for the poor now in use; indeed, I think it absolutely necessary. The poor have nothing to depend on but the good will of the people in the neighbourhood, and that may be withdrawn at any time. Several of the absentee proprietors contribute, I believe, nothing to the poor fund.”—Do., p. 351.

Mr ALEXANDER SINCLAIR, Merchant, Thurso.

“ Various reasons induce me to decide in favour of an assessment. The collections at the church doors are likely to be discontinued, owing to the late disruption. The charities, as now

“ administered, *fall as a burden on a very small portion of the community*, consisting of benevolent individuals, who are always ready to assist the poor, many of them beyond their means ; while other individuals, of equal or greater means, contribute comparatively little. I believe *there are many aged and infirm persons in the town* who have too much pride to go about begging, or even to let their friends know their straits, who are often in great straits, and *worse off than many of the paupers on the roll.*”—Vol. ii., p. 354.

REV. GEORGE ROBERTSON, Secretary to the Destitute Sick Society, Thurso.

“ Many benevolent persons inquire into the cases of the poor, and make great exertions to procure relief for them. Still, in my opinion, *their wants are very far from being adequately supplied* ; they are often found in circumstances of great destitution. On Saturdays, when they are permitted to beg, they go about *in crowds, sometimes of twenty or thirty* ; and they beg individually on other days. I have doubts that the wants of that portion of the poor who beg are *better supplied than the wants of those of them who abstain from this practice.* I have no doubt of the pernicious effects of the begging, particularly on the young. It destroys all feeling and independence, encourages indolence, and promotes fraud and imposition. But, *without making some better provision for the poor than exists, I do not think it possible effectually to suppress begging.* In the case of many of the poor, it is a necessary means of subsistence. “ If they do not beg they must starve.”—Do., p. 355.

Dr D. J. M'LEAN, Thurso.

“ Thanks to Sir George Sinclair, the poor here are well off in comparison with their state in other parts of the country. The aged and infirm poor seem worse off in the parish of Reay than in any other in Caithness. The land has been thrown there into large sheep-walks ; there is only one resident heritor in the parish ; and, with few exceptions, no persons whose means enable them to give much in charity. I would decidedly

“ approve of providing for the aged and infirm poor by an assess-
 “ ment. I am clearly of this opinion for the rural parishes, and
 “ I am of the same opinion with respect to Thurso, because the
 “ poor here would be just as ill off as in the country were it not
 “ for Sir G. Sinclair ; and, of course, the expediency or inexe-
 “ diency of the mode of providing for the poor cannot depend on
 “ an individual. I think that abuse may be guarded against, by
 “ strict regulations and vigilant inspection ; and that the charac-
 “ ter of the working classes here is such, that they would not
 “ apply for relief unless it were absolutely necessary.”—Vol. ii.,
 p. 357.

Although it is out of the strict order—as I propose to consider the case of the Highland parishes separately—I add here an extract from the evidence as to the one mentioned by Dr M‘Lean :—

REV. FINLAY COOK, Reay.

Population,	2804.
Paupers relieved in 1842,	150.
Sum distributed,	L.40, 15s.
(Averaging 5s. 3d. per annum to each pauper.)	

“ There is no assessment in the parish. There are five heri-
 “ tors, the Crown being one ; only one is resident. For the last
 “ two years, the Duke of Sutherland has sent an annual donation
 “ of L.3 for the poor. *We have got nothing from the other ab-*
 “ *sentee heritors. We made application to them all, but have*
 “ *received no answer from the other absentees. We have no or-*
 “ *phans on the roll. Our funds would not admit of our support-*
 “ *ing orphans.* Some of the poor on the roll go about begging,
 “ and I give them certificates for that purpose. I think the poor
 “ in this parish are very ill off since the introduction of the sheep-
 “ farming. Some of them are half-starving. I have witnessed
 “ many distressing cases of indigence. *It is sickening to see what*
 “ *I have witnessed. I think it would be advisable to introduce an*
 “ *assessment. I do not see how they are to be maintained with-*
 “ *out an assessment.*”—Vol. ii., p. 359.

We may next take a view of the opposite extremity of Scotland.

Parish of Stranraer.

Population in 1841,	4201.
Paupers relieved in 1842,	68.
Sum distributed amongst them,	L.84, 10s.

CHARLES MORELAND, Esq., Provost of Stranraer.

“ The only funds for relief of the poor, are the collections at the church doors, mortified funds, and occasional voluntary contributions, which are of no great amount. In his opinion, the means of providing for the poor are *very insufficient*. There has been a committee appointed by the magistrates to inquire into the state of the poor, and to report to a meeting of the town-council to-morrow. Being a native of the town, he knows a number of the poor people about the town, who are in a very poor state; and his sisters, who visit a number of the poor people, have informed him that those they see are in very poor circumstances. His rule is to give to the native poor, but not to strangers, or vagrants who come to his door; but this cannot be always observed.”—Vol. iii., p. 521.

ROBERT WILSON, Esq., Surgeon in Stranraer.

“ Has practised thirty years as a surgeon in Stranraer. Has had a good deal of experience in visiting the poor. There was a public dispensary, *which was given up a year ago for want of funds*. *No allowance is made by the parishes for medical attendance on the poor*. There is sometimes a great deal of sickness amongst the poor. The condition of those receiving parish relief is *very wretched*. In distant parts of the country they are badly off for medical relief; in the town, they get it when they require it. The paupers' houses are very miserable—perhaps worse in the town than in the country; they are very badly off for bedding. At this season of the year they are better off for food; but in the latter end of the year, when the potatoes are finished, some of them are very badly off. He knows the condition of the poor in Leswalt, Kirkholm, Stony-

" *kirk, Port-patrick, and Inch, and thinks it very much the same in all these parishes, not better in one than in another.*"—Vol. iii., p. 522.

THOMAS HARKNESS, Esq., Editor of the Galloway
Advertiser.

" Hitherto there have been no fixed allowances to the poor in Stranraer. They have been allowed to beg with badges ; but it is now intended to raise funds for relief of the poor by a legal assessment. Lately, of one hundred and twenty claiming relief, about sixty were put on the roll : of these, not more than nineteen or twenty were born in the town. There are a great many Irish settled here, the price of labour being higher here than in Ireland. There would be considerable difficulty at present in providing means for relief of the poor in the usual way. The parish church has for some time been attended only by a very few, and the collections are quite trifling. He has visited the poor within the last month, and *nothing can be more wretched than their condition, as regards furniture, fuel, food, ventilation, and cleanliness.* Hitherto there does not seem to have been much superintendence of the poor. It is proposed to raise a sum of L.300 by a legal assessment on the burgh, which, it is calculated, will be sufficient to maintain the paupers on the roll. The rental of the burgh is calculated at L.6000, the assessment upon which will be 1s. in the pound. *Over and above the number on the roll, there is a number of poor people who will require considerable relief, particularly during winter.*"—Vol. iii., p. 522.

ANDREW IRVING, Esq., Merchant in Stranraer.

" There are only about twenty of the native poor of Stranraer claiming to be admitted on the poor roll, while there are thirty-eight strangers on the roll ; and, besides, *sixty-two strangers claiming to be admitted, but who have no title to relief, and never can be entitled to it, as they have been supported by charity since they came into the parish.** The great mass of them

* Another proof how little the rolls of the parishes can be relied on as indicating the number of destitute poor in Scotland.

“ are Irish, but several belong to the neighbouring parishes,
 “ where their claims are not attended to. The great curse of
 “ Stranraer is, that some persons, for the sake of profit, build a
 “ number of wretched huts, which they let to poor people, screwing
 “ the rents of them weekly, and not caring though they should
 “ live up to the knees in mud. *The poor in the parishes adjoining Stranraer have no adequate allowance given to them.* It
 “ consists with his knowledge, that the common allowances to the
 “ rural poor in this district of the country do not exceed 1s. 6d.
 “ or 2s. 6d. a quarter.”—Vol. iii., p. 523.

Parish of Girvan.

Population in 1841,	. . .	7423.
Paupers relieved in 1842,	. . .	160.
Sum distributed amongst them,	. . .	L.440 : 14 : 4.

REV. PETER M'MASTER, Minister of the Parish of
 Girvan.

“ The highest allowance to any one on the roll is about 5s. in
 “ the six weeks ; a few may have 6s. A great many of those on
 “ the roll are aged persons, who have come from Ireland begging.
 “ At first they received occasional relief ; now they are on the
 “ permanent roll, and get 2s. 6d. in the six weeks ; some few get
 “ more. It is very difficult for the session to distinguish between
 “ those who have supported themselves by their own industry till
 “ they obtained a settlement, and those who have not. There are
 “ a number of women, with children, deserted by their husbands,
 “ or with children whose fathers are dead. They get 5s. or 6s.
 “ in the six weeks. *All the parents who have deserted their families are Irish.* The poor in Girvan have very wretched dwell-
 “ ings in point of furniture and bedding. The bedding is the
 “ most wretched thing in their condition, and has been so ever
 “ since he has known them. They must get a great deal of their
 “ food by begging. They are always going about, especially on
 “ the Saturdays, when they go round in great numbers. Some of
 “ them can do a little for themselves ; others almost nothing.
 “ They are not much troubled with beggars from neighbouring
 “ parishes, but have a very great number from Ireland. Such an

“ immense number of Irish have now been resident in Girvan for
 “ more than ten years, that a change in the term of residence for
 “ obtaining a settlement would make very little difference to them.
 “ *There is not the reluctance there was formerly to receive assist-*
 “ *ance from the poor funds ;* he prefers maintaining the poor by
 “ voluntary contributions, but sees it cannot be done longer in the
 “ parish of Girvan, without oppressing the heritors, and sees that
 “ a legal assessment must soon be resorted to. There would have
 “ been, he thinks, such an assessment this year, but it was de-
 “ layed, to see the result of this Commission.”—Vol. iii., p. 441.

ROBERT BANNATYNE, Esq., M.D., Girvan.

“ The poor are generally very destitute ; their houses and fur-
 “ niture, &c., bad. There is a considerable difference between the
 “ Irish and the native poor, who have a greater spirit of inde-
 “ pendence about them than the Irish. Nearly three-fourths of
 “ the people in Girvan are Irish.”—Do., p. 443.

JOHN WILSON, Esq., Factor for the Duchess de
 Coigny.

“ He is apprehensive that a regular assessment may become
 “ necessary ; but it will be avoided as long as possible. The
 “ Bargainy estate gives nearly L.200 a-year as voluntary charity
 “ to the parish of Girvan. *Eleven years ago, the contribution*
 “ *was only L.30 ;* and the poor were as well off then as now. At
 “ present there are between sixty and seventy children who have
 “ lost their parents by death or desertion ; they are a heavy bur-
 “ den on the parish, and have increased the expenditure very
 “ much.”—Do., do.

DAVID FERGUSON, Esq., one of the Magistrates of
 Girvan.

“ Does not know any means of preventing the influx of Irish
 “ population. Is convinced it would be better for the house-
 “ holders to have an assessment, and that they would prefer it to
 “ the present state of pauperism ; and that it would be much
 “ more for the comfort of the native poor.”—Do., do.

Parish of Linlithgow.

Population in 1841,	5950.
Paupers relieved in 1842,	228.
Sums distributed,	L.317, 12s.

ADAM DAWSON, Esq., Provost.

“ There has not hitherto been an assessment ; but means are
 “ now taking to impose it. The number of the poor, he is in-
 “ clined to think, has been increasing. Certainly the funds are no
 “ longer sufficient for the demands. The dwellings of the poor
 “ are in a very miserable condition.”—Vol. iii. p. 828.

Rev. Dr BELL, Minister of the Parish.

“ The ordinary amount of the collections are from L.65 to
 “ L.70 ; there being also a mortification to the extent of L.120 ;
 “ and there is a collection for coals and other necessities annually,
 “ besides the ordinary collections. The greater part of that money
 “ is bestowed on persons *not on the poor roll*. There is a Ladies’
 “ Society which furnishes clothes, &c. to the value of from L.30
 “ to L.40 yearly ;—the Dissenting Bodies give assistance to mem-
 “ bers of their congregations ;—there is much private charity ;—
 “ there are several Friendly Societies, and eight incorporations,
 “ which act, more or less, as Friendly Societies.”—Vol.iii., p. 828.

But the condition of the poor, just *before* the introduc-
 tion of assessments, is as follows :—

G. D. BAIRD, Esq., Surgeon.

“ The poor in the town are nearly not so well off as those
 “ in the country ; they are crowded together in uncomfortable
 “ places, not so well known to those who are able to relieve them ;
 “ they are more uncleanly in their habits than the country people,
 “ and more given to *intemperance and improvidence*. The pre-
 “ sent allowances to the poor are miserably small ; to make
 “ them comfortable, it would be necessary that there should be a
 “ *very considerable increase, and that continued permanently*. In

“ the case of widows and some others, an increasing allowance
 “ might be applied to good uses, in many other cases that is very
 “ doubtful.”—Vol. iii., p. 830.

Parish of Arbroath.

Population,	. . . . .	5144
Paupers relieved,	. . . . .	370
Sums distributed,	. . . . .	L.646, 14s.

Rev. WM. STEVENSON, Minister of the Parish.

“ Only one year’s assessment has been distributed. They had
 “ been struggling against assessment for some time, and keeping
 “ down the allowances as much as possible. There is no provision
 “ from the parochial funds for medical relief to the poor.”—Vol.
 viii. p. 47,

The effect of the system of *keeping down the allow-
 ances*, may be judged from the following.

ALEX. COCHRANE, Esq., Surgeon.

“ Has been above 10 years practising in Arbroath. The poor
 “ are well supplied with medicines and medical advice by a dis-
 “ pensary ; but as regards wine and nutritious diet, there are no
 “ funds to supply them. The kirk-sessions in the country are
 “ far more liberal. In the town, the poor are very ill supplied
 “ with bedding and bed-clothes ;—they are, in general, not cleanly,
 “ and are far from being temperate. He considers the state of
 “ the poor as *much deteriorated* since he came here. Many who
 “ would have been averse to making their wants known at the
 “ dispensary, now have recourse to it. They are *less provident*
 “ in their habits, and *are less willing to pay for any thing which*
 “ *they can procure otherwise.*”—Vol. iii., p. 52

Rev. JOSEPH HAY.

“ The poor-law does not afford sufficient relief to the suffering
 “ poor. When parties are in destitution, and have no settlement
 “ in the parish where they are, *no relief at all is to be had*. There
 “ are also cases, where the relief given is wholly inadequate. He
 “ approves of the new system of superintendence of the poor (in-

“cluding a paid superintendant), as embracing the best means of
 “inquiring into, and judging upon, cases of distress. The funds
 “under the assessment are not so limited as before; he expects
 “that the allowances to individuals will be increased; that the
 “number receiving relief will be increased—as *the sum appro-*
 “*priated before was too limited to supply all that required it;*
 “that the situation of the poor is to be improved; and thinks the
 “suppression of begging may be accomplished under the new sys-
 “tem.”—Vol. iii., p. 52.

In the town of Peterhead, we have an opportunity of seeing the effect of assessments and increased, although still inadequate, allowances, introduced chiefly by the exertions of Mr Scott, Session-Clerk, whose publication on this subject was noticed in my Illustrations.

MR CHARLES SCOTT, Session-Clerk, Peterhead.

“The funds for the maintenance of the poor in the parish are
 “now chiefly raised by assessment, which is laid upon real rents.
 “The number of poor on the roll has not much increased since
 “1840, when it was 371; now it is 380. This, in both cases,
 “including children and dependents, comprises every individual
 “on the roll, though the dependents do not appear in the list
 “of paupers. Nevertheless, the amount to paupers has con-
 “siderably increased, partly in consequence of the suppression of
 “begging, which made it necessary to give some allowance to
 “those who had none, or to increase it to those who had a little,
 “who had formerly been permitted to beg. The proportion of
 “this increased expense, he thinks, might amount to from L.250
 “to L.300. He is in frequent communication with the poor; he
 “thinks the condition of the deserving poor much improved by
 “the assessment; they are grateful for it, but the worthless poor
 “are dissatisfied with it. Previously, the deserving poor were
 “assisted by private charity, but were often ill off; they are now
 “better off, but still the sources of private charity are not dried
 “up. The deserving poor are still assisted by private charity,
 “though not so much as formerly, their destitution being less.
 “Under the old system, the highest allowance to a person able to

“ go about, but not to work, was from 30s. to 40s. a year. Now,
 “ the allowance to such a person would be 2s. a week ; he should
 “ think this was the highest. The worthless poor are dissatisfied,
 “ because by making false and exaggerated statements, they got
 “ more by begging than they do now by assessment. He sees no
 “ improvement in this class of the poor, who, however, are *not*
 “ *very numerous* when compared with the whole. Sometimes the
 “ allowances are given to them in provisions, to prevent abuse,
 “ but there can be no proper check on them, except in a work-
 “ house. Begging amongst the poor of the parish is nearly sup-
 “ pressed in town.”—Vol. ii., p. 717.

Mr DAVID EWAN, Treasurer to the Managers of the
 Poor of Peterhead,

“ Has come a good deal in contact with the poor, and knows their
 “ circumstances. The more infirm are better off since the assess-
 “ ment than before, because they could make little by begging ; but
 “ the more active, who went about easily both in town and country,
 “ complain that they are not so well off as before. Regular begging
 “ is as much suppressed as is possible ; but there is no preventing
 “ some old beggars from sometimes going about ; a few still beg
 “ in the country, but it is not general. They are much annoyed by
 “ beggars professing to be tradesmen out of work.”—Do., p. 718.

THOMAS ARBUTHNOT, Esq., Provost of Peterhead,

“ Is a member of the Committee for the Management of the
 “ poor ; occasionally attends the meetings, but does not take
 “ much personal cognizance of the details. Since the assessment
 “ was introduced, those who begged habitually complain that the
 “ allowance is too small. The present system is best ;—doing
 “ away with begging is a great advantage to the public. Under
 “ the present system, the allowances to the really indigent are too
 “ small,—still it is the best of the two. He approves of the way
 “ the Board of Management has been formed here, and thinks the
 “ Committee do their utmost to make the system work well. He
 “ considers *it would have been impossible to have found the neces-
 “ sary means for the support of the poor without an assessment.*”
 —Vol. iii., p. 718.

Some of the more resolute admirers of the "older and better system" may say, that, in the different districts now noticed, although there had been no assessments during the increase of the number, and deterioration of the condition of the poor, above described, there had been regular contributions by the higher orders, which would be reckoned on by the lower; and, therefore, that the poor had not been fairly "thrown on their own resources." The answer will be found in the evidence I shall adduce presently, as to the condition and numbers of the poor in those extensive districts, which are not only unassessed, but, in many instances, unaided by any contributions from the proprietors; and which present a still greater extent and intensity of suffering. In the meantime, we may turn to a more pleasing subject, and contrast the foregoing extracts, with the full and satisfactory evidence contained in the volumes before me, as to the *safety*, and in that part of the country where the principle is fairly carried out, the *beneficial effect* of assessments.

It is stated indeed by the Commissioners, that there are rural districts unassessed, in which, nevertheless, the allowances to the poor are as high, and their condition as comfortable, as in the assessed parts; but they do not specify those districts, and I have been unable to detect them in looking over the evidence. They cannot be numerous, as the *average* allowances in the unassessed districts are not half those in the assessed,*—inadequate as we have seen that these very generally are. I have no doubt, however, that these unassessed but favoured districts are the abode of resi-

* The average having lately been L.2 : 14 : 9. per head per annum in the assessed districts, and L.1 : 0 : 4. in the unassessed.—*See Official Report to General Assembly in 1839, p. 23.*

dent and benevolent proprietors; and that there is, practically, in them no difference from the state of matters which I shall describe in the fully assessed rural districts, excepting only the utter absence of *security*, to the poor or to the public, for the continuance of the regular sustentation and comfortable condition of the poor.

It is certainly true, however, as the Commissioners state, that a considerable portion of the wealth and intelligence of the country is still opposed to assessments; but the objections made to them are not insisted on by the Commissioners, and their fallacy appears to me to be very easily shewn. It does not seem necessary to quote the evidence of more than two gentlemen on these objections, and I shall select two of known respectability and influence.

The Rev. Dr EASTON, Kirriemuir.

“ There is now an assessment for the poor, laid on first in 1840.
 “ Before applicants can be admitted on the poors’ roll many steps
 “ must be taken, conversations held, consultations conducted, visi-
 “ tations made, &c.; and though the applicants do make good
 “ their claim, and a monthly aliment, comparatively liberal, has
 “ been allowed them, yet their feelings have been so much hurt,
 “ and their spirit so much crushed, by the ordeal they have been
 “ compelled to go through, that they find, many of them by bitter
 “ experience, that the shillings they receive are a poor substitute
 “ for the kindnesses which, at a former period, they could have
 “ counted on receiving from their neighbours. And many modest
 “ and needy applicants, rather than have their feelings wounded in
 “ this way, feel themselves forced to give up the contest altogether,
 “ preferring the evils of cold and nakedness, extreme poverty and
 “ starvation, to the full disclosure of their situation, and the humili-
 “ liating and mortifying circumstances with which it is attended,
 “ &c., which their gentle and sensitive nature will not permit them
 “ to encounter; while the forward, and shameless, and undeserving,

“ to whom the arts of imposture are familiar, stand their ground,
 “ set the scrutators at defiance, and are successful. And what
 “ is the tendency of this system on society ? The kindly inter-
 “ course which ought to subsist between the rich and poor has
 “ been discontinued. The gulf which separates the two classes
 “ continually becomes deeper and wider, a *spirit approaching to*
 “ *actual hostility is engendered*, &c. At last their mutual jealou-
 “ sies become so insolent, that *they cannot speak of one another*
 “ *but in terms of acrimony and vituperation.*”—Vol. iii. p. 77.

From this description, we should be disposed to think that there must have been something peculiarly harsh and ungracious in the administration of the parochial funds at Kirriemuir; and recollecting the ample evidence which has been produced, that the relief of destitution in Scotland, so far as it is not accomplished by means of assessment, is very generally intrusted, in a great measure, to “common begging,” it might be thought necessary to observe, that this is an expedient, generally speaking, more revolting to gentle and sensitive natures, and more favourable to the success of the shameless and undeserving, “to whom the arts of imposture are familiar,” than the simple disclosure of distresses, in which there is neither sin nor shame, to persons who are, or ought to be, intelligent and humane; therefore, that this representation of the state of matters at Kirriemuir cannot be taken as a fact of such general prevalence as to guide the decisions of the legislature. But the very next sentence shews that the representation is not intended to be a description of fact at all, but only an effort of imagination, picturing what, in this gentleman’s judgment, is to come.

“ Things have not yet come this length in Kirriemuir; for witness never heard the heritors speak of the poor but in terms of
 “ compassion, nor the poor speak of the heritors but with respect

“ and gratitude ; but *the time will assuredly come, when this will*
 “ *cease, and all, and more than he has said, will be the conse-*
 “ *quence.*”—Ib.

I formerly adduced a good deal of evidence to shew, that none of those consequences, so vividly imagined, and so deeply apprehended, are the usual results of well regulated assessments; and I particularly request attention to the evidence which I shall presently quote, as to the condition and character of the poor, and the intercourse between them and the rich, in the only part of Scotland in which assessments have been fairly tried, viz., in Berwickshire. In the meantime, I place in contrast with the (partly imaginary) representation of Dr Easton, the simple observation of a gentleman who has attended particularly to the alleged effects of assessments, and full allowances, on the demeanour and character of the poor receiving them in England.

DR ALEXANDER WATT, City Statist, Glasgow.

“ Have you any personal knowledge of the good effects of Eng-
 “ lish poor laws on the people at large ?” “ In visitation at
 “ Manchester and Liverpool, I observed that there was not that
 “ heartlessness among the poor that might be supposed. They
 “ were very frank and open in character. In Manchester especially,
 “ I went round the houses of many, and found the people cleanly ;
 “ they seemed to have the utmost confidence in each other, and
 “ in the overseers of the poor ; they were not afraid to ask re-
 “ lief ; they seemed to think they had a right to it.// There was a
 “ degree of comfort and cleanliness among the poor, comparing
 “ Manchester with the Scotch towns, that was very pleasing to
 “ me.// In Liverpool it is not so much so, in consequence, I dare
 “ say, of there being so many poor Irish there.”

“ From what you have seen in England of persons receiving
 “ parochial relief, what appeared to be the effect of it ?” “ It
 “ kept up their appearance ; they were more comfortable and

“cheerful. I saw a great many in Manchester and Liverpool. I was the better part of three days going among them ; and certainly there was *a decided difference in favour of the English poor.*”—Vol. i., p. 366.

The other opinion unfavourable to assessments, which I shall quote, is the following :—

JAMES GORDON, Esq. of Craig, Parish of Auchindoir,
in Aberdeenshire.

“My opinion is, that there is no necessity for any alteration in this district. At the same time, there are circumstances which would almost shake my opinion in some respects. There are *absentees that give nothing* ; they draw the rents from their estates, but send nothing to the poor. There are some who, though not absentees, do not contribute. One heritor *never gave one penny*—neither he nor his. *It would be expedient if a law were to be obtained that would strike against them.* But I would rather submit to the loss of the contributions of those people than alter the law, *because we live happily under it.* Some benevolent individuals with whom I am connected, take care that there shall be no want, but almost a superfluity, of the necessities of life—meal, potatoes, blankets, &c. But our principal object is to find employment for the people. We say to a person—Do you want work ?—if so, *we will find it for you.* I am decidedly of opinion that a change of system, by the introduction of a compulsory tax for the support of the poor, would change the nature of the population. Everything they now receive is taken in the most modest manner. It appears to me, that, if the relief came in the shape of a demand, the character of the population would alter. They are satisfied now, but would not be satisfied then.”

“Have you resided in any other rural parishes in Scotland ?”
“No.”

“Have you ever taken any part in the management of the poor in an assessed parish ?” “No.”—Vol. ii. p. 641.

Here I beg it may be particularly observed—*First,*

That the comfort of the poor of this parish is dependent on the voluntary exertions of certain "benevolent individuals;" therefore, that, when that "*accident heureux*" does not exist, there is no security against such evils, resulting from destitution and mendicity, as those described as "*sickenings*," by the minister of Reay, already quoted. *Secondly*, That in this, as in other similarly circumstanced parishes, there are other individuals who enjoy the *rights* of property, and are altogether absolved from its *duties* in regard to the poor. *Thirdly*, That Mr Gordon's only reason for not wishing those duties to be enforced, is the fear that the character of the poor would be altered, and that they would not be satisfied or contented if provided for by an assessment;—and, *Lastly*, That, in forming this opinion, he is not guided by experience, having seen nothing of the management of the poor in assessed parishes, but merely by a conjectural anticipation of what is likely to be the result. If it is found by *experience*, on a scale of sufficient extent, that this injurious effect on the character and conduct of the people is not produced by an assessment; but, on the contrary, that—in respect to sobriety, industry, moral and religious conduct, respect for their superiors, prudence, and moral restraint on excessive population—the people of the longest and most highly assessed parishes are at least equal to any others in Scotland, Mr Gordon's scruples about the introduction of a law which shall strike at his friends, who "draw their rents from their estates, and send nothing to the poor," ought to vanish entirely.

We can hardly expect, indeed, that one who has formed and expressed an opinion so strongly as Mr Gordon has done, should afterwards perceive his error, and retract that opinion; but I cannot help thinking,

that many others who have not yet made up their “faggots of opinions” on this subject, must perceive that on this question conjecture must yield to *experience*; and farther, that without travelling beyond the precincts of our own country, or beyond the evidence which came before the Commissioners, we have abundance of experience to enable us to shew that the fears of Mr Gordon, and many other persons in Scotland, are absolutely groundless.

In opposition to the *opinion* which I have quoted, I place the *facts*, ascertained by the Commissioners in those parts of Scotland immediately adjoining to England, where the assessments have been longest continued, and might be expected to have produced their most injurious effects, where the allowances to the paupers are the highest, and the whole system bears the closest affinity to that adopted in England; and bearing always in mind, that assessments are opposed solely on the ground of their alleged injurious effect on the character of the poor, and on their intercourse with the higher ranks, I beg simply to ask—What is the injury of that kind which has resulted from these assessments?

Rev. J. WILSON, Minister of Chirnside, Berwickshire.

Population,	1203.
Paupers,	62.
Sum distributed among them,	L.262, 8s.
Parish long assessed.	

“ Usual allowance to old persons unable to work, from 2s. to 3s. a-week; to a widow with children, 1s. a-week *for each child* under twelve. A doctor is paid for attendance on the poor; and a sick pauper requiring nutritious diet is supplied from the session funds, or from funds at the disposal of the heritors. Able-bodied men are *hardly ever in distress* from want of employ-

“ment; they have occasionally granted relief in such circumstances, but it has occurred very seldom. There is generally work of some kind or other for able-bodied women. There are a good many beggars *from distant parishes*, mostly vagrants, representing themselves as in search of work; often relieved by private charity. *There is much private charity in Chirnside.* The people are *temperate and industrious in their habits*; more so of late years than formerly, and *respectful to their superiors.*”—Vol. iii., p. 726.

Rev. J. EDGAR, Minister of Hutton, Berwickshire.

Population,	. . . . .	1133.
Paupers,	. . . . .	58.
Sum distributed among them,	. . . . .	L.238.

The parish long assessed.

“The usual allowance to an old person on the roll, 2s. a-week—in some cases more. A bed-ridden woman has 2s. for herself, and 2s. for an attendant. Has occasional funds at his disposal for cases of emergency, or applies to the heritors. *There is much done in private charity; one lady has spent L.100 in a year on the poor, in flannel, tea, meal, and coals.* Destitution among able-bodied men is hardly known. So far as his experience goes, *has never seen a beggar from Berwickshire*, although they are inundated with beggars from other quarters. This he attributes to better allowances being given to the poor people here than elsewhere. The paupers on the roll are comfortable; their houses very clean; they have the bare necessities of life; and he thinks they are *a good deal assisted by their friends.* Their condition is much superior, *they are much more cleanly, and their houses much more comfortable,* than at Symington, in the Presbytery of Biggar, where he was formerly minister, and where there is no assessment.

“The labourers are generally *provident, orderly, and decent.* The hinds are a most excellent set of people—*industrious, sober, attentive to the education of their children, and to their religious duties.* The system is an excellent one. The population was 1118 in 1821, and 1133 in 1841; few had emigrated in the interval.”—Vol. iii., p. 716.

Parish of Eyemouth, Berwickshire.

Mr TROTTER, Session-Clerk.

Population in 1841, . . . 1401.

Paupers in 1842, . . . 50.

Sum distributed amongst them, . . . L.219, 10s.

“ A day-labourer, past work, on coming on the roll, would
 “ receive 2s. 6d. a-week. Any addition given to bed-ridden people
 “ is generally given from collections at the church, perhaps 2s.
 “ or 2s. 6d. a-week, as the case requires. A widow with three
 “ young children, has 4s. 6d. a-week at present (*i. e.* three times
 “ as much as in Edinburgh or Glasgow.) There are some widows
 “ of fishermen who were drowned about eighteen months ago, and
 “ they receive an *allowance from a subscription raised on their*
 “ *behalf, equal to what they receive from the session*; so some of
 “ them have about 8s. a-week. There are two fatuous persons
 “ upon the poor-roll of Eyemouth, who live with their relations;
 “ they have each 2s. 6d. a-week. Some of the houses of paupers
 “ are very bad, but they are improving. Generally, they are very
 “ well provided in bedding. When there is any deficiency in that
 “ respect, the parish supply it. There is no provision made for
 “ medical attendance on the poor, but when the surgeon pre-
 “ sents his account for attending on the paupers, it is generally
 “ paid by the heritors. When any of the paupers become sick,
 “ and apply to the session, they are allowed extra aliment. None
 “ of the paupers of Eyemouth beg. It is still the practice to
 “ grant relief to able-bodied men in difficulty. This is to *prevent*
 “ *them from falling into poverty*. This relief is given from the
 “ session funds; but it is all the same, they are mixed with the
 “ funds from the assessment. It is, however, understood that the
 “ session should not exceed the amount of the church collections
 “ in granting relief to able-bodied persons. If, however, they do
 “ exceed it, the heritors seldom say much about it.”—Vol. iii.,
 p. 728.

Parish of Foulden, Berwickshire.

Population in 1841,	393.
Number of paupers relieved in 1842,	10.
Sum distributed amongst them,	L.46.

Rev. ALEX. CHRISTISON, Minister of Foulden.

“ There has been an assessment in the parish during the whole
 “ of his incumbency—twenty-three years. There are at present
 “ eleven paupers on the roll, of whom only two reside in the
 “ parish. One of them is an old woman about ninety, who re-
 “ ceives 2s. a-week. She sits rent free, and is very *much assisted*
 “ *by the principal proprietor*, with coals and other comforts. She
 “ is taken charge of by her immediate neighbour, who, in fact,
 “ receives the 2s. The other is an old woman above sixty, who
 “ is lame; she receives 2s. a-week, sits rent free, and has *similar*
 “ *advantages* with the pauper just mentioned. Of the non-resident
 “ paupers, one is a fatuous person. He lives with a brother at
 “ Dunse, and receives 3s. 6d. a-week. One old woman who has
 “ lost an arm, resides at Eyemouth. She receives 2s. 6d. a-week.
 “ The allowances to the other paupers are 2s. a-week. There is
 “ one lunatic at Musselburgh asylum, who costs L.24 a-year.
 “ There is *no begging* among the parishioners; there are many
 “ vagrants from a distance. There is *no destitution in the parish*
 “ *among able-bodied people* from want of employment. There
 “ is a *great deal of private charity* on the part of the only resident
 “ proprietor. The people of the parish are decidedly *sober, indus-*
 “ *trious, and orderly*. He has experienced no difficulty in ad-
 “ ministering the poor-laws. He highly approves of the present
 “ system. Out of the eleven paupers on the roll, four are pre-
 “ cisely of the class who would naturally come upon the roll,
 “ being *unmarried women in advanced life*. Such persons could
 “ not be expected to maintain themselves now, or to have been
 “ in circumstances to provide for old age. A hind, with an
 “ income of under L.30 a-year, cannot materially assist his parents
 “ if they are away from him. Old people say they used to do so

“ formerly ; incomes were better then than now. A hind’s income was worth L.60 during the war. The standard of living amongst the labouring classes in the parish is much the same as formerly, except that the use of wheaten bread is becoming more common, owing probably to its cheapness.”—Vol. iii. p. 729.

Parish of Roxburgh.

Population in 1841,	.	.	.	968.
Paupers relieved,	.	.	.	29.
Sum distributed among them,	.	.	.	L.138, 18s.

Mr WM. LAIDLAW, Session and Heritors’ Clerk.

“ Highest allowance to a pauper is 14s. a-month ; the lowest 5s. A widow, with three of her children under twelve years, has 8s. a-month. There has been no beggar belonging to the parish for twenty-three years ; there are no drunkards in the parish. All who are able to work get employment.”—Vol. iii., p. 681.

Rev. WM. NICOL, Minister of the United Secession Church, Jedburgh.

“ Witness has not found, from his experience, that the assessment in Jedburgh, although heavy, has had the effect of drying up the sources of private charity. He believes that *although the assessment were ten times greater than it is, it would not have that effect*, although individuals are to be found who make the assessment an excuse for not giving. He knew a tradesman who was taken ill and died, and was supported during his illness by witness and some friends. After his death a subscription was raised by himself and some other individuals, all of whom are heavily assessed, by which his wife and family were maintained and set up in a way of gaining their livelihood. Two of the family were also educated by private charity ; and that family is now comfortable and well-doing, without ever having been a burden on the parish. Witness is acquainted with *three other*

“ *instances of the same kind* in the town of Jedburgh, in the last “ five years.”—Vol. iii., p. 67.

The evidence from the other parishes in Roxburghshire and Berwickshire is nearly to the same purpose. It is generally stated, also, that more than half the paupers live with their relations, and are well attended to, and that they are a good deal assisted by their neighbours. In regard to the moral character of the poor, as well as their general comforts, we have the following unimpeachable evidence :—

The Rev. J. HUNTER, Edinburgh, formerly of the Parish of Swinton, Berwickshire.

“ In my country parish the poor were in as comfortable a state “ as could be wished. I may truly say that I had no idea of “ poverty till I visited a city parish.”

“ You would say that they are generally in a sound, comfort- “ able condition in the parish of Swinton ? ” “ I would say so ; “ and, in general, their *moral character is much superior* to that “ of the poor in this city.”—Vol. i., p. 55.

I add only the evidence of

Mr UNDERHILL, Superintendent of Police in Berwickshire.

“ With the exception of vagrants from a distance, there are “ *no beggars* in Berwickshire. *I do not know a single beggar* “ either in the villages or the towns. The inhabitants of Berwick- “ shire appear to me *very steady, orderly, and well-behaved,* “ *respectful to their superiors, and decidedly religious.* The “ *poorest of them endeavour to give a good education to their* “ *children. Drunkenness is very rare among the inhabitants.* “ Committals for drunkenness are chiefly among strangers.”—Vol. iii., p. 743.

Thus we have one county in Scotland, and hitherto only one, in which begging has really been suppressed, without hardship on the poor, without forcing them to become vagrants, almost without the aid of the laws (for the rural police have been only established there within the last three years), simply by keeping the poor in "a sound and comfortable condition" at home;—and this is a county in which assessments are general, and the allowances to the poor twice and three times as high as in Edinburgh or Glasgow,—the sick poor are relieved, and their medical attendants remunerated from the poor-rates—even the unemployed poor assisted; in short, there is the closest approximation possible to the system adopted in England; and (bating a little grumbling, which is a national failing, and no great national grievance) the heritors are contented.* Surely there cannot be a more sober and practical method of reform than to take steps for enforcing, over the country, the same general system which has been so effectual here.

When these facts are taken in connection with those which have been ascertained on a large scale in other countries, where there is, either by law or by universal practice, an effective public provision for the impotent poor (some of which I have quoted on former occasions, particularly in my Reply to Dr Chalmers), it seems to me that they afford as complete a justification as can possibly be desired of the observation of Mr

* That there is no good ground for discontent, I infer, from two facts which I formerly stated—*First*, That the *population in Berwickshire remains nearly stationary*, although the emigration is trifling;—and, *Secondly*, That the proportion of paupers does not rise above five per cent. of the population.

Twisleton, that “the mischiefs which have been attributed to assessments for this class of the poor have been *remarkably exaggerated*.” In fact, I have been unable to perceive any better ground, stated in this evidence, for the apprehension still entertained by many intelligent witnesses on this point, than the *conjecture* as to the effects of assessments, which I have quoted from Mr Gordon; or the bold *assertion* of a highly respectable witness (whose personal experience, however, has been limited to a parish of 305 inhabitants, with benevolent resident heritors and *six* paupers),—and the very slender foundation of whose judgment appears, I think, from the following dialogue:—

The Rev. Dr AITON, Minister of Dolphington.

“I think an assessment for the poor a remedy worse than the disease. In many cases you increase it *tenfold*,* and put the people out of that sort of Scotch independence which makes them averse to being paupers. The barrier is broken down between them, and shame,” &c. “By an assessment benevolence is dried up, so that it is not given so profusely, nor received so thankfully.

“Supposing it was shewn that there was a great deal of private charity when an assessment existed, would that alter your inference?” “Most unquestionably.”

“You have been in Berwickshire?” “Yes.”

“Are you prepared to say that in Berwickshire there is not a

* It will be remembered that the proportion of paupers in the assessed districts in Scotland is *less* than in the unassessed (as 344 to 353, as shewn by the Report to the General Assembly, p. 22.) It is true, that neither in the one nor the other is the number of paupers a fair exponent of the number of destitute poor; but I believe no one who has read over the extracts already given can doubt, that it is in the unassessed districts of the country that these are most numerous.

“ great deal of private charity ? ” “ *I should act very uncharitably to say so.* ”

Again : “ I never knew an instance of assessment where there was not wrangling. I have been at meetings of heritors and kirk-sessions where there was an excess of wrangling. ”

“ Is there wrangling in Berwickshire ? ” “ I cannot state that there is, of my own knowledge ; but, from my knowledge of human nature, I believe there is. ” *—Vol. iii., p. 807.

The Commissioners state that “ they have reason to believe that the general feeling against an assessment in Scotland is gradually diminishing ; ” and I really think I may add, that unless better and more practical reasons can be given for that feeling than the conjectural opinions which I have quoted, the sooner it vanishes entirely, the better for the credit of the intelligence of the country. We shall afterwards inquire whether the objection to the relief of the able-bodied poor by assessment rests on any better foundation in experience. In the mean time, I add only this reflection on the foregoing extracts, that they illustrate perfectly the truth and wisdom of the sacred maxim, that “ charity is twice blessed. ” We have seen that in unassessed rural

* The following quotations, taken quite at random, from the Berwickshire witnesses, shew how far this conjecture is well-founded.

Rev. H. RIDDELL, Longformacus.

“ There is no point in which he has found any difficulty in the administration of the poor-laws. He was always well supported by the heritors. ”

Rev. A. HUME, Greenlaw.

“ He has never experienced any inconvenience in the administration of the poor-laws. Many of the poor on the roll are sensible people, and very well contented with the provision made for them. ”

ALLEN PURVES, Esq., Chief Magistrate of Dunse.

“ There is no point in the administration of the poor-laws in which the witness has found any difficulty. He is acquainted with five neighbouring parishes as well as Dunse ; has seen the poor in all their own houses, and thinks them, in all, comfortably attended to. ”—Vol. iii., p. 739.

parishes in the north of Scotland, where the misery of the people sickens the heart of the clergyman, some of the proprietors, living at a distance, *contribute nothing to the poor, and return no answer to his letters* soliciting assistance for them; while in the heaviest assessed county of Scotland, where the poor are in a “sound and comfortable condition,” the proprietors are voluntarily attentive to their wants, the clergymen have no difficulty in administering the poor-law, and are “well supported by the heritors.” This is precisely analogous to what I have formerly remarked, as to the difference of the feelings with which the sight of destitution is habitually regarded in the rural districts of England and of Ireland. It proves the importance to the higher ranks, not less than to the lower, of having the relief of the poor made an integral part of our social system; and confirms me in the hope and belief, that, sooner or later, in Scotland, as well as in England, *charity by law* will be so firmly established in the hearts of the people, as to insure its being, even under the heaviest dispensations of Providence, “a fragment of our history, “to be preserved wherever the succession of our constitution and our religion shall go.”

VII. The degree of destitution, and the dependence on beggary, in many parts of the Highlands and Islands, if not greater, certainly extend much more generally through the population, than in any of the large towns. There are several circumstances which render the condition of the poor in the Highlands at the present moment peculiar, and must be allowed to modify any practical conclusion which can be applied to them; but at present we are only concerned with the *facts*, of their

extreme destitution, and the absolute nullity of legal protection,—of their dependence on the charity of their neighbours,—of the *tax on the industry* of those persons, which is thereby imposed,—and of the absolute exemption, in many cases, of the landed proprietors, *i.e.* of the capital of the country, from any direct share in the support of this burden. These points, and the inference from them, in the minds of the most intelligent and most disinterested of the inhabitants of these districts, as to the necessity of assessments, are sufficiently illustrated by the following evidence, which I have selected from distant parts of the Highlands and Islands, to shew how generally, under the present voluntary system of relief, the same misery presents itself, and the same complaints are made.

The Rev. T. BARCLAY, Lerwick.

“How are the poor supported?” “Chiefly by begging. The Saturday of every week is a general begging day among at least two-thirds on the roll.”

“That is allowed?” “Yes; and is carried on chiefly by the younger branches of the families. All the attempts to put a stop to street begging have been ineffectual; and the demoralizing effects of it are deeply deplored by all. It degrades them in their own eyes, and, in many cases, ultimately leads to theft.”—Vol. i. p. 719.

Rev. PETER PETRIE, Kirkwall.

“How do the poor on the roll manage to get on?” They are assisted much by the poor people around them, and many of them beg; some visit the neighbouring parishes. Many women are out of employment, and reduced to great indigence.”—Do., p. 720.

The Rev. C. M'KENZIE, Sheldag in Ross-shire.

"What is your highest allowance to a pauper on the roll?"
 "10s. a-year, and that only in one or two cases."

"Take a widow, with four children under ten; how do they live?" "It is not easy to tell that. They plant a few potatoes, and *beg among the fishermen for herring*. They live very scantily."

"How are orphan children taken care of?" "By their friends. If they have no friends, they are sent off to do something for themselves;—they get their food, and generally their clothing."

"How are lunatics taken care of?" "By their friends."

"Do they get assistance from the parish funds?" "Yes; in proportion to what we receive;—it may be 5s. in the year; never so much as 10s."

"How do old men and women past work live?"

"Their friends generally support them."

"How are the people chiefly employed?" "Chiefly in fishing; they are idle two-thirds of the year. It is melancholy to see how they pass the time."

"Have you any means of giving temporary relief to able-bodied men in sickness?" "No."

"Are many persons in your parish in a state of great destitution?" "Yes; some are wretchedly ill off. Some have nothing but what they get by going from door to door."

"Are they aged and infirm?" "Very aged. One man gets his breakfast and dinner in my house; he was living all last winter in a roofless house."

"Are there in your parish impotent persons, proper objects of parochial relief, and having a right to it, who go about begging, and without such relief?" "There are not many; but there are some."

"Have they made any demand?" "No; they know it is not to get."

"Are any heritors resident?" "None."

"Have not the kirk-sessions a right to apply to the heritors?"

"Yes; but this is a thing not known in that part of the coun-

"try. *I never heard of such a thing ; and I was born and bred in the Highlands.*"

"Are the people of provident habits?" "Not at all. *The fishermen and sailors have nothing of that kind in their composition.*"—Vol. i., p. 724-6.

The Rev. D. M'RAE, Poolewe.

"What is your usual allowance for a man past work?" "From 4s. to 8s. in the year ; and the same to a widow with four children."

"How do these old people and widows subsist?" "By going about from door to door, collecting victuals."

"Why do you not give them more?" "*Because we have it not to give.*"

"Do you never apply to the heritors?"

"I got L.5 from five heritors, more as a voluntary contribution than assessment. It is a very rare thing to get that."

"How are the impotent and bedrid maintained?" "*Their neighbours are exceedingly kind to them, and bring them whatever they have. The poor could not live without the kindness of their neighbours.*"

"How are orphans provided for?" "They go about, and are supported by the people."—Vol. i., p. 733.

Rev. ALEX. RUSSELL, Assistant, Gairloch.

"How are your poor old people maintained?" "*By their neighbours.*"

"Is there begging in your parish?" "There is abundance, though not regular begging. The poor with us are very liberally supplied by the poor, and they generally place most reliance on the poor."

"How do the widows and children subsist?" "They wait on the shore, when the boats come in with fish, and are supplied ; —they go about in harvest-time with baskets, and get a few potatoes, and occasionally a sheaf of corn, from the cottars. At clipping season they get a little wool ; there are one or two families of means who give a little beef or mutton to some of the

"poor. *This is the only way in which, so far as I am aware, they subsist.*"

"Have you ever applied for an increase of allowances to the poor? "No; *I have not done so; but the minister of Poolewe has done so, the heritors being the same.*"

Rev. WM. M'RAE, Barras, Island of Lewis.

"How do the poor and impotent in your parish subsist?"
 "Such as are able to *go about do so, and collect food.* Such as are unable have relations who *collect for them. That is their only subsistence.*"

"How are orphans subsisted?" "They subsist *on the charity of their neighbours, and of the small tenantry.*"

"The support of the poor depends on those who are very poor themselves. *We never get a farthing from the proprietor for the relief of the poor.* He is heritor for the whole island of Lewis, containing a population of 16,000. The late proprietor gave L.5 a-year to each of the parishes, and L.10 to Stornoway; *but this has been discontinued a number of years.*"

"Do you conceive it would be possible to make a provision for the impotent without casting an intolerable burden on the rest of the parish?" "It is possible enough, making it optional to pay in money or produce."

"Would it be possible to prevent begging?" Yes; it would keep the poor in their own parishes. Ours is more of an agricultural parish than the others around, and a number of poor from other parishes flock into it for meal. *They are a great tax upon us.*"—Vol. i. p. 750.

Rev. N. M'LEAN, Minister of the united Parishes of Tiree and Coll.

"The greater part of the island is divided into small crofts. A few of the crofters pay as high a rent as L.20, a few as low as L.1, a-year. The few paying the highest rent live pretty well; *the rest are in a very miserable condition.* The poor on the roll are chiefly supported *by the charity of their neighbours*, who are very liberal to them according to their abilities. There are

“ orphans in the parish, but they, like the others, are chiefly supported in the same way. A small additional sum may be allowed them out of the poor’s funds, but it is quite insufficient for their subsistence. There are some insane persons on the island, all of the poorest class. No special provision is made for them out of the poor’s funds: *they rely on the kindness of neighbours like the rest.*”—Vol. ii. p. 131.

Extract from NOTES of CASES visited in the Island of Tiree, 26th June 1843.

“ Malcolm M’Ginnes, an orphan, with a sister still on the roll, eight or nine years old. Five of them were left orphans six years ago; the eldest was then fourteen. He and his sisters live by getting a rigg of land from a neighbour to plant potatoes; and he goes to the low country to shear. Little girl in rags; house very poor; one wretched bed, a little straw for bedding; very little bed-clothes; a dish like a trough, an old wheel, a few potatoes in a corner; no window, and a small hole in a corner of the house for a chimney. The neighbours supply the support necessary above what M’Ginnes, who is now twenty, can do for himself.”

“ Janet M’Lean, *not on roll*; aged 40. Two children (boys) illegitimate. *Lives on charity of neighbours.* Has nothing but what the eldest boy gets by herding. He gets some potatoes for his wages. House very clean.”

“ Flora M’Kinnon, widow; *not on roll*: past 80. House large and clean. No window; no chimney. No light when door is shut. Lives with her daughter; *is supported by farmers.* She is very poor.”

“ Mary Macdonald, widow; has 6s. Has four children, three of them with her. Wretched bed, merely a little straw; scarcely any bed-clothes. *No means of living but what the neighbours give her.* None of her family fit to work potato ground; has one girl twelve years old, who cannot leave her mother. Goes about to different people, and gets a little milk,—sometimes from one, and sometimes from another. They are wretchedly poor.”—Vol. ii., p. 137–138.

Dr D. M'LEOD, Surgeon in Skye.

“ In general (in Skye) they are very poor and very destitute—
 “ many of them without the usual necessities of life. In many
 “ of their houses there are no bedsteads, nothing but a wisp of
 “ straw on the ground, and a little covering. In particular, he
 “ has found such cases when practising as an accoucheur. He
 “ thinks, unquestionably, that the bad living of the poor produces
 “ disease among them ; but he has not known any cases of death
 “ which he could trace to the want of proper sustenance. He has
 “ not been in the parish of Kilmuir or Waternish for a twelve-
 “ month : the poor were then much the same there as here. In
 “ all parts of Skye that he knows, the poor are much in the same
 “ situation. Waternish, the *quoad sacra* parish, included in Dair-
 “ nish, is as bad a place as any he knows. *Does not know how*
 “ *the poor are to be assisted, but assistance they do require.*”—
 Vol. ii. p. 394.

THOMAS MACDONALD, Esq., Banker in Fort-William.

“ The poor are chiefly maintained by the charity of people in
 “ the town and country ; that is, the mendicant poor, who go about
 “ once a fortnight collecting what they can. But besides the men-
 “ dicant poor, there are a great many persons in the village in a
 “ state of destitution, who will not beg, and to whom benevolent
 “ individuals in the village send relief. There are a great many
 “ people in that state of poverty, yet their feelings are such that
 “ they would rather starve or steal than beg ; and he has no
 “ doubt many of the petty larcenies here proceed from absolute
 “ want. The dwellings of many of the poor are *so bad that he*
 “ *can hardly describe them.* The poor have suffered terrible pri-
 “ vations from want of fuel, particularly this last winter. The
 “ poor on the roll at Fort-William have no land at all, and *how*
 “ *they live he really cannot tell.*”—Vol. ii. 396.

WILLIAM KENNEDY, Esq., M.D., Fort-William.

“ There is no provision made in any of the parishes for medical
 “ attendance on the poor, or for medicines. He finds himself
 “ obliged to furnish medicines for them at his own expense, which
 “ he cannot estimate annually at less than L.20. There is very

“ often no means of getting proper diet for the sick poor. The
 “ sessions do not like to give a large allowance to any one indivi-
 “ dual, and there is no other way of getting it. There is no means
 “ of vaccinating the poor, except what is afforded gratuitously by
 “ the medical men. Some have suffered severely from want of
 “ food at this season of the year. He knew a woman die in the
 “ village, a month or five weeks ago, whose illness, he is sure, was
 “ brought on by want of food. In general, the poor are better
 “ off in the country than at Fort-William; but even in the coun-
 “ try, in the extensive district where he practises, there have oc-
 “ curred cases of disease, followed by death, having been brought
 “ on by want of proper food; but such cases are not frequent.
 “ The poor in Fort-William are much better off during harvest
 “ and winter than at this season of the year, (July.)”—Vol. ii.
 p. 410.

Captain SPALDING, Barrack-Master at Fort-Augustus.

“ Has been resident here twenty-two years, and has had occa-
 “ sion to pay attention to the state of the poor in the neighbour-
 “ hood. The money collected at the chapel of the mission is dis-
 “ tributed among the poor; and, on extraordinary occasions, the
 “ inhabitants endeavour to raise money for them by subscription,
 “ but this happens very seldom; there have not been above two
 “ for twenty-two years, as far as witness can recollect. There are
 “ a great many old persons about Fort-Augustus *entirely depend-*
 “ *ent on the charity of their neighbours*; a great number of those
 “ unable to do anything, particularly women, and some old men;
 “ and there are a great many destitute children, orphans, and
 “ widows with children. The last collection, of which he took
 “ charge, amounted to about L.20, which he distributed among
 “ fifty-one families—from two hundred to three hundred indivi-
 “ duals. *A great many more families required assistance.* The
 “ houses of the poor people are, generally speaking, very bad;
 “ indeed, half of them do not keep out the rain. He has been
 “ obliged *himself* to have thatch put on their houses, and to give
 “ them blankets, especially on Lord Lovat’s property, and on
 “ Abertarff’s, and to give them coals in winter, else they would

“ have perished. Their bedding is as bad as anything can be—
 “ many of them without bedsteads, lying on straw or chaff on the
 “ ground ; and, what is worse, *without blankets*, many lying on
 “ heather. They often suffer dreadful privations from want of
 “ food, chiefly from December till June. This great destitution
 “ has been owing, in some cases, to the efficient members of fami-
 “ lies having gone to America and Australia, leaving their aged
 “ and infirm relatives in this country ; in others, to the natural
 “ privations occasioned by the death of parents, who have left
 “ destitute children. None of the proprietors of land reside in
 “ the country. When he made up the last subscription, Abertarff
 “ gave him L.3 ; Lord Lovat, L.3 ; Glenmorison, L.3 ; he sub-
 “ scribed, L.3, and made up the rest by small subscriptions. He
 “ does not know of any of the large proprietors having contri-
 “ buted to the assistance of the poor on any other occasion ; they
 “ may have given assistance privately, but there has been no other
 “ public subscription. Mrs Fraser, Abertarff, and Mrs Grant,
 “ Glenmorison, are extremely generous in relieving the poor *when*
 “ *in the country*. He thinks it would be expedient to introduce
 “ an assessment here. *The poor depend on himself, and three or*
 “ *four others ;* and, unless there is an assessment for them, they
 “ must starve.”—Vol. iii. p. 411.

Rev. JOHN NOBLE, Minister of Fodderty.

“ The funds arise from the collections at the church door, and
 “ a mortification of twelve bolls of barley, which is restricted to
 “ the poor on the Cromarty estate. The largest amount in the
 “ year to any of the poor on the roll is 7s. 6d., and only three or
 “ four of them get that. The usual amount varies from 2s. 6d.
 “ to 5s. It is not easy to say how these people live ; it has long
 “ been a problem to myself. *It has often paralysed my exertions*
 “ *among them to see them so badly off ;* I have been obliged to
 “ give from my own pocket, so as to do injury to myself. *I have*
 “ *never applied to the heritors for assistance—it is not the custom*
 “ *to do so in this part of the country.*

“ The church collections will be materially affected by the late

“ secession in the Church ; almost the whole parish retire with
 “ myself from the Establishment. There seems to me no way of
 “ relieving adequately the distress of the parish but by an assess-
 “ ment. I was reluctant to admit the idea ; but from the distress
 “ I have seen, apart altogether from the secession, I am con-
 “ vinced that an assessment is desirable. *The heritors have not,*
 “ *during my incumbency, as far as I am aware, ever assisted to*
 “ *relieve the poor.* They have not remitted money to me for the
 “ Church collections.”—Vol. ii. p. 24-25.

The Rev. ALEXANDER ROSS, Minister of Ullapool.

“ It would be advisable to assess this parish for the relief of the
 “ aged and infirm poor. The sole heritor is very kind to the poor,
 “ and lets some of them have lots gratis, which, in one or two in-
 “ stances, are of the value of L.5 a year. He also gives money
 “ occasionally when he is in the country ; but he does not reside
 “ here above two months in the year, and his shooting lodge is
 “ seven or eight miles distant from where the bulk of the poor
 “ are, so that there are very many cases of distress which cannot
 “ come within his knowledge. I should unquestionably approve,
 “ therefore, of a moderate assessment, strictly limited to the relief
 “ of the really aged and infirm poor, who would thus be better
 “ provided for than at present. It would then be possible to re-
 “ press begging amongst them, which is a great evil.”—Vol. ii.
 p. 424.

ALEXANDER MACKENZIE, Esq., Fisheurer, Ullapool.

“ Is well acquainted with the condition and character of the
 “ working classes. The paupers are not comfortable, even for
 “ persons in their situation ; their allowance from the kirk-session
 “ is wholly inadequate to their support. It is eked out by pri-
 “ vate charity, the source on which they mainly depend. Begging
 “ is incessant ; not daily, but hourly. At certain seasons, how-
 “ ever, particularly from the latter months of spring till the pota-
 “ toes are ready for use, this source is often very limited and pre-
 “ carious. At that season I have known cases of extreme desti-

“tution among the poor. *Often at my own meals, I have felt I was scarcely at liberty to partake of them, when conscious that so many around me were almost in starvation.* I would by all means recommend an assessment for the aged and infirm poor, and would be quite willing to pay my proportion of that assessment. Whatever the amount of it might be, I am quite sure that, under its operation, I should be less heavily taxed for the support of the poor than I am at present.”—Vol. ii. p. 425-426.

REV. DUNCAN CAMPBELL, Minister of Kiltearn.

“I have read a passage in the Statistical Account of Kiltearn, written in 1839 by my predecessor: ‘The miserable pittance allowed to the poor on the roll is totally inadequate to the relief of their distress, and *the greatest misery and want prevail in consequence, to an extent that would seem incredible to those who had not actually witnessed it.* It is no uncommon thing for an unmarried female, or lonely widow who has survived all her friends, to live in a wretched hovel, without fire, or bed-clothes, or food, in the depths of winter.’ I have seen a few instances of distress in the parish, which correspond with that representation. It would be desirable to introduce an assessment for the aged and infirm: the poor would be better off under such a system. *If something of that kind be not done immediately for them, they must starve.* I know of no place in Scotland where the poor are so ill off. The people are charitable, but it is not enough; and the poor in my parish are not at all sufficiently maintained by the charity of their neighbours. Were it not for this assistance, many of the poor must have perished. I am sorry to say the richer part of the inhabitants of the parish are not the most charitable.”—Vol. ii., p. 23.

The Rev. JOHN MACKENZIE, of the Gaelic Church,
Cromarty.

“I think the allowances to the paupers perfectly inadequate. I think L.4 or L.5 a-year an adequate allowance for a person past work. Such an allowance would be a great boon, and

“ give great contentment among the poor, though it would be
 “ small for widows with children. I am assuming that the volun-
 “ tary contributions, by which they now partly subsist, would
 “ cease in a great measure. But they would be much better off,
 “ because they would have a certainty, instead of living, as they
 “ do now, in a constant state of uncertainty as to what they may
 “ receive. The uncertainty does not produce a good moral effect ;
 “ it creates discontent. I think this attaches to the system.
 “ There is begging to a great extent in Cromarty. *I have no ex-*
 “ *perience in a parish of what are the evils of a legal provision,*
 “ *but have no hesitation in saying that the sufferings of the poor in*
 “ *Cromarty are such as no persons should be subject to. As*
 “ to the quantity of food, they are worse off than the lowest
 “ class of labourers. I have seen cases of extreme destitution
 “ amongst them. I have known asthmatic people, who, for a
 “ whole week, had nothing to live on but potatoes. In the ex-
 “ treme point of poverty, the poorer classes are very generous in
 “ giving potatoes. Widows with children are very poor, and en-
 “ dure a great deal.”—Vol. ii., p. 6.

Rev. T. GRANT, Minister of Petty, Presbytery of
 Inverness.

Population, 1749.

“ Till August last year, there was no systematic provision for
 “ the poor of the parish. *In the memory of man, no heritor had*
 “ *ever previously given anything.*”—Vol. ii. p. 423.

Rev. F. FRASER, *Quoad Sacra* Minister of Fortrose.

“ I believe there are *a number not on the poor's roll who are as*
 “ *ill off as those on it ;* but I cannot say there are some on the
 “ poor's roll who do not need to receive relief from the parish.
 “ From the circumstances of the poor, I believe it will be impos-
 “ sible to do without an assessment for the aged and infirm, how-
 “ ever much I may deprecate its introduction. The average of
 “ what they receive does not amount to L.1 a-year, and many of
 “ them have no means of support but the charity of their neigh-
 “ bours. I was in New Brunswick for six years, and the system

“ worked there very well. There was an assessment, and the over-
 “ seers of the poor were selected and appointed annually wholly
 “ by the magistrates. Before a person was put on the poor’s
 “ roll, he was taken before a magistrate and a medical man.
 “ *There was an appeal, with regard to the amount of relief, to the*
 “ *county magistrates from the overseers. There were very seldom*
 “ *any appeals.* I deprecate any assessment in this country, fear-
 “ ing it may encourage laziness: but still it can scarcely be
 “ avoided in the present circumstances of the country. However,
 “ I do not mean to apply this to an assessment merely for the
 “ aged and infirm, or partially disabled.”—Vol. ii., p. 14.

Dr R. DEMPSTER, Fortrose.

“ It would be desirable to introduce an assessment for the in-
 “ firm poor. We have few or no resident gentry in the neigh-
 “ bourhood, and the burden of maintaining the poor falls on the
 “ poor themselves, and on the middling classes. The paupers
 “ would be better off if there were an assessment, when I think the
 “ allowances would be raised. It would, in a great measure, pre-
 “ vent the poor and the middling classes from assisting the poor.
 “ Our middling class are very little raised above the poor. I
 “ would transfer the burden of maintaining the poor *from those*
 “ *who are equally poor to those who have property.*”—Vol. ii.,
 “ pp. 11, 12.

Mr JOHN GRANT, Session-Clerk, Rosemarkie.

“ *I believe that many of those not on the roll, are just as badly off*
 “ *as those on the roll.* I don’t think parties receive more than
 “ 3s. a-year from the mortifications in Fortrose. There are 559
 “ persons in Fortrose. There are 49 on the poor’s roll. I should
 “ think the population of Rosemarkie is about 350 ; the number
 “ of paupers, 39.”—Vol. ii. p. 14.

This, it will be observed, gives eighty-eight *paupers*
 in this unassessed district, for a population of nine
 hundred and nine, *i.e.* more than nine per cent. ; and
 we have the distinct evidence, both of the minister and

session-clerk, that many of the *destitute poor* not on the roll are in as great misery as the paupers. Now, it will be remembered, that in Berwickshire—long and fully assessed, and where there is so much less destitution—the paupers do not amount to five per cent. of the population; and we know, from the absence of mendicity, that they approach much nearer to the whole number of destitute poor in Berwickshire than in Ross-shire. Yet some of the Ross-shire witnesses lay it down as an established principle, that, wherever there are assessments, the number of poor is much greater than where there are none. This is another example of the gross inaccuracies in matters of fact, which have been so much relied on in defence of the system now existing in Scotland.

I rejoice to observe, however, that most of the clergymen and medical men, and several of the proprietors, examined as to the Highland districts, recommend—as in many of the preceding extracts—the introduction of assessments for the support of the impotent poor; although some of them express apprehensions in regard to their effects, which are easily understood from what has been stated above, and which experience entitles us to set aside as quite visionary—at least, under a management of even ordinary prudence. For example, the Rev. J. Pearson, at Kilmeny, in Islay, says, “The
“certainty of a provision for old age might encourage
“the indulgence of a feeling which would cause them
“to throw themselves a burden on that provision.” But when asked, Is it common for people when young to lay by for old age in your parish? he answers—“They are not much in the way of doing
“that; but those who have been most regular in their
“conduct, are those who have been the least burden.”

“ Are there many labourers in your parish who have laid by a provision for old age ? ” “ I do not think there are many.”

“ Those who have not been able to lay by, when they become unable for work, must subsist by begging from door to door ? ” “ They must.”

“ *Notwithstanding that you have no provision but begging, you do not find that many have saved for old age ?* ” “ No.”—Vol. i. p. 752.

The slightest reflection on this point, however, must shew any reasonable man, that one condition by which the maintenance or failure of such provident habits is necessarily determined, is simply, the state of the population, and the proportion which the supply of labour bears to the demand. The people, says one of the Highland ministers (Mr Gibson of Avoch), “ are well behaved, and of sober habits ; but very few of them make provision for sickness or old age ; *they have not the means to do so,*” *i. e.* their numbers are greater than the means of subsistence and demand for labour in the country enable to do so. Thus it appears, from the examination of these, and of all other facts connected with poverty and destitution, that the fundamental question, which it is in vain to attempt to evade, is simply—Under what system is population most effectually restrained?—on which question we have, in the evidence before us, perfectly satisfactory information, but reserve it for future consideration, as more closely connected with the management of the able-bodied poor.

Again, some of the usual objections are thus stated :

JOHN MACKENZIE, Esq., M.D., Kinellan.

“ The poor are maintained *entirely by their poor neighbours, who are almost as poor as themselves.* Their food is almost

“ entirely potatoes ; oatmeal is a kind of luxury, which they have
 “ not for a great part of the year. They would be thought very
 “ well off, indeed, if they had oatmeal constantly. I do not think
 “ any change in the present system would be beneficial to the
 “ poor ; though they are neither well fed, nor well lodged, nor
 “ well clothed, yet they never want for food, lodging, or clothing.
 “ They are looked on kindly ; whereas, if there were an assess-
 “ ment, they would be looked on as a nuisance ; they might be
 “ better off, but the kindly feeling would not continue. This
 “ applies to country parishes, but it is different as to towns ;
 “ there is very little of the kindly feeling in towns.

“ If it were possible, by making a decent provision for the poor,
 “ to prevent begging, it would not make any alteration, in my
 “ opinion, as to the result of an assessment ; because I should
 “ feel it more than what I give at present to beggars, though I
 “ give more now than I would if there were an assessment. It is
 “ a difficult question to answer—Whether a society, where there
 “ is no begging, is in a healthier state than where it exists ? It
 “ depends on the kind of begging. I do not consider what I have
 “ described to be the same as common begging, because I know
 “ those who come to me. It would make all the difference in the
 “ world if beggars were confined to their own parishes. I do not
 “ think that the begging I have described produces a more inju-
 “ rious effect on character than receiving a decent legal provision.
 “ *I do not consider it fair that non-resident heritors should escape*
 “ *altogether the burden of maintaining the poor of their own pa-*
 “ *rices.*”—Vol. ii. p. 35-36.

Now, when Dr Mackenzie states that the poor are supported “ entirely by their poor neighbours, almost
 “ as poor as themselves—that oatmeal is a luxury to
 “ them—and that he does not think it fair that non-
 “ resident heritors should escape altogether the burden
 “ of maintaining the poor on their own estates”—and,
 at the same time, admits their great number,—he assigns what, I am sure, will be very generally re-
 garded, by disinterested men, as perfectly sufficient

reasons for imposing assessments. And although I allow that there is an essential difference between the kind of begging which he describes, and the “common” “begging” of the more populous districts ; yet, when he asserts that poor and impotent people, looked on kindly as long as they beg, will be looked on as a nuisance by their neighbours, to whom they are known, as soon as they are provided for by assessment—he asserts what is distinctly at variance, both with the experience of assessed rural districts, and with the feelings of many of the most intelligent men in the Highlands, such as those quoted above.

Farther, in answer to the opinion, or *conjecture*, that no change in the present system would be beneficial to the poor, I beg simply to adduce the following statement of *facts*, illustrating the result of a judicious restoration, for the benefit of the poor of any of those districts, of a part of the money drawn from them by the heritors.

Mr JAMES MIDDLETON, Factor for Colonel Campbell
of Possil, in Mull.

“ He is perfectly acquainted with the poor on Mr Campbell’s
“ estate, in the parish of Torosay ; and they are maintained chiefly
“ by a regular weekly allowance, which they get from Mrs Campbell.
“ They are perfectly contented with their houses, although
“ they are far from comfortable ; they have barely bedding and bed-
“ clothes. He considers the poor on this property *in an infinitely*
“ *better situation* than the poor on the neighbouring properties,
“ from Mrs Campbell giving them a weekly allowance, clothing
“ them, providing medical advice and medicines when they are
“ sick, and superintending them, and educating their children.”—
Vol. ii. p. 133.

Now, what has been here done by a single benevo-

lent proprietor, is precisely what, according to the views of the Commissioners themselves, ought to be done by the poor-law for the impotent poor in all parts of the country ; but it is quite obvious that it cannot be done anywhere, without the help of regular remittances from the heritors, such as experience has sufficiently shewn that no expedient but assessments can make uniform or certain.

A more decided *opinion* is indeed given against assessments for the impotent poor by several of the proprietors and their agents, who can hardly be regarded as disinterested judges ; but I have been unable to perceive any other grounds for that opinion, than those which I have fully considered, and answered, *by appeals to ample experience*, in the last section of these remarks. In some instances the objections to the scheme of assessments seem to me wholly inconsistent, either with one another, or with ascertained facts.

Thus Mr DAVIDSON of Tulloch says,

“ The present poor law is *amply sufficient* provision for the poor, *when taken in connection with private charity* ; and any assimilation to the poor laws of England would be injurious to the poor here. They would be worse off than at present, as it would tend to lessen the kindly feeling entertained by their richer neighbours towards them.”—Vol. ii., p. 37.

But then, being interrogated,—

“ Whether he considers the sums given by him, a resident heritor, for the relief of the poor of his parish, can be at all considered a fair measure of sums given for a similar purpose in other parishes by non-resident heritors ?” Answers,—“ I should say *not* ; because I know there are several non-resident heritors who contribute very little to the relief of the poor.—Do. do.

These are just the persons who would be reached by an assessment, and whose contributions, added to the other resources already existing, would make the poor law equally efficient in other parts of the country, as Mr Davidson has found it to be, *where aided by his own charities.*

In like manner we have the following evidence, for the most part conjectural, the facts of which are very probably quite correct, as applicable to certain parts of the Highlands, but which we have already seen to be wholly inapplicable to others, and those the most extensive districts of the country.

M. MACLAINE, Esq., of Lochbuie.

“ It would be much to the disadvantage of the poor to introduce a legal assessment into country parishes. It would do away with the charitable feeling which induces their neighbours to support them now. They are as well taken care of as they could be under a moderate assessment. No doubt the heritors of the different parishes with which he is connected *would come forward with voluntary contributions for the poor, if they saw that the present means of support were insufficient.* He never heard them refuse to do so. A legal assessment would impair the industrious habits of the poor; many would fall upon it who now support themselves; and the support now given by children to parents would cease. Any change would probably be for the worse, both as affecting the condition of the poor, and of the working-classes immediately above them. Those who at present supply the wants of the poor in the parishes with which he is connected, do it cheerfully, and he has never heard any complaints from them.”—Vol. ii., p. 129.

The Honourable R. C. Scarlett explains, that in the Highlands there are a few labourers and shepherds, and the rest of the population consists of small tenants, renting from four to ten acres of ground at a very moderate rent. Except in those years when

“ the potato crops entirely fail, they appear to me to live in *greater abundance and comfort*, after their fashion, than the labourers in the south of England.” On this, the only observation to be made is, that where this is found to be the condition of the people, a prudently regulated poor-law will hardly be applicable to them at all. But then he adds, that “ in years when a failure of potato crop visits the country, severe privations occur, and *I hardly think the whole resources of the respective districts would suffice to place the poor in a state of comfort.*”—Vol. ii., p. 407. Thus he thinks that an assessment, although unnecessary in ordinary years, would be quite inadequate in bad seasons.

The idea that the whole resources of a Highland parish are insufficient to make adequate provision, even for the *impotent poor*, “ without casting an intolerable burden on the rest of the inhabitants,” seems to have found much favour with the Commissioners,—questions to that effect having been frequently put. But when it is said that the whole resources of the country would be insufficient to place the poor in a state of comfort, it must be remembered that *a part of the resources* of the country, viz. the voluntary contributions of the *tenants* (or a part of them), and other inhabitants, without help from the landlords, are practically found to be sufficient to prevent starvation, in almost all cases. This resource, already existing, cannot be made *less* by the *addition* to it of sums of money from a quarter which at present yields, in many parts of the country, nothing at all. All the proceeds of an assessment, so far as it would affect the heritors, would be, in many places, *a clear addition to the resources by which the poor are now supported*; and, although this might not be enough to secure comfort, it would at least contribute materially to relieve misery.

It should always be remembered, that the charity of their relations and neighbours is a resource which is not denied to the poor in any part of the world. The poor among savages are supported by their friends and neighbours; and, except on occasion of famines or extraordinary accidents, few of them die of starvation. It appears that in our civilized land, where the poor are nominally under the protection of the law, the resource practically provided for them, in the extensive district now under consideration, is precisely the same. It is the same as would exist in England, if the whole poor-laws were abolished; and no doubt in that case, many persons would be found to give exactly the same advice, as to the propriety of re-establishing a poor-law, as that given by Mr Scarlett in the Highlands. “How-
 “ever tempting it may be to relieve aged individuals, in a
 “state of great destitution, by public contribution, I am
 “of *opinion*, that looking, as we must, to general results
 “on such subjects, the *mass of misery, vice, and destitu-*
 “*tion, which would be created by the poor-laws being*
 “*enforced*, would be a greater evil than the poverty and
 “destitution of such poor persons. The hand of pri-
 “vate charity would be checked,—the general capital
 “would be diminished by the tax,—less would remain
 “for the employment of the poor,—and the people
 “would not be so ready to render assistance to one
 “another.”—Vol. ii., p. 408. All these reasons may be given, or rather all these *conjectures* may be hazarded, to dissuade a government from imposing a tax for the support of the poor in any place, or under any circumstances; but when such conjectures are hazarded in regard to the application of the principle in Scotland, where, fortunately, we have an example of one district in which the poor-law (for relief of the impotent) is

enforced, and have it in our power to refer to the general results there observed,—it is only necessary to turn to the evidence regarding Berwickshire, and to call for *distinct and detailed proofs of the “mass of misery, vice, and destitution,” which have been created since the poor-laws were enforced there*,—of the hand of charity having been checked,—of the capital of the country having been diminished,—of the poor having been thrown out of employment, and their assistance to one another withdrawn. And if we find, as the extracts which I have given distinctly prove, that the condition of Berwickshire, as compared with the condition of the Highlands, is *as nearly as possible the reverse* of what that speculation supposes,—still more, if we find that in other countries, where there is an effective provision, the condition of the poor is, in general, equally good,—then I say we are fully entitled to set aside that speculation, and to reject the advice founded on it, as counselling us to perpetuate barbarism; when it is our duty, dictated by religion, confirmed by reason and experience, and *expressly enjoined by law*, to make such legal provision for the impotent poor, as has been shewn, by the history of many other nations, to be not only the usual attendant, but the “surest test of civilization.”

There are two points insisted on by several of the witnesses in the Highlands, which are truly matters of detail, and on which I do not presume, nor think it necessary, in arguing the general principle, to give an opinion: *First*, That in laying an assessment on the Highlands, all the smaller tenants included in it should be allowed to pay in kind; *i. e.*, that the assessment should merely equalize and regulate the kind of relief which these people are continually giving to their poor neighbours; some arrangement for which purpose seems to be both reasonable and just. *Secondly*, That, consider-

ing the great variety in the systems of management which have been pursued by different proprietors on their estates, it is reasonable that each should be assessed only for the relief of the poor on his own property.

Thus Mr M'LEOD of M'Leod says—

“ A legal assessment for the poor would fall very unequally in many cases. Some heritors, in order to increase their rental, have divided their lands into very small portions, which they have let to persons coming from all quarters, and have thus created a great excess of population; and it appears to him hard, that those who have followed a different system, and got the population on their estates into a better condition, should be burdened with the pauperism produced by a system which others have followed out with a view to their own immediate profit. But although he would object to a general assessment, as unjust, *he would not at all object to every proprietor and his tenantry being compelled to maintain the impotent poor on his own property, so as to give security to the poor.*”—Vol. ii., p. 389.

This seems to me quite reasonable in the abstract; but whether it will practically be found possible to relieve the more prudent and judicious proprietors from the consequences of the conduct of others, is a question on which I am not qualified to pronounce; but it is important to observe, that it is a difficulty which has arisen entirely from there being no law which makes it the interest of landlords to look narrowly into the population on their property, and take measures to prevent redundancy; nor can I conceive that any other than a well regulated poor-law can have this salutary tendency.

Having taken this general view of the miseries existing among the aged and infirm poor in Scotland, and of the irregularity and inefficacy of the relief granted under the present law, and bearing in mind the concurrence of the Commissioners in the general proposition, that the

present law does not fulfil its object—that “its administration has been, of late, in several particulars, of a very defective character”—that “remedial measures” are required,—particularly that “the allowances now made to impotent paupers are too small,”—and that the remedies to be applied ought to be such as will “take out of the way a large mass of the wretchedness which at present becomes a prey to epidemic disorders, and through which such disorders are more widely diffused ;”—remembering, also, their statement, that “a completely new order of things has been created in large districts of Scotland, leading to a great increase of vice and pauperism,” and requiring an “adaptation of the poor-laws to the altered economical condition of the people ;”—we proceed to consider how far the measures proposed by the Commissioners are fitted for attaining these most desirable objects.

And, *first*, I think we are fully entitled to infer from the above review of existing evils, and these admissions of the Commissioners, that this is not a case to be met by timid or inefficient measures. The obligations of religion, the feelings of humanity, the interests and credit of the country, all demand that the evils should be fairly met, and temperately but firmly corrected. It is quite true, that various interests must be considered—that charity may be abused—that safeguards and checks are required—and that a reasonable time must be allowed, for the required “adaptation of the poor-laws to the altered economical condition of the country,” to be effected. But it is equally certain, that the interested parties, and the higher ranks generally, in Scotland, are quite alive to the necessity of adequate checks on any profuse ex-

penditure. No one can attend to the history of Scotch legislation on this subject, or to the statements universally made throughout the evidence of the Commissioners, by the official men, or to the usual bearing of the kirk-sessions and managers towards the poor, without being thoroughly convinced that, in all questions concerning the management of the poor, the interests of the higher ranks are in perfectly safe keeping. What is most important is to provide for the interests of the poor themselves;—to see that the power by which the improvements, allowed to be necessary, are to be effected, shall not be intrusted to persons by whom the object in view may be practically frustrated, and the changes, necessary for attaining it, made nugatory and inefficient.

Now, let us consider what reason we have for thinking, that the power in question can be safely or beneficially intrusted to the existing managers of the poor in Scotland.

We must always remember that all the neglect of the poor, and all the evils consequent on that neglect, which have been described, have taken place under the administration of those authorities—clergymen, elders, and appointed managers of the poor;—men whose individual character is irreproachable, and who have been hitherto invested with nearly irresponsible power in this matter. It has been represented to the public, even lately, since these inquiries began, that “the interests of the poor cannot be in better hands; that they are discreet and worthy men, *well acquainted with the wants of the poor, and anxious to relieve them;*” and that they have never neglected their duty. I can have no wish to hurt the feelings of any of these persons, by the exposure of the evils which

have resulted, and still result, from their system of management; but in looking forward to the remedy which is allowed to be requisite, it is impossible to avoid drawing the inference from these facts, that, if the above had been a fair description of their conduct, in most parts of the country, such evils could never have existed; and likewise impossible to avoid the question, what security can we have, that, under the same management, the same consequences will not recur? It is impossible to shut our eyes to the fact, that, under such management in time past, the law has been so much perverted and altered from its original intention (always in favour of the interests of the rate-payers, and against the poor), as to justify the observation which has been repeatedly made, on comparison of the original statutes of England and Scotland, that the difference between the two countries in regard to the aged and infirm poor is simply this, that the law is obeyed in the one, and disobeyed in the other.

It must be remembered, also, that many of these administrators of the law have been so far from admitting, even to this day, any defect in the system in Scotland, that they formed themselves, only three years ago, into an association "for *opposing any official inquiry* into the management of the poor in Scotland;" alleging that it was unreasonable and absurd to "tamper with the Scottish Poor-laws," which were known by experience to "*work so well*, and produce "the happiest effects on society."

Again, we must always expect that a very large and influential part of the middle and upper ranks of society in this country (as, I presume, in all others) will take no farther interest in this question, than to inquire into the cost of the poor; and will be always most ready

to support those men and those measures which are *the most economical*. Nor can we overlook the consideration, that several of those persons, to whose judgment the middle ranks of society in Scotland habitually trust, have unfortunately taken up the speculative idea, that a legal provision for the poor creates more misery than it relieves; and adhere to that idea in face of the clearest evidence, on a large scale, that, in regard to the essential attributes of health, comfort, sobriety, industry, and independence, the social condition of the English poor, who have enjoyed such a provision for centuries, is much superior to that of the poor in similar districts in Scotland, who have no such protection. I have the highest respect for the character and intentions of the gentlemen to whom I allude; but I cannot hesitate to aver my conviction of two things,—*first*, That they are quite mistaken; and, *secondly*, That they will never see their mistake. And it seems to me equally certain, that while this idea still actuates them, and those of the administrators of the law whom they can influence,—and while these administrators of the law are allowed to be judges, *without appeal*, of the amount of relief to be given,—the various evils which we have traced to the irregular and imperfect relief of destitution, must necessarily continue to recur. I look on all the evils which have been described, *e. g.* as to the treatment of widows and orphans, and of lunatics, as natural results of the false and fatal maxim, that “the more you do
 “for the poor, the more you will contribute to their
 “increase;” working on the minds of officials, to make them regard economy as the only duty incumbent on them, and on the minds of the higher administrators of the law, to make them shut their eyes to the sufferings of the poor. It cannot be expected that men

whose minds have been impressed with that maxim, will act on the nearly opposite principle (of course requiring safe-guards and cautions, but which is the true and sound general principle of awarding relief),—"The poor shall never cease out of the land; *therefore thou shalt open wide thy hand to thy poor brother,*"—with that uniformity over the country which is requisite for the public interests.

Thus the interested motives of many, the negligence of others, the prejudices and speculative errors of others, will long, perhaps indefinitely, present such an obstacle to the execution of the law, in the manner which the Commissioners themselves desire, for the benefit of the aged and disabled poor, the widows and orphans, as can only be overcome by the interposition of legal authority.

The continual reference, in the evidence of the existing official authorities, to the great object of maintaining the *independence* of the poor; the ready excuse which this principle affords for harshness, and the tried experience of the cruelties (abundantly exemplified in the preceding extracts) which have been, and still are, continually committed and justified under its authority; are, of themselves, sufficient to indicate what is the greatest danger to be kept in view in devising any improvements in the system; viz., that the wise and benevolent institutions of the Legislature will be continually thwarted in future, as they have been heretofore, by the administrators of the law.

From the tenor, both of questions and answers, in many parts of this evidence, it is obvious that Independence has been regarded as a peculiarly Scottish virtue; and a virtue pertaining to old Scotland, gradually wearing out in the progress of time, but which

it is especially the duty of the guardians of the poor to cherish and maintain. I confess, I trust very little to any such representations. We know that in all ages, and in all countries, there are many "*laudatores temporis acti*," who take pleasure in accumulating evidence that "*Terra nunc malos homines educat atque pusillos*." But the progress of human society continually belies their assertions; and certainly they are not the men to whom the practical administration of measures of reform and improvement, *admitted to be requisite*, can be safely or beneficially intrusted. We know that, in Scotland, one hundred and fifty years ago, so far from there having been any peculiar spirit of independence, one-fifth of the population are represented as having been mendicants. On the other hand, some of the extracts, which I shall presently make from evidence laid before the Commissioners, shew very distinctly that the virtue of independence is strikingly exemplified, under very trying circumstances, and on a large scale, by many of the English poor of the present day. Mr George Wilson, Vice-President of the Destitute Sick Society in Edinburgh, tells the Commissioners also, that "The spirit of independence exists among the poor of Edinburgh to a very great extent—to an extent that would be refreshing to any one that witnessed it;"—and Mr Ferguson, Inspector of the Unemployed on the Relief List at Glasgow, tells them, that "There is a great disposition among the Scottish workmen to give value for what they get in the shape of relief;" and "that, if there were any outlet by which the people could give a return for relief, that would be the best way to treat the Scottish people, as they have ever been independent and industrious." These representations, I believe, from all that I have seen of the poor in Scot-

land, to be strictly correct, as applicable to the great majority of those who have been brought up in circumstances of tolerable comfort, and on whom, therefore, the moral and religious education which is so general in Scotland, has a fair opportunity of producing its full effect. But we cannot expect that the spirit of independence should be strong among people whose chief reliance, during childhood and youth, has been on "common begging," which we have found to be the case with so many of the Scotch poor. The virtue of independence is most easily practised, and will therefore be most frequently found, in a country not yet peopled up to its resources, and when employment is in general easily obtained ; and this explains its greater frequency in Scotland in the early part of last century than in the present. It gave way among the Scotch people when the civil wars of the seventeenth century had materially interfered with the application of capital to the employment of labourers ; and it gives way among them again, wherever population is redundant, employment rare, and destitution frequent. Mr Forrest at Stirling (an *unassessed* town), describes, in a few words, the gradual deterioration, in regard to this and other good qualities, of a population "formerly noted for sobriety and industry," as they are gradually impoverished by the progress of population and deficiency of relief.

" He thinks the poor are getting more filthy in their habits, *and*
 " *more improvident* ; and that they are in a worse state generally,
 " than when he first knew them. The number of destitute per-
 " sons has been yearly increasing. A good many Irish come here,
 " and soon become paupers ; a number come from country places,
 " when their occupations there have failed them" (the influx, in

both cases, being from *unassessed* districts); “and, generally, “*there is now less reluctance in making demands for public assistance.*”—Vol. iii., p. 210.

The remedy is pointed out, equally simply, and as the result of *experience*, by one of the witnesses in Berwickshire:—

“It is their practice to grant relief to able-bodied men *in difficulty*; this is to prevent them from falling into poverty. By “the way in which it is applied, it prevents people verging on “poverty from sinking, and coming on the permanent poor’s “roll.”—(Mr T. Trotter, Session-Clerk, Eyemouth.)—Vol. iii., p. 721.

The true and fundamental principle affecting this and all other questions regarding the poor, is simply this: That the mode of management which is found, *by experience*, to favour most distinctly the moral and prudential checks on excessive population, is that which promotes this virtue of independence, as well as all others, and is morally and politically the most expedient. But, without enlarging on that topic at present, I may adduce the following as an expression of opinion on this subject, which, I cannot help thinking, to perfectly disinterested and unprejudiced inquirers, must appear quite reasonable and practically judicious.

JOHN GLADSTONE, Esq. of Fasque.

“Witness is of opinion that the poor cannot be properly supported without an assessment. Voluntary contributions are “precarious, and cannot be depended upon. One man gives, and “another withholds; and the burden is not imposed equally. The “state of society requires that the poor, who have hitherto been “indifferently provided for in this country, should be better sup-

“ported. The poor in England, where he has resided much, are like princes, in comparison with the poor in Scotland. The spirit of independence which has been said to prevail in Scotland is of great value, but *it must yield to distress*; and when people fall into distress they must be supported; and it is only by an assessment that this can be done with good and equal effect.”—Vol. ii., p. 64.

But it is quite obvious that these sentiments are nearly the reverse of those which have generally actuated heritors and kirk-sessions, and managers of the poor, in the greater part of Scotland.

Common sense teaches, that to deny a man relief, on the ground of maintaining his *independence*, when we are aware that he has no other resource but *begging*, is a palpable absurdity; yet we have seen, that, in the perfect knowledge of this fact, such relief as may supersede the necessity of begging is continually denied, not partially or occasionally, but generally and systematically, to the aged and infirm in almost every part of Scotland; and the reason for the smallness of the allowances equally generally given, is, that the object is to maintain the independence of the poor. From this it seems to me quite impossible to resist the inference, that an ulterior reason, different from that assigned, really guides the decisions of these functionaries. What that ulterior reason is, it is easy indeed to conjecture, but unnecessary to inquire. Whatever it be, we must expect that it will continue to influence the same persons; and while it does so, it is obvious that it were quite in vain to expect them to adopt any particular line of conduct for the good of the poor, merely because it can be shewn, to the satisfaction of most intelligent men, that it is reasonable and right, and for the public interests, that they should do so.

I have stated, as a reason for distrusting the present administrators of the Poor Law in Scotland, that they not only grant inadequate, and in many cases, even in large districts of the country, practically illusory relief,—“proportioned, not to the necessities of the pauper, “but to the funds which they may happen to have in “hand,” and which they do not choose to increase by the exercise of the powers confided to them by law for that purpose—but have in various instances altered and perverted the law itself, and that always in such a way as to render it less burdensome on themselves and their constituents, and less effectual for the relief of the poor; and it may be thought necessary to give a little farther evidence on this point. I do not enter on the disputed question, how the time of settlement came to be altered from seven to three years; but I beg it may be remembered, that the law which these gentlemen are appointed to administer is, in all parts of the country, a law for providing for the poor such sustentation as they may, “*of their own consent*, be willing to accept, and live unbeggand.” I need not recur to the evidence, contained in almost every one of the foregoing extracts, to shew how far the actual practice has been either from the spirit or letter of this law. I need not repeat what has been proved of the systematic violation of the law, *secretly*, and therefore we must presume *knowingly*, committed by the parochial authorities, by whom so many lunatics were sent to Arran. But I request attention to the manner in which the law regarding settlement has been practically altered or evaded. It appears, that while the law requires only “haunting and resorting,” without being legally chargeable, for three years, as establishing settlement in any parish, proofs of industrial residence have been very

frequently demanded; and that while the settlement was doubtful, a very common practice has been, as stated by the Commissioners, "although there might be no doubt of the destitution, to refuse all relief." In these circumstances, when application has been made to the native parishes of destitute and disabled persons, it has been, in a great part of the country, the usual practice, either, as Dr M'Leod states, to answer, as if by a printed form, that they have no funds; or, as the Commissioners themselves state, to "return no answer to such letters."* Nay, in some parts of the Highlands, it has been held by the parochial authorities, that a residence of *six weeks* in a parish gives a right to relief; from which, of course, it follows, that they are absolved from all responsibility in regard to any of their natives who may have lived six weeks in any parish in the low country.†

Another fact, illustrating the spirit in which the law is administered, at least in some parts of the country, is, that pains are habitually taken to *conceal* from the destitute poor the existence of a law entitling them to claim relief.

Farther, it appears to be well ascertained, that the

* The following evidence is another example in confirmation of these statements.

Rev. Dr GRANT, Petty, Inverness.

"Have any demands been made on your parish for people belonging to it, who have gone elsewhere?" "Very rarely. I do not recollect having ever paid anything. There have been demands made, *but we thought it not worth our while to answer them.*"

"Did you think them not well founded?" "*They might be, but they were not urged.*"—Vol. ii. p. 456.

† The following is the evidence of Mr R. ROSE, Session-Clerk of the parish of Fearn (Ross-shire.)

"People must reside six weeks in the parish to entitle them to relief; this is the custom in Fearn. I do not know what is the general law on this point."—Vol. iii., p. 59.

peculiarity of the Scotch practice, to refuse relief to the able-bodied unemployed poor,—which is regarded by the Commissioners, and by many others, as the fundamental difference between the Scotch and English law,—has been, in like manner, the work of the administrators (although at a period now distant), *innovating upon the original intention of the law*. The words of the original statute, providing relief for all “poor and “impotent folk,” had certainly been at one time so interpreted, as to include *both* those who were impotent (*i. e.*, disabled by age or infirmity), and those who were poor, or destitute from other causes. There is a subsequent statute unequivocally admitting the right of relief in the able-bodied, as well as the impotent poor; and it seems to have been by the administrators of the law only, that the words of the former were so restricted in their meaning, as to be held applicable to those only who were, *at one and the same time*, poor and impotent (*i. e.*, destitute and disabled.) The following evidence on this point appears to be decisive; and the Commissioners seem virtually to admit it by their expression, “that there may be provisions in some of the statutes “not altogether in accordance with the principle,” which they regard as honourably characteristic of the Scotch Poor Laws, that of denying all right of relief to the able-bodied poor.—See Report, p. 45.

A. ALISON, Esq., Sheriff of Lanarkshire.

“I think the principal abuses in the Scottish Poor Law are owing “to the Act 1579 not being adequately carried out. Had it been “so, there would have been little cause for change. There is a “passage in the act 1672, cap. 18, providing that poor persons “of age and capacity to work, might be received as apprentices “or servants, by heritors or inhabitants in each parish. This “clause is as follows :—‘And, likewise, that *such of the said poor*

“ ‘ persons as are of age and capacity to work, be first applied to
 “ ‘ the heritors and inhabitants of each parish, that if they will
 “ ‘ accept of any of them to become their apprentices or servants,
 “ ‘ they may receive them upon their obligation to *entertain and*
 “ ‘ *set to work the said poor persons*, and relieve the paroch of
 “ ‘ them ; for which cause they shall have the benefit of their work
 “ ‘ until they attain the age of 30 years, conform to the act of the
 “ ‘ twenty-two Parliament of King James the Sixth ; and the *rest*
 “ ‘ of the *said poor persons be sent to the correction-houses*, for
 “ ‘ whose entertainment the saids heritors shall cause contribu-
 “ ‘ tions, and appoint a quarter’s allowance to be sent along with
 “ ‘ them, with clothes upon them to cover their nakedness ; and
 “ ‘ the said allowance to be paid quarterly thereafter, by way of
 “ ‘ advance.’ ”—Vol. i., p. 471.

Thus it appears, that, whether we look to the gradual alteration of the law, which has taken place under their management,—to the very irregular, and, in large districts of the country, manifestly illusory execution of the law admitted to exist,—or to the principles on which they still profess to act in its administration,—we see the strongest reasons for distrusting the capacity of the present administrators of the Poor Law, for carrying into effect the improvements, admitted to be requisite, in the legal relief of those whose right to such relief is now recognised in Scotland ; and for concluding, that, if the execution of the law is left in their hands, it should at least be effectually aided and controlled by more competent, less prejudiced, and less interested persons.

This being so, I think any one who feels an interest in the subject, and is anxious that the improvements desired by the Commissioners themselves should be fairly carried into effect, must feel both surprise and regret, that they should not only have recommended no material change in the persons now intrusted with the

execution of the law, but have advised that the only legal check on their mal-administration,—that which consists in the tedious and expensive, and, therefore, generally inaccessible, process by an appeal to the Court of Session—should be withdrawn; and that our sole reliance for a better administration of the law in future should be on “the influence of reason and good feeling, aided by public opinion.”

Many respectable witnesses, as the Commissioners admit, expressed a decided opinion in favour of the simple and effectual remedy against mal-administration of the existing law, by restoring to the Sheriff Courts that power of adjudicating between the dispensers and the claimants of relief, which they undoubtedly (although very rarely) exercised before 1821, when the Court of Session, by a majority, decided against its continuance. The reasons given by the Commissioners for denying any right of appeal to the Sheriff Courts are few and simple. *First*, they say that different witnesses, when examined by them, had given very discordant statements, as to the average sum required for the aliment of an impotent person. This they ascribe to varieties of local circumstances; and they infer, that the only proper court to award the requisite aliment is a local authority. But the different statements of these witnesses (several of them in *the same locality*) have, in general, obviously arisen from their having been questioned on a point which they, or some of them, had not duly considered. The same witnesses, I have no doubt, if directed to consult on the subject, would have agreed on an answer in a very short time. And, certainly, if the variety of answers shews, as the Commissioners state, that little reliance can be placed on the opinion of any one person as to the quantum of aliment,

the extraordinary variety of practice by the present administrators of the law in different parts of Scotland—(3s. a-year being given in one parish to a case which would have L.6 a-year in another)—must be held as decisive proof that no reliance can be placed on the local authorities on this point. In fact, it is just because the local authorities have decided it so variously, and, in the judgment of the Commissioners themselves, *generally so ill*, that some means of “securing due attention, on the part of the parochial managers, to the wants of the poor,” are admitted by the Commissioners to be required.

In England there is a remarkable uniformity in the allowances granted to the out-door poor in almost all parts of the country ; and the amount is very generally from twice to three times that granted in similar cases in Edinburgh and Glasgow. These allowances were fixed in England at a time when the law allowed of a ready appeal to magistrates from parochial boards, when paupers were dissatisfied. I have always thought it somewhat unfortunate, that this question should come under discussion in Scotland so soon after the power of magistrates, in regard to the allowances of paupers, had been taken from them in England by the Poor Law Amendment Act. And accordingly, the *second* reason stated by the Commissioners on this subject, is the example of England. On this point they quote, with approbation, the “striking remark” contained in the Report of the Poor Law Commissioners for 1834: “A more dangerous instrument cannot be conceived than a public officer, impelled by benevolent sympathies, armed with power from which there is no appeal, and misapprehending the consequences of its exercise.”—(Report, p. 117.) But, with all deference to

the opinion of those Commissioners, I will assert, that the evidence now made public in Scotland shews what is a more dangerous instrument than this;—a public officer, in the pride of half-knowledge, thoroughly impressed with a false theory, that the more you do for the poor, the more you contribute to their increase, and taught to believe that all “sympathies must give way to general principles,”—armed with power from which there is no appeal, and which he is at liberty to exercise in favour of his own pecuniary interests and those of his friends,—responsible only to a constituency which will ask no questions about the *condition* of the poor under his charge, but anxiously inquire about their *cost*, and whose approbation of his services will always be in the inverse ratio of their own expenditure. If we take a little pains to trace facts to their causes, we shall find, in the evidence already quoted, abundant proof of the injury which has been done to the comforts, to the health and morals of the poor in Scotland, and to the general character and happiness of the country, by such “dangerous instruments of power.” In saying this, of course, I do not mean to accuse them of directly inflicting all these injuries on their fellow-subjects, nor of any malevolent intentions towards the sufferers, any more than the Poor Law Commissioners in England accused the English magistrates of such intentions. I accuse them only of a grievous error of judgment, by which they have long obstructed the intentions of the Legislature for the mitigation of the sufferings of the poor in Scotland; and which error has so strong foundations, and so wide extent, that firm and effective measures are requisite for applying to it that correction which the Commissioners themselves desire. I may add, that although it is well known that this

power of magistrates in England was formerly much abused, and that restrictions upon it (whether complete abolition or not, is much more doubtful) were required, I will assert with much confidence, that the fault lay, not in the existence of the right of appeal, but in the appeal having been allowed to an ill-constituted court; the unpaid magistracy in England being a very inferior tribunal, for the settlement of any such questions, to the Sheriff Courts of Scotland. I maintain, farther, that it was not in the allowances to the impotent out-door poor that the abuse existed in England, and that very little change—in fact, in some instances, an increase in the allowances to that class, followed the Amendment Act. So far as the impotent poor are concerned, therefore, the admitted necessity for restriction in the former power of the magistrates in England proves nothing in favour of the opinion of the Commissioners.

Again, the Commissioners state, and refer to Mr Senior as their authority, that the Canton of Berne is the only other country in which, “so far as they know, any power of appeal exists from the local authorities, in regard to the amount of allowances;” and that there, “the state of pauperism is described as being in the highest degree painful.” But in this I am convinced there is some misapprehension. I am quite aware of the abuses—(very similar to those which formerly prevailed in the south of England)—in the administration of the Poor Law in the Canton of Berne; but I have been unable to find any evidence that it has been ascribed, either by Mr Senior or any one else, to the circumstance of “appeals, in regard to the amount of allowances,” having been allowed from the local authorities. The abuses are ascribed, in the official report made by the Government of Berne to the British am-

bassador, to various causes ; partly to the principle of the law itself, which they (erroneously, as I believe) at that time considered faulty ; partly to the negligence or ignorance “ des administrateurs, parce qu'ils negligent des ameliorations, qu'ils distribuent les secours sans discernment—sans examiner la veritable situation des pauvres,” &c. ; partly to the local authorities being too numerous, each charged with a small number of poor, so that classification and economical arrangements are impossible ; and partly, also, to impolitic restrictions on the free circulation of labour. Mr Senior, in his commentary on this report, states generally, that there has been in that Canton an obvious neglect of the sound principle, that the situation of a pauper should be rendered less eligible than that of an independent labourer ; that there are no restrictions on the marriage of paupers as in some other countries ; and that there is a want of any central superintendence.—(See Preface to Foreign Appendix to Report of the Poor Law Commissioners in 1834 ; p. 33 and 37.) But I find no mention of appeals from the local authorities, in regard to the amount of allowances, as a cause of the abuses,—which are indeed quite sufficiently explained without reference to that cause.

Neither are the Commissioners correct in the statement, that in no other country are appeals from the local authorities, as to the amount of allowances, permitted. I have already quoted the evidence *given before themselves*, of the Rev. F. Fraser of Fortrose, who resided six years at New Brunswick, and says that appeals, on *that precise point*, are permitted to the county magistrates there, and that the system worked *very well* (*supra*, p. 122). And although I cannot assert positively that appeals, as to the *amount of allowances*, are allowed in other countries abroad, yet

it is quite certain, that in all those countries where a *right of relief* is granted to all the inhabitants, the usual practice is to allow of appeals from the decisions of the local authorities, to higher tribunals ; * and indeed, if it were not for such appeals, the penalties which are annexed to the non-execution of the laws in those countries, for the relief of the poor, could not take effect, and the laws could not be thereby carried into effect with that strictness which is generally admitted to be the practice. And I beg it may be remembered, that of all those countries, according to Mr Senior's own statement, the Canton of Berne is the only one where serious abuses have resulted on the principle of compulsory relief of *all kinds* of destitution ; and that, to use his words, " in the majority of nations " that have adopted that principle, the *existing system* " *appears to work well.*"—*Preface to Foreign Appendix*, &c., p. 37.

Again, when the Commissioners quote the expression of the state of pauperism in the Canton of Berne, even when these acknowledged abuses existed, " being in the " *highest degree painful*," I take the liberty of saying that they quote a very exaggerated statement. It appears from the official replies to the queries of the British ambassador, that the whole number (including dependents) who had public relief in the year 1828 (to which the reports relate) was less than 20,000, in a population of above 321,000,—*i. e.* 6.2 per cent. of the population,—almost exactly the same as the proportion of paupers on the rolls in the city of Edinburgh, and fully *ten per cent.*

* See, *e. g.*, Mr Laing's account of the practice at Berlin, quoted in my *Observations on the Epidemic Fever*, page 50 ; likewise Reports on the German practice generally, quoted in Reply to Dr Chalmers, p. 15.

less than the number of destitute poor there. And as to the condition of the people in that "painful state of pauperism," I can speak with some confidence, for I happen to know the Canton of Berne pretty well, and to have made some observations and inquiries on the state of the poor there, and particularly in the Emmenthal, which is described as the most pauperised district; and I am certain that a traveller may traverse that canton from end to end, without witnessing as many painful scenes of misery and destitution as he may see in a single forenoon in Edinburgh or Glasgow, or in a single parish of some of the Highland districts.

With these explanations I am willing to leave it to the reader to judge, whether any sufficient reasons have been stated by the Commissioners for setting aside those which I have given above, for thinking, that the local parochial authorities in Scotland should no longer be allowed to exercise, without appeal, that power in regard to the allowance to the poor, which they have confessedly abused; and abused always, it is to be remembered, in one way, in favour of their own immediate pecuniary interests, and against those of the poor. I quoted on this subject the following opinion formerly, and having seen no answer to it, shall take the liberty of quoting it again:—

"When the principle is once understood, which lies at the bottom of all sound legislation on this subject,—that the claims of the poor are not of the nature of a petition to be admitted to the benefits of a voluntary donation, but of a legal right, which the destitute and impotent poor, in a complex state of civilized society, every where have to a reasonable support from the more opulent and fortunate classes of society, who have been enriched or maintained by their labours, it becomes sufficiently evident, that the duty of determining between the applicants for

“ this relief, and the persons intrusted with its distribution, must
 “ not be left to the final adjudication of the parties who are to be
 “ burdened with the assessment. To do this is to do nothing less
 “ than to intrust one party in a law-suit with the exclusive right
 “ of judging of his opponent’s case,—a principle universally re-
 “ pudiated by the laws and practices of all civilized nations.

“ Without ascribing to the members of the kirk-sessions indi-
 “ vidual inhumanity, and admitting that many of them are men
 “ of the highest worth and benevolence, sufficient evidence exists,
 “ from the state of the poor in Scotland, to shew that the admini-
 “ stration of the law has been intrusted, without the power of a
 “ practical review, to a body who, however respectable as indivi-
 “ duals, *are not, in their collective capacity, capable of doing justice*
 “ *in the matter.*”—Principles of Population, by Archibald Alison,
 Esq., vol. ii., pp. 229, 232.

But it is right to admit that the Commissioners propose a measure which they think will gradually bring all the parishes in Scotland into that “satisfactory condition” in which “the poor are adequately provided for;” *i. e.* bringing public opinion to bear on the subject, by means of a Central Board of Supervision, which they recommend to be established in Edinburgh, “on some such footing as the present Prison Board, all the members to be *unpaid* ;” to which reports are to be made, at stated periods, from every parish in Scotland, and which is to present annually a report to the Secretary of State. They wish this Board to have “full power to require the Parochial Boards to furnish them with every information, in regard to the management of the poor in their respective parishes,” but “no power of interfering with the management of the Parochial Boards, except by representation or advice.” They propose that every Parochial Board should be bound, when required by this Board of Supervision, to make out classified lists of their

paupers and occasional poor, and also lists of the persons who have been claimed and been refused relief, with the grounds of claim and the reasons of refusal; also statements of the provision made for the poor, and the mode of raising it, by legal assessment or otherwise.—P. 19.

It cannot be doubted that the proposal of forming such a Board is a considerable step towards the requisite improvements; indeed, I stated long ago that the establishment of some central authority, at least for a time, seemed essential to a fixed and uniform plan of improvement. And if such a Board were composed (at least in part) of *paid* public officers, responsible for the activity and uniformity of their proceedings, and were armed with powers to enforce the execution of the law, I am ready to admit that it might supersede, at least for a time, the jurisdiction which I have said ought to be vested in the sheriffs; and might be trusted as the proper instrument for securing that “adequate provision for the impotent poor,” which the Commissioners wish to introduce into all parts of Scotland. But when it is expressly said that this Board is intended only as a means of “gradually leading the parochial managers, by the influence of reason and good feeling, aided by public opinion, to a right exercise of the powers with which they are invested;” and when, accordingly, its members are to be unpaid, and to possess no power over the parochial managers except that of representation and advice, the question comes to be—Why should the execution of the law for the relief of the poor be entrusted only to the influence of good feeling, and of public opinion, thus brought to bear upon it? Why should it not be provided for in the same way as that of other laws, by allowing those who think

themselves aggrieved by its non-execution, to appeal to an accessible court of law, by which it can be enforced? And on this question I beg to submit the following observations :—

1. Although no one can entertain a doubt of the great power of public opinion in this country, or of its being, on the whole (although not without remarkable exceptions), rightly applied, especially to the enforcement of general principles, previously established,—yet it is by no means to be depended on, either as a faithful expositor of matters of fact, or as a security for the constant and uniform regulation of details, in any department of public affairs ; simply because it is a power which is known to act, in individual cases, with extreme irregularity, often requiring great efforts to bring it into action, and, when excited, sometimes far exceeding the bounds either of law or reason. What would be thought of the proposal to trust the regular and sufficient payment of the army or navy, or of any portion of them, to the heads of their departments, or to the commanding officers of ships or regiments, and leave these functionaries to be guided solely by public opinion? Yet it has been justly observed, that a fixed decent provision for the poor in all parts of a country is an object of equal public importance as the maintenance of an armed force. Would it be thought wise to intrust to “ the influence of reason and good feeling, aided by “ public opinion,” the execution of any of those laws by which the property of the rich is secured against the depredations of the poor and needy? It will not be alleged that the public opinion of the lower and more numerous ranks is sufficient security on this point. Why, then, should that of the higher ranks be thought a sufficient security for the lives and comforts

of the poor? Any one who attends to the subject may observe, that the public opinion of the poor is, in general, except during periods of strong political excitement, more indulgent towards the rich, than that of the rich towards the poor.

2. Public opinion in Scotland (although certainly improving) is as yet much divided on this subject. I believe it to be true that, in England, at this moment, it is by the power of public opinion only, that the general rate of allowances to the aged and disabled poor is kept up; but then, that is an opinion formed and established in the minds of the people by the habitual practice of ages; and it remains to be seen whether it will continue to act beneficially in all parts of the country, if no power of appeal as to allowances, from the Boards of Guardians, is permitted. But in Scotland, although the Commissioners have expressed a decided opinion in favour of adequate allowances, yet it need not be said, after the evidence already quoted, that there is no such uniformity of opinion; and that, in many parts of the country, the most general opinion among the higher ranks is opposed to that of the Commissioners themselves. They say, that, in many parishes in Scotland (I would say *some*), the poor are adequately provided for,—that many have been brought into this satisfactory condition without external interference; and that “they can see no reason why *the same laws* should not “produce the same effect in other places.”—(P. 18.) But surely, if this satisfactory condition had been really the effect of the laws (as at present interpreted), it would have been general, instead of being so very partial.

I believe, indeed, that the adequate allowances in Berwickshire are to be ascribed to public opin-

ion, extending from the adjoining districts of England; but we see, in this instance, how slowly and irregularly this power has worked. The public opinion of Berwickshire has never crossed the Lammermuir hills,—nor has the public opinion of Cumberland ever extended to Dumfries. And in general, in Scotland, the fertile districts are so completely separated from each other by tracts of heaths and mountains, that their intercourse with each other is not sufficient to secure that any improvements, depending only on good feeling, can be communicated from one to another.

It may be said, that the publication of the Reports of the Board to be found in Edinburgh, will be a sufficient security for the public opinion being so fixed on the subject, as to make the allowances adequate. Judging of the subject *a priori*, I should say that this is exceedingly doubtful. The interest really taken in the concerns of the poor is at all times confined to a limited portion of the public; and of that portion there are so many in Scotland who take an interest in it only that they may avoid what they think unnecessary expense, and so many others who are still strongly prejudiced, from theory, against adequate allowances, that I should think the much more probable result of this kind of inspection of the poor, and “representation and advice” by the Board in Edinburgh, will be a mere succession of verbal controversies, such as have been anticipated by Mr Twisleton in the following part of his dissent, and by which the patience, both of the public and of the (unpaid or amateur) Board will be soon worn out. After stating that the main reliance of the Commissioners for the supply of the deficiency, admitted to exist in the provision for the aged and infirm poor in Scotland, is “on a proposed Board of

“ Supervision, or Standing Commission of Inquiry,
 “ with ample powers of inspection, but no adminis-
 “ trative control, or direct authority,” he observes,
 “ It appears to me that the striking inadequacy of the
 “ allowances at present made to the aged and infirm
 “ poor, in a large proportion of the unassessed rural
 “ parishes in Scotland, arises, not so much from igno-
 “ rance of facts, as from want of funds ; which, again, is
 “ owing, in no small degree, to *theories* regarding the
 “ effect of any provision for the poor, even when re-
 “ stricted to the relief of the aged and infirm. And
 “ any statement which may be made annually in re-
 “ ports, tending to shew that this class of the poor are
 “ in a destitute condition, will be met by the usual an-
 “ swer, that the only cure for such evils is in the moral
 “ and religious education of the young ; and that a
 “ provision for the poor creates much of the misery
 “ which it relieves, but does not relieve all the misery
 “ which it creates.”

To this I only add, that, while the information and interest of the public at large, in the proceedings either of the proposed Board of Supervision, or of any of the Parochial Boards, must be expected to be limited, variable, and transient, the most powerful cause by which the allowances are habitually kept down, viz., the immediate pecuniary interests of the rate-payers, will always remain equally permanent and formidable. This is *explicitly admitted by the Commissioners, in regard to their proposed measure for the better management of lunatics* ; and they may be assured that protection is just as much required for the more ordinary forms of poverty and misery, as that which they seem to contemplate for the case of lunacy, in the following passage :—

“ The *cost* of board at an asylum being greater than that for
 “ which they might otherwise be maintained, affords a strong
 “ temptation to conceal their real condition ; *and it may be in-*
 “ *ferred, that, in any legislative measure* which may be brought
 “ forward, *unless a penalty be imposed for non-compliance, some*
 “ *difficulty may be found in enforcing obedience to the law.*”—
 Report, p. 31.

As to the facility of evasion of the law which the Commissioners propose, I need only observe, that it is obviously quite essential to its beneficial operation, that the Board of Supervision should have accurate lists, not only of the paupers admitted, but of the “ persons who
 “ have claimed and been refused relief in every parish
 “ in Scotland, shewing the grounds of the claim, and
 “ the reasons of the refusal ;” and that these lists of persons refused relief should be duly considered by the Board. Now, it may well be questioned whether these claims, and these grounds of refusal, will be thoroughly sifted, and compared with one another in different parts of the country, by the members of this unpaid board ; but in regard to the point, whether, in all parts of the country (*e. g.*, in the remote Highlands), such lists of applicants refused relief will be fairly and accurately kept, and regularly transmitted to a board which has “ no administrative control, or direct authority,” over them, but is merely empowered to remonstrate and advise, I humbly apprehend that there is no question whatever. Much more stringent regulations for the relief of the poor are habitually regarded as dead letter in all those districts ; and can we expect that, when all *power*—even of the Court of Session—over the local authorities is withdrawn, and when the applicants cannot possibly have the means of bringing their cases before a central court at Edinburgh, these parochial

courts will be at pains to make out lists, for their own condemnation, of the circumstances of all the applicants to whom they refuse relief?

The Commissioners speak of "the anxiety, displayed in almost every parish which they visited, to make it appear that the poor were comfortably provided for," as proof of the power of public opinion over the local authorities in Scotland. But I presume there can be no doubt, that all this anxiety on the part of the Parochial Boards had little to do with the opinion of the *public*. Its object was merely to deprecate and prevent any authoritative interference on the part of the *Commissioners* with the power of those parochial boards. The very same motive will prompt them to avoid, by all means in their power, any such representations of their conduct towards their applicants as can bring them into troublesome discussions; and when the distance of the Court of Revision, its composition, its impotence as to administrative power, the facility of concealment, and the difficulty of detection, are all considered, we can have little doubt as to the line of conduct which will be usually adopted by the parochial boards towards the Board of Revision.

3. But the fact is, that we are not left to conjecture, as to the effect of this or any other expedient for bringing public opinion to bear on the parochial courts as at present constituted. For the last four years, this whole subject—the scanty legal allowances granted, to a portion only of the poor, in Scotland, and the consequences thence resulting—have been the subject of much public discussion;—probably of more, from its novelty, than can be expected of the reports of the projected Board of Revision. The most popular periodicals have united very generally, in condemning the present prac-

tice, and I hope it may be supposed that the movement by which assessments have been directed in many districts, where there had been previously hesitation about them, has been thereby accelerated. But there has been no approach, in any other part of Scotland, to the full allowances and adequate provision for the poor which have been long characteristic of Berwickshire, and which the Commissioners seem to wish to see general.

But this is not all. Not only has public opinion declared itself as strongly as can be expected, on a subject in which a large portion of the public takes little interest, against the small allowances granted by the Parochial Boards, but there have been distinct and unequivocal declarations of the Supreme Court—the constitutional expositor of the existing law—which shew that the allowances, now very generally granted, are *illegally* small. In the “Ceres case,” it was found by the Court of Session, two years ago, that an allowance to a widow with six children, not yet able to work, of 6d. a-week for each child, with 6d. for herself, was too small, and a larger allowance was directed. For more than a year this judgment remained a dead letter in the very case in which it had been given ; and it was necessary to raise a second action before the decision was acted on, and 3d. a-week additional for each child was obtained. Everywhere else *it has remained a dead letter to this day*. In the city of Edinburgh there is not a single widow who enjoys an allowance (as proportioned to the number of her children) equal to that which Widow Duncan, at Ceres, possessed *before* the action. Yet, even *since* the action, since the official statement of the law, and the pretty general acquiescence of public opinion, no widow in Edinburgh has

had any addition to her allowance in consequence of it.

It may be said that the peculiar circumstances of the city of Edinburgh—the unusual amount of burden resting on it—the exemption of so many of the wealthy citizens—and the control exercised over the Managers of the poor by the Town Council, should be admitted as an excuse for the general rate of allowances being kept so low. But this answer does not apply to the West Church parish, where the burden of the poor-rate is remarkably light, not above 1s. 2d. a-head on the population, or hardly a third of its amount in the City of Edinburgh, while the parish is one of the wealthiest in Scotland; and a recent change in the constitution of the Board of Management has substituted for the authority of the heritors and kirk-session a numerous body of managers, selected annually by the rate-payers, and reporting annually to them. It might be thought, that in this parish the power of public opinion might be asserted; and I have no doubt that the sentiments of the great majority of the intelligent inhabitants, who have studied the subject, are favourable to much better allowances than those which are now granted. But whether it be owing to the negligence or inactivity of these persons, or the superior activity, or the numerical majority, or the sturdy prejudices of those who think differently, it is certain that the allowance to widows and orphans in that parish *are still kept lower than in the city*—so low, and distinctly illusory, as 4d. a-week for each child unable for work,—after the decision of the Supreme Court has declared more than double that allowance to be required by the law.

In every part of Edinburgh, therefore, at this moment, and particularly in that wealthy parish, the al-

lowances to widows and orphans are kept at a much lower standard than that which the Supreme Court has declared to be their *due*; the managers, I presume, flattering themselves that they are exercising on the helpless and dependent objects intrusted to their care “a wholesome vigour beyond the law.”

This example I consider as a perfect *experimentum crucis* to prove, that no reliance can be placed on the public opinion of the present generation in Scotland, as a means of enforcing such a full administration of the law as the Commissioners themselves desire, and as the evidence laid before them has shewn to be so imperiously demanded. I give the Commissioners credit for the honest and benevolent intention of making provision for the effectual (although prudent and gradual) execution of the law; but the facts and considerations which I have now stated seem to me to leave no room for doubt, that the only practical effect of the constitution of the Board of Revision which they propose for this purpose, will be the annual publication (for a time) of dry and defective reports, and useless disputes, which will not be read, and will only tend to smother inquiry; and, if not to perpetuate abuse, at least to retard, perhaps indefinitely, the general extension over the country of that satisfactory administration of the law, for the benefit of the aged and infirm poor, which the Commissioners desire, and which, I am confident, that the most intelligent part of the community very generally approves.

The Commissioners represent so completely those portions of the population of Scotland which are known to have been most averse to any change in the laws, that we may be quite sure that any objections that can be made to those principles of improvement which they agree in recommending, must have occurred to them,

and been fully considered by them ; that if these objections are urged in future, it can only be ascribed to what Mr Twisleton calls “ the possible caprice, partial “ knowledge, or narrow views, of accidental majorities “ in particular localities ; ” and that it will be both safe and expedient to allow any improvements approved by the Commissioners, to be “ settled by the more enlarged wisdom of Parliament,” and carried into effect by the usual constitutional means.

The official inquiry has been made—the inadequacy of the relief given to the aged and disabled poor is admitted—the numerous evils resulting from thence have been exposed—the reasons of expediency which used to be urged in favour of those inadequate allowances are abandoned—the wisdom and authority of the law have been vindicated ;—surely the natural inference is, that the law should now be allowed to take its course, and the ordinary tribunals should be intrusted, in the usual manner, with its execution ; and that any special board which may be formed with a view to the execution of this law, should be so constituted as to aid and facilitate the operations of the ordinary courts, when these may be required, to enforce it ;—not to supersede their operations, still less to abrogate their power, or substitute for them the vague and indefinite tribunal of Public Opinion.

It still remains for me to state, that the Report of the Commissioners contains several practical suggestions for the better administration of the law, relative to the aged and infirm poor, which are so obviously beneficial, that they must necessarily increase our regret at finding, that no adequate means are recommended for carrying them into effect, and, therefore,

that there is the greatest probability of many of them remaining, at least for a very long time, nearly a dead letter.

I allude particularly to their recommendations as to the union of the parishes of which a large town consists, with a view to concentration of management, uniformity of treatment of the poor, and the avoiding of the difficulties and delays, the trouble, expense, and tardy or illusory relief, consequent on the frequent disputes about the true parochial settlement of the poor of such towns; again, as to the practice to be followed in cases of destitution, where the settlement is disputed between distant parishes,—the relief to be given forthwith, and continued until the settlement be ascertained, and the claim established, and the expenses of interim maintenance, &c. to be recoverable from the parish ultimately found liable;—as to the appointment of salaried superintendents of the poor in all parishes, and facilitating prosecutions for expenses between parishes, by having officers in whose names the managers shall pursue and defend actions; as to the education of pauper children, at the public expense; and the punishing criminally, by a summary process, husbands and fathers who have deserted their families, and left them chargeable;—as to the obligation of the managers of the poor to send insane persons to asylums, unless authorized by the Board of Supervision to treat them otherwise,—and as to a more extensive medical relief, by cordials and diet, as well as medicines, to the poor, as “a charge on the poor funds,” particularly by dispensaries attached to poor-houses.*

* In this, as in other instances, however, the Commissioners shew the same timidity about interfering with the parochial boards, as in general principles. They say, “The scheme to be adopted for en-

The Commissioners likewise “think it highly desirable,” that, in every parish, with a population of above 5000, a poor-house should be established “enlarged medical relief, we would leave in the hands of each Parochial Board.” On this Mr Twisleton justly observes, that “the local authorities may deem that they have a direct pecuniary interest in fixing the scale of remuneration as low as possible, or throwing altogether on medical practitioners, as is very generally the case at present, the burden of attending the sick poor gratuitously.” I quote the following observations on this part of the subject, because I agree with their general tenor, although not sufficiently conversant with the facts, to judge how far they are generally applicable.

“If Parliament do not fix the proper charge, we feel too certain the lowest fee for which any medical man can be found to do the duty, however imperfectly, will be generally considered by heritors and kirk-sessions (who are really interested parties), the proper remuneration. In fact, the system of medical estimate, though not pointedly recommended, is decidedly the favourite in the eye of this Commission. They bring forth in a prominent point of view the recommendation of the Duke of Richmond, in favour of medical clubs. The peculiarities of such clubs do nowhere appear; but if we may judge of what we have seen of institutions for a similar purpose, in some parts of Scotland, we hesitate not to say, that instead of relieving paupers (what pauper can even afford to subscribe to any club?) they are calculated to lower the junior portion of the medical profession to the grade of paupers. We refer to the Societies of Odd Fellows, which have recently sprung up in every quarter of Scotland. These institutions, we are informed, require the *use* of a medical man. We know many very well informed members of our profession, who have been compelled to join such despicable establishments in pure self-defence;—finding that their next door neighbour had become the surgeon to the ‘Lodge,’ under the condition of attending all the sick members of the body, for the very moderate sum of 2s. 6d. per annum.

“Supposing such clubs as the Duke of Richmond recommends

“ der proper regulations, for the reception of aged and
 “ helpless persons, incurables, orphans, deserted child-
 “ ren, and the dissipated, and improvident poor,” not
 to supersede the present system of out-door relief, “ but
 “ for the greater comfort, and more proper treatment, of
 “ those whose condition may be thereby improved;”
 and they recommend that “ power should be given for
 “ two or more contiguous parishes,”—I presume, al-
 though each may be below the population of 5000,
 “ to unite for the purpose of building a poor-house.”*

The Commissioners likewise acquiesce in the opinion
 which has now become very general in Scotland, that
 a change in the term of residence necessary for acquir-
 ing a settlement is requisite; and propose to return
 to the original time fixed by the Scotch law, of seven
 years, making it, at the same time, requisite that these
 should be years of *industrial residence*. It still seems to
 me that a longer period of residence is more desirable;

“ were established in every village and hamlet of our land, how
 “ long would they continue to work? The very first strike, the
 “ very first depression of trade, would terminate their usefulness,
 “ even to the working classes; and, so far as regards paupers, they
 “ must be *ab initio* inefficient. He who offers his services at the
 “ lowest rate to such a club, is generally accepted. We are well
 “ informed, that a surgeon to one of the multifarious orders of
 “ *Odd Fellows* or *Druids*, was requested to lower his price,—or
 “ retire. He chose the latter alternative, and in less than 24
 “ hours, several medical candidates offered their services to the
 “ club at 1s. annually a-head.”—*Cormack's Monthly Journal of*
Medical Science, Aug. 1844.

* I cannot agree with the Commissioners, that the rate of out-
 door relief should never exceed what the maintenance of the same
 individual would cost within a poor-house. The *maintenance* of
 a pauper within a poor-house does not include anything for lodging,
 fuel, or even clothing, which are heavy articles of expenditure to
 the out-door poor.

but I have no doubt that this change would be a great improvement; provided only, that it be accompanied with such arrangements as may carry fairly into effect the desire of the Commissioners, formerly mentioned, that every parish shall be bound to relieve all cases of distress occurring within it, in the first instance, and afterwards have facility of recourse on the true place of settlement, for repayment of the outlay.

We now know, however, that the Law of Settlement is to undergo revision in England, and that Government have expressed an opinion in favour (as I understand) of settlement by birth only, but with the provision, that removal to the place of birth shall never be enforced on those who have lived five years in the place where they become chargeable. If this is to be held applicable to the unemployed, as well as the disabled, I have no doubt that it will be a great improvement on the present practice in England; although it still does appear to me that the principle of settlement by a certain term of industrial residence is a just one. But in whatever manner this question may be settled in England, I have no doubt that, sooner or later, it will be seen to be advisable, and indeed necessary to the right management of the poor, that the same law should be extended to all parts of her Majesty's dominions.

If all these recommendations of the Commissioners were *carried into effect*, under a central authority,—and if the ordinary law courts were authorized to enforce the original law, with these improvements, according to its obvious intention, recognised by the Commissioners themselves, so as really to give needful sustentation to the aged and infirm,—almost every thing would be accomplished which I have contemplated, for the benefit of this portion of the poor in Scotland. It hardly

appears to me to be necessary, in *that case*, either to enact general assessments, or to make the erection of work-houses in towns of 5000 inhabitants compulsory, as Mr Twisleton recommends; because, while I fully admit the justice of his statement as to both these measures, I am persuaded that, if the allowances were made adequate, and the legal right to relief were enforced, the expediency or necessity of both measures, to equalise the burden, and to prevent abuses, would speedily shew themselves.

But I need hardly repeat my thorough conviction, that these proposals will never be carried into effect generally or beneficially throughout Scotland, as long as the only provision for enforcing them is a Court of Supervision, intrusted only with power of "representation and advice."

PART II.

In regard to the *second* great division of the subject,—the extent of suffering among the able-bodied poor in Scotland when out of employment, there is a fair admission of the evil, in general terms, by the Commissioners. They say, that, “in periods of a depressed state of trade and manufactures, the labouring classes are subject, in many instances at least, to severe privations;” and again, “That the great mortality of some of the large towns in Scotland, arising from fever or other epidemics, may be fairly ascribed to the less comfortable condition of the labouring and pauper population” (than in England), “we do not presume to dispute.” P. 523. They say, farther, “With reference to many, indeed most of the parishes in the Highlands and Islands, if the existence of distress is to be held of itself, apart from other considerations, sufficient to prove that the provisions of the present law are inadequate, and that an assessment for the able-bodied poor ought to be substituted in place of them, the case, we admit, has been fairly made out. Scarcely a year passes, in the course of which, at one season or another, large portions of the labouring classes in the Highlands are not more or less straitened for the means of subsistence. Their distress, on some recent occasions, is well known to have been very great. Indeed, according to their present mode of life, it must always be so, in the event either of a defective potato-crop, or of an unsuccessful herring-fishery.” P. 49.

Notwithstanding this admission, the Commissioners strongly recommend, that "the Poor Law of Scotland, with reference to this important section of it, "should remain unchanged," *i. e.* that those who are destitute only from want of employment, should have no legal right to relief, and that any provision made for them should be made on the voluntary principle only; and I beg particular attention to the fact, that it is *for the good of the working classes and of the poor themselves*, that they wish it to remain unchanged. They say, that the opposite system, adopted in England, of giving the unemployed able-bodied poor a right to relief, has been founded on neglect of the salutary maxim of Christianity,—that "if a man will not work, neither shall he eat;" and that "no portion of society has suffered more, from the baneful effect of such negligence, than the working classes themselves." P. 45. It is, therefore, with a view to the prevention of suffering among the working classes, and the good of the poor themselves, that they approve of the present system in Scotland. This statement of their ground of preference of the Scottish principle, simplifies the question materially. We have only to attend to the evidence which the Commissioners have collected, as to what they call the "*less comfortable* condition of the labouring and pauper population," as to the "severe privations," and "very great distress," of large portions of the Scottish people (resulting from want of employment); and then to inquire what evidence there is of the *still greater injury* to the labouring classes, which they allege to result from the opposite system of management, and on account of which, *and of which alone*, they strongly ad-

wise us, notwithstanding the sufferings which have prevailed in Scotland, to cling to the principle of the Scotch law.

Now, so far from there being any evidence to this effect, I undertake to shew, from evidence laid before the Commissioners, and *from their own commentaries on that evidence*, that the miseries which they admit to exist in a greater degree among the Scottish poor are counterbalanced by no advantages whatever ; that there is not only “ a more comfortable condition of the labouring and pauper population,” but a more “ healthy social condition,” as regards temperance and sobriety, industry, cleanliness, and comforts, in those classes of the population, in England than in Scotland, *i. e.* that the ground on which they themselves put their preference of the Scottish system, completely and confessedly fails them.

I have always maintained, that this, and all other questions in that department of Political Economy, can only be satisfactorily solved by Experience, and that we have abundance of experience, even in our own country, still more on comparison of it with other European nations, to enable us to decide on it with perfect confidence. And I now undertake to shew that the judgment of the Commissioners upon it is in opposition to the evidence of Experience, as collected by themselves and others ; and that their laboured argument on the subject is a vain attempt to retard the ultimate decision of a question, on which that infallible arbiter has declared against them.

I think it must be admitted, that there is no kind of human suffering more intense, or more deserving of sympathy,—and I believe there is none more injurious

in its moral and political consequences,—than the case of destitution from want of employment. Let us picture to ourselves a family, of religious and moral character, previously accustomed to comforts, and maintaining a respectable appearance in society,—forced by causes entirely beyond their control, to part in succession with all their comforts, and gradually reduced to beggary,—the parents obliged to absent themselves from church, and their children from school,—struggling in vain for employment,—sickenings under hope deferred,—seeing their families wasting, and often perishing before their eyes, from diseases resulting from want of food, fuel, and clothing, which they are unable to procure for them,—at last themselves sinking under disease to which their sufferings have disposed them, and having no other earthly prospect on the approach of death, than to leave their surviving children to the tender mercies of some of those boards of managers, whose attention to the duty thus to devolve on them, may be judged of from some of the foregoing extracts.

To any one who has seen and reflected on this painful spectacle, as often as I have done, and who knows, at the same time, that those who are threatened with similar sufferings in another part of the country, can claim legal protection against them, I cannot but think that it must appear a sacred duty to press for a distinct and practical answer to the question—Why should not the same protection be given here?

I think likewise, it will appear, that the following extracts from the evidence given before the Commissioners, confirm all the statements previously made by myself and others, as to the frequency of such suf-

ferings, resulting strictly from this cause, and often affecting the most respectable members of society, in the lower ranks in Scotland. These extracts will shew how true is the assertion of the wise man, that "the destruction of the poor is their poverty,"—how naturally vagrancy, ignorance, vice, crime, disease, and excessive mortality, flow from this prolific source of evil; and how irregular and inadequate are the existing provisions in Scotland against it. And I maintain, farther, that they prove what I have always asserted,—that all these sufferings have not only no beneficial effect, but a permanent demoralizing and injurious effect on the population. In fact, the natural change on the human mind, by which it is gradually inured to such sufferings, and enabled to bear up against them, is simply this,—that it becomes careless of every thing but the wants of the passing day, *i. e.* it becomes essentially reckless and improvident; and therefore, the regular and effectual relief of such sufferings is not merely a moral duty, but (like the performance of all other moral duties) a political benefit to society.

It is often said, in the loose and careless way in which we must expect such topics to be discussed in general society, that seasons of peculiar depression and distress among the poor are nevertheless *got over*; and the general inference is, that they are a disagreeable subject of contemplation, and the less they are thought of afterwards the better. But let us remember that the human race is so constituted, that as long as it is permitted to exist on the face of the earth, all the evils which affect it are *got over*. Wars, plagues, pestilence, and famine,—although inflicting all kinds of misery on individuals, and of injury on communities,—all are

transient evils. The human *race* springs uninjured from the ruins of nations,

“And soars and shines, another and the same.”

But *our* power and *our* duty are limited to the generation in which we live, and to the small portion of mankind that we see around us. Have those seasons of depression among us been attended by miseries that might have been avoided, and by degradation that might have been prevented; and have we reflected on, and done our best to counteract, the consequences of that misery and degradation? Have we loved our neighbours as ourselves? Have we done to them as we would they should do to us? Have we obeyed, as to them, that law which was written from the beginning on the hearts of men, which was enforced by the precepts of the Gospel, and which makes us the instruments of the mercy of Heaven to our species? If not, can we cherish the hope, that any thing else which we can do, can avert from us the judgments of that Providence, who has expressly said, what is the return required for all the benefits, national or individual, that we have received at His hand;—“Mercy, not sacrifice;” “Love one another, as I have loved you?”

With these feelings as to the obligation of Charity, let us consider the evidence now before us as to the sufferings of the unemployed poor in Scotland, and the efficacy of the existing provisions for their relief.

The following statement is made by Mr JOHNSTON, Chairman of the Committee for the relief of the unemployed operatives in Edinburgh, in 1842:—

“We had a double check on the statements of the men themselves. These inquiries led to some distressing revelations. I

“ have found honest and industrious tradesmen who, after having
 “ sold or pawned every article in their dwellings, were at length
 “ reduced to ask the smallest pittance of bread or meat. In
 “ many instances, they assured us (and we found their statements
 “ true) that they had not tasted food for 24 or 28 hours. In
 “ some instances, I found that *their very grates* had been sold or
 “ pawned; and, in many instances, when we gave a pittance of
 “ meal, they had not the means to cook it, nor salt to season it.
 “ Many, who had been in a respectable way as tradesmen, were
 “ thus reduced *from causes over which they had no control*. I
 “ could discover no instance of their having exchanged their meal
 “ or bread tickets for spirits. Such a story was indeed got up;
 “ and, as Chairman of the Committee, I instituted a rigorous in-
 “ quiry, and am glad to say that in no instance was the relief so
 “ exchanged. The whole of my experience led to the result, that
 “ the poor were far more anxious to recover the small articles of
 “ clothing and household stuffs they had pawned, than to indulge
 “ in personal indulgence of any kind. We have at present 900
 “ employed at 5s. a-week, and 230 more on the Queen’s works at
 “ 9s. They are a fair sample of our working men, with a few
 “ noisy exceptions.”—Vol. i., p. 201–202.

Let it be remembered here, that the operations of this Committee came to a close in summer 1843; and that subsequently about 200 workmen and labourers, with families, professing to be in a similar state of destitution, applied for similar relief, in work, to the Town-Council of Edinburgh, and received for answer, that the funds devoted for such purposes were exhausted, and that in future they must depend on their own exertions.

The evidence of the Rev. Dr Clark forcibly describes the sufferings endured by numerous unemployed females in Edinburgh, for whom I and others in vain attempted to procure a part of the subscription funds raised in 1842–3.

REV. T. CLARK, Minister of the Old Church,
Edinburgh.

"I have been in every house in my parish once, and in many twenty times since August 1841.

"Are there many in a very destitute state?" "*I was not the least aware that such destitution existed in Scotland. Those who receive parochial relief are not the most destitute.*"

"Are those who are not receiving parochial relief able-bodied?" "There are a *great many families* who seem to have no visible means of subsistence, and *are in a state of positive starvation.*"

"Are many of them of good character?" "I have no doubt *that many of them are of very good character.*"—"I visited ten rooms lately, and there was not a particle of furniture in any one of them. The people were lying on the floor, on just as much straw as you could hold in your hands."—"I have been able to bring thirty or forty to church, who had not been in a place of worship for many years before. *They now attend regularly, and are very decent persons.* The want of clothing kept them away."

"A great deal of the destitution is caused by *want of employment*, and my belief is also that a great portion arises from intemperance. But I have a strong impression at the same time that much of this arises *from want of sympathy towards them, and want of superintendence of any kind.* They have stated to me, that they regarded themselves as *outcasts from the sympathy of their fellow men.* They exist for *weeks together, without the least portion of fire, and for days together without tasting food.*"—"I have seen them lift out of the gutter green herbs, which they devoured greedily, and the offals of fish."—"Those needing relief from the workhouse greatly exceed those obtaining it."—"Some change is necessary. The destitution is so great that danger arises from it. If there be not some change, you will have positive starvation."

"You say you have many females in your parish without visible means of subsistence. What ages?" "All ages, from

“ eighty to young girls. I have gone into rooms where I found them without clothing.”

“ What brought them to this state ? ” “ They attribute it to *want of employment*. They are all willing to work.”—“ There are a great many females who can get no kind of employment, and are refused relief at the workhouse, being told they are *able-bodied*.”—Vol. i., p. 117.

Mr C. R. BAIRD, Secretary of the Glasgow Relief Committee.

“ Able-bodied persons, willing to work, often cannot find employment. I may mention the case of a moulder whom I had known for twenty years, and who has borne a most irreproachable character. He applied to the relief committee for work. I spoke to several friends to procure work for him, but failed in doing so. What was this decent person to do ? I have known people on the relief fund reduced to poverty by causes over which they had no control ; and I am inclined to think that such parties have as just a claim for legal relief as a person deprived of work by disease.”

“ Are there many cases of that kind in Glasgow ? ” “ Yes, a great many ; owing to the vicissitudes of trade and unhealthy occupations and diseases, many are in this way reduced to such extreme poverty as to need aid.”

“ Were any great proportion of those on the relief fund persons of bad character ? ” “ *I think not. The weavers, especially, are of good character.*”—Vol. i., p. 391.

The Rev. ARCHIBALD BAIRD, United Secession Church, Paisley.

“ Would you give the able-bodied a claim to relief ? ” “ Most certainly I would. *I consider them to have as strong a claim in nature, humanity, and religion, as any other class of the poor. I cannot conceive a more melancholy thing than the spectacle of labourers suffering from want of employment. Persons well-disposed to labour, heads of families, most virtuous, well-doing*

“ men, thousands of them, as I know, who would scorn to receive the
 “ slightest pittance till they are at the point of starvation ; without
 “ food for themselves or their families, and having absolute desti-
 “ tution staring them in the face. I have been in the houses of
 “ parties where there was a kitchen, such in furniture and arrange-
 “ ment that any person of the higher ranks might have taken a din-
 “ ner there with the greatest comfort. There were window sashes,
 “ mirrors, and well-stocked libraries. I have known these fami-
 “ lies ; and I have found on revisiting them, when the depression
 “ had been protracted, that they had *parted with everything*,
 “ *and were lying, in the depth of winter, without a blanket*. I
 “ think it very serious when the pressure comes so heavily as to
 “ beat down a population of that kind. I tremble for the result,
 “ if such times are to come again. I think it extremely desirable
 “ that some precaution should be taken ; and I am satisfied that
 “ in Renfrewshire we had the means of meeting the whole of the
 “ evil.”—Vol. i., p. 686.

The Rev. Dr WILLIS, lately Member of the Associate
 Synod, Glasgow.

“ I have found people, respectable and decent, falling into
 “ poverty under the present system, from the delays that are ex-
 “ perienved, and from the impression that is abroad of a reluc-
 “ tance to entertain their claims till after a most protracted and
 “ rigid examination. They are reduced to all shifts before their
 “ destitution is made known. We find them reduced to the pawn-
 “ ing of their Sabbath clothes. And not only is it an intemperate
 “ person that is reduced to this, but *I have known moral and re-*
 “ *ligious persons reduced to it ;* members of my own church. Great
 “ poverty and misery are entailed by the present system, and great
 “ suffering of the destitute, before redress is given in the case of
 “ unemployed labourers.”—Vol. i., p. 351-2.

Dr PERRY, Physician to the Fever Hospital, Glasgow.

“ Have you been in the habit of visiting any of the poor in
 “ their own houses ? ” “ Not to any great extent. I have seen
 “ some of them in their dwellings ; but I know, from the circum-
 “ stances in which they are brought to the hospital, the very great

“ extent of destitution and misery that prevails among them. On
 “ parents coming to the infirmary, I have taken the trouble to
 “ inquire into the circumstances of their families, and have found
 “ them almost in a state of starvation. We get many cases into
 “ the house which are not fever at all, but *mere cases of starva-*
 “ *tion.*”—Vol. i., p. 430.

REV. R. DOUGLAS, Kilbarchan.

“ During the distress in Paisley we had a great many able-
 “ bodied persons out of employment,—at one time 500 men and
 “ women, without counting dependents. A considerable number
 “ of these were of respectable character. You may safely reckon
 “ that of the 500 unemployed, 100 were careful and provident
 “ when in the receipt of earnings. The remuneration for the work
 “ of these hand-loom weavers has been gradually decreasing since
 “ the peace; *they had it not in their power to lay up their earn-*
 “ *ings.* Till within the last few years, our friendly societies went
 “ regularly on, increasing their stock; but within the last two
 “ years they have been falling off,—the people being unable to pay
 “ up their subscriptions. They were reduced to great distress du-
 “ ring the stagnation of trade.”—Vol. iii., p. 410.

MR P. BLAIR, Writer, Irvine.

“ During the late depression of trade there was considerable
 “ distress in the town. I knew most of the unemployed operatives.
 “ *They were generally people of good character, and many of them,*
 “ *when in the receipt of earnings, had been as provident as their*
 “ *circumstances admitted.* The distress was not adequately met
 “ *by the subscriptions.* The operatives pawned or sold some of
 “ their clothes and furniture, particularly their clothing. The dis-
 “ tress lasted so long that the savings of those who had been pro-
 “ vident were exhausted.”—Vol. iii., p. 496.

MR WM. DUFF, Session-Clerk, Erskine.

“ There has been some distress among able-bodied persons in
 “ the parish from want of employment,—partly among females
 “ who used to be employed in sewing,—partly among labourers.
 “ *No measures were taken to meet this distress.* I cannot say

“ *how they got through*,—some of them I know pawned their
 “ clothing and other articles. They must all have been living on
 “ very spare diet. *Nothing was done by the heritors to get them*
 “ *work*. Some of them applied to the parish, but they were con-
 “ sidered to have no proper claim.”—Vol. iii., p. 478.

The Rev. JAMES MONILAWS, Minister of Annan.

“ For the last four or five years, there has been a great deal of
 “ distress from want of employment among the agricultural la-
 “ bourers and the hand-loom weavers ; and he does not know any
 “ class that has suffered so much for some years as these two. No
 “ public means were adopted for their relief, nor was there any
 “ private subscription, that he was aware of. They got through
 “ with great difficulty.”—Vol. iii., p. 629.

The Rev. JAMES BARR, Port-Glasgow.

“ Our town suffered materially from the late depression of
 “ trade. A very considerable number were thrown out of em-
 “ ployment. I knew some of them, and can state that they *were*
 “ *men of good character, and had been provident when in the re-*
 “ *ceipt of earnings*. I believe the distress was to a certain degree
 “ met by the relief fund, and by contributions from private indivi-
 “ duals. But a considerable number of the *respectable operatives*
 “ *suffered extreme privations*.”—Vol. iii., p. 476.

J. PHILP, Esq., Surgeon, Kirkaldy.

“ I have occasionally witnessed great destitution among able-
 “ bodied persons in periods of stagnation of trade. There are
 “ frequently very distressing cases not on the poor’s roll. I knew
 “ the case of a family who had no food but cold water for forty-
 “ eight hours. This was a labourer out of employment ; he after-
 “ wards *sickened and died of consumption*, and I have no doubt
 “ his death was accelerated by the privations he suffered when out
 “ of employment.”—Vol. iii., p. 336.

J. FERGUS, Esq., Manufacturer, Kirkaldy.

“ The distress last year was met in different ways, by subscrip-
 “ tion, &c. I think *the relief afforded was very partial*, and a

“ certain portion of the operatives suffered, notwithstanding, very great privations.”—Vol. iii., p. 337.

Extract from NOTES as to Unemployed visited at Greenock.

“ P. M‘Gowan, a blacksmith, wife and two children, nearly nine months out of work, had parted with almost everything—inner room quite stript of furniture.”

“ D. Carmichael, a sawyer—wife and five children—two months’ work out of fourteen—house completely stript.”

“ D. M‘Kay, founder—wife and two children—out of employment thirty-five weeks—had been bred under Mr Smith at Deanston—had been all about England in search of work.”

“ A young woman in a garret—her husband absent in search of work—her appearance and manner most respectable. She said she had formerly lived in a house for which they paid ten guineas a-year of rent, and the furniture of which had cost them between L.30 and L.40. Nearly every article had been pawned or sold.”—Vol. iii., p. 485.

Mr A. JACK, Session-Clerk, Largs.

“ I should say that *almost all* those relieved were of respectable character, and had been provident when in the receipt of earnings. The savings of the weavers were exhausted before they came on the relief fund, from the continuance of the distress.”—Vol. i., p. 484.

Rev. G. COLVILLE, Beith.

“ For the last three years, the labourers have been worse off than any other operatives ; they have had very little assistance. Some of them got relief from the proprietors, and we have given small sums from the session ; but the relief so given has been *very limited*. After the railway was made, a number of labourers settled down on us, and there has been a superabundance of this class ever since. Females have great difficulty in finding work, and are very ill off.”—Vol. iii., p. 492.

Mr ROB. M'LACHLAN, City Missionary, Dundee.

" We find a considerable number, not on the poor roll, who
 " have been long out of work ; and many I have found of late,—
 " persons of sober habits,—willing to go to a workshop, have told
 " me candidly that they had not clothes to appear in. *We have*
 " *resolved to open a school for the purpose of having service on a*
 " *Sabbath afternoon, to meet those people who have not clothes to*
 " *go to church from their great poverty.* They must suffer much
 " from want of food and clothing, many of them long out of work ;
 " if now at the loom, earning 5s. a-week,—many of them with
 " three or four little children."—Vol. iii., p. 68-9.

Dr L. DAVIDSON, Dundee.

" I have frequently been in houses of operatives where there
 " was nothing but a chair, or perhaps a small table ; for crockery,
 " the half of a large ashet, and only a few shavings for bedding.
 " These were not cases of people of good character ; they had
 " been reduced not by vice perhaps, but improvidence."—Vol. iii.,
 p. 119.

Mr D. CAMPBELL, Inspector of Poor, Dundee.

" Were you acquainted with many operatives out of employ-
 " ment ?" " I know those belonging to this town." " Were
 " many of them men of good character ?" " A great number."
 " Did you know persons who had been provident, and were out
 " of employment ?" " Yes, a great many ; and I was very sorry
 " to see them."—Vol. iii., p. 108.

W. THOMS, Esq., Dean of Guild, Dundee.

" Would you consider it a fair representation to say of the un-
 " employed who came on the relief funds raised by subscription,
 " that they were dissipated ?" " I could not say so. I can say
 " from my own knowledge, that there were several respectable
 " men desirous of that relief. I have seen a man begging from
 " door to door, who had been in the receipt of 20s. to 30s. a-week
 " for years. Such persons had been out of employment at that

“ time for several months. During the last two years there has
 “ been more suffering from want of employment than at any
 “ other time within my recollection.”—Vol. iii., p. 131.

Mr W. MORRIS, Treasurer of the Subscriptions for the
 Unemployed in 1842 (Dundee).

“ The relief from this fund was given from January to Decem-
 “ ber 1842. The sum raised was, in all, (with L.300 from Go-
 “ vernment), L.1869 ; the numbers relieved varied exceedingly ;
 “ —sometimes they were 1500, males and females. To those
 “ who had not work given, the allowance was *2s. a-week to a mar-*
 “ *ried man, 1s. 6d. for an unmarried man, and 1s. a-week for a*
 “ *woman.*”—Vol. iii., p. 135.

PROVOST BLACKIE, Aberdeen.

“ Were there many that could not get employment during the
 “ last year ?”

“ I am satisfied that there were many that would have starved
 “ if the committee had not supplied them.”

“ Were there poor on the list who were not intemperate and
 “ improvident ?” “ There were many oldish tradesmen whom the
 “ masters would not employ when they could get younger men.
 “ It consists with my knowledge that there were some who were
 “ provident, and could not get employment ; and who had *sold*
 “ *and pawned all their clothes and furniture* to support them-
 “ selves and families.”

“ Did you find difficulty in raising subscriptions for their re-
 “ lief ?” “ *Yes ; great difficulty. Had it not been for some large*
 “ *sums from parties not belonging to Aberdeen, we could not have*
 “ *supported them so long.* Lord Kintore sent L.300.”—Vol. ii.,
 p. 583.

Rev. JAS. FOOTE, late Minister of the East Kirk,
 Aberdeen.

“ Have you witnessed many cases of extreme destitution among
 “ able-bodied persons out of employment ?”

“ Yes ; many. Extreme destitution appears first in the want
 “ of clothing, especially in the men.”

“ Are you of opinion that such destitution has been adequately
 “ relieved by the sums voluntarily contributed in cases of emer-
 “ gency ?” “ *No.*”

“ Have you known many instances of provident able-bodied
 “ persons who have been destitute ?” “ *Yes.*”—Vol. ii., p. 590.

JAMES FORBES, Esq., one of the Magistrates of
 Aberdeen.

“ A meeting was held in winter 1841–42, when the matter was
 “ fully discussed, and parties were satisfied that distress existed
 “ among a class of citizens not generally requiring assistance. A
 “ committee was appointed, and about 600 were found to be un-
 “ employed, who, in general, had been able to support themselves
 “ and families.”

“ Were there many on the list whom you think provident when
 “ in employment ?” “ With regard to out-door labourers my
 “ impression is, *that their income when in full employment was so*
 “ *scanty as not to enable them to husband any means to support*
 “ *them when out of employment ;* but in regard to many mechanics
 “ who applied for relief, my opinion is, that a great degree of im-
 “ providence must have existed among them. One-fourth of the
 “ original 600 (previously in receipt of good wages) refused the
 “ work at the wages offered them.”

“ In what condition were those who remained in respect of cha-
 “ racter ?” “ *They were generally well behaved.*”—Vol. ii.,
 p. 606.

In the next place, I beg particular attention to the
 evidence of extensive *Vagrancy* as an effect of unre-
 lieved destitution among the unemployed able-bodied
 poor ; because the Commissioners lay much stress on
 the importance of encouraging the labouring men in
 these circumstances, to disperse themselves over the
 country in search of work,—apparently forgetting the
 strong evidence before them of the extent to which they
 actually resort to that expedient, of its very general

failure at the times of depression, and of the evils and miseries, to themselves and others, which very frequently result, particularly the acquisition of habits of mendicity by themselves, and the communication of Fever to others.

It is to be remembered, that although these poor men suffer extreme hardships, and many of them die of diseases thereby contracted, yet hardly any of them die of starvation. They are maintained—as well as their wives and children, whether accompanying them or left behind—partly at the expense of the parishes, chiefly at the expense of charitable individuals ; so that, by refusing them a right to relief, the country does not rid itself of the burden which their loss of employment involves ; but throws it on the charitable members of the community, and allows the uncharitable to escape. The charitable part of the public suffers probably as much, and the unemployed poor, and their wives and families certainly suffer much more, than where the system of legal relief is established ; and the only true gainers are the uncharitable among the higher ranks—certainly that portion of the community who have deserved *least* of the public favour or regard.

Provost BAINE of Greenock.

“ We found very great exertions made by parties on the relief
 “ list to be employed elsewhere, and we had many instances of
 “ parties coming and getting a little pecuniary assistance to en-
 “ able them to go elsewhere. The same parties have come back,
 “ after an absence of weeks, and after travelling over a great part
 “ of the country, without succeeding in obtaining work, and quite
 “ worn out with their exertions.”—Vol. i., p. 521.

Mr ALEX. JACK, Session-Clerk, Largs.

“ The begging here has been caused by the late distress in

“ Greenock. I should say three-fourths of the beggars belonged
 “ to Greenock ; stout, able-bodied persons, who stated that they
 “ could not find employment.”—Vol. i., p. 484.

Mr Gray, Town-Clerk, Greenock.

“ We are a good deal annoyed with strangers from the neigh-
 “ bouring towns requesting passages to Belfast—parties so desti-
 “ tute that the magistrates give them a passage. It is a great
 “ burden on the poor funds ; they come from Glasgow, Paisley,
 “ and other neighbouring towns. We have parties also from other
 “ parts of Scotland in very great destitution, going about from
 “ place to place. These parties are generally threatened with
 “ confinement if they return. *I think it would be desirable to*
 “ *have a mode of charging the parishes to which they belong with*
 “ *these expenses*, and a summary mode of obtaining payment. It
 “ is often distressing to witness many poor people who have no
 “ house of refuge ; they are allowed to go about quite destitute,
 “ particularly females.”—Vol. i., p. 535.

Mr C. CALDWELL, Inspector of the Vagrant Poor at
 Kilmarnock.

“ In the course of a year, have known about one thousand va-
 “ grants passing through Kilmarnock. A good many strangers
 “ come with passes from other parishes—from Maybole, Girvan,
 “ Glasgow ; and even from Edinburgh. The strangers are princi-
 “ pally *persons out of employment*, labourers, and operatives.
 “ Within the last two years the number has been greater, and some
 “ persons of a better class than formerly.”—Vol. i., p. 700.

Rev. DR FLEMING, Parish of Neilston.

“ During the late depression of trade, there was considerable
 “ destitution among able-bodied men in my parish. Two or three
 “ houses had failed in Neilston, and this was the immediate cause
 “ of the distress of the calico-printers. *They made every effort,*
 “ *and went far and near, in order to get employment if possible,*
 “ *but all their efforts failed.*”—Vol. i., p. 416.

P. D. SWAN, Esq., Provost, Kirkaldy.

“ We have been very much annoyed in the last two years by
 “ individuals with passes coming through the town, and making
 “ applications for relief—chiefly from Dundee. Many of these
 “ men seemed to be regular operatives, who had been starved out
 “ at home for want of regular employment; had 6d. at starting,
 “ which only paid the ferry to Newport, and then lived by get-
 “ ting relief in every parish as they passed through. *The increase*
 “ *was owing to the depression of trade*; the numbers are now
 “ greatly diminished. I certainly think that, in such seasons of
 “ depression, some means should be adopted for *preventing the*
 “ *unemployed operatives from being reduced to the necessity of*
 “ *roving the country as beggars, which must superinduce bad*
 “ *habits*. There should be some general fund over the country to
 “ relieve unemployed persons in these circumstances.”—Vol. iii.,
 p. 343.

THOMAS CARNABY, Esq., Writer in Forfar.

“ The number of vagrants turned out of the rural districts of
 “ Forfar by the police constables, from April 1841 to March
 “ 1842, was 217 men and 215 women, including children; and
 “ from April 1842 till March 1843, was 848 men and 892
 “ women, including children. The increase during the last year
 “ appears to have arisen chiefly from the number of poor people,
 “ *driven by want from Dundee*, to seek relief in some of the rural
 “ districts. There is a very great abuse in the readiness with
 “ which passes are granted.”—Vol. iii., p. 83.

Mr GRAHAM, Governor and Treasurer of the House of
 Refuge, Edinburgh.

“ Are there parties who come from a distance to the House of
 “ Refuge, and why?” “ From *want of employment*, they come
 “ here seeking employment. I have seen many able-bodied men
 “ passing through the Night Refuge, from Glasgow or Greenock,
 “ who have been employed as founders or carpenters, and who
 “ have informed me that they have been travelling through Eng-
 “ land looking for employment, and were just returning back

“ again. Their feet were bad with travelling ; we entertained
 “ them for a little while, and gave them a little food, to enable
 “ them to get on.”—Vol. i., p. 103.

Bailie MAIN of Kelso.

“ In consequence of the existence of distress in the manufactur-
 “ ing districts, I do not remember this district being ever so over-
 “ run with beggars as at the present time ; and as many of them,
 “ no doubt, have been reduced to mendicity by want of employ-
 “ ment, it is impossible to exercise the necessary discrimination in
 “ applying the laws against vagrancy.”—Vol. i., p. 694.

Rev. Mr GOLDIE, Coldstream.

“ Have you much trouble with vagrant beggars in your pa-
 “ rish ?” “ Yes, to a very great extent, during the last eighteen
 “ months especially. Last summer it was quite distressing to see
 “ the number of artizans and operatives travelling to Glasgow and
 “ Newcastle in opposite directions.”—Vol. iii., p. 708.

Mr JOHN M'LELLAN, Clerk to the Heritors of Annan.

“ There is a great flock of vagrants passing and repassing
 “ through Annan, between Glasgow and Newcastle ; they give
 “ them beds in passing, and generally relieve about 2000 in the
 “ year in that way.”—Vol. iii., p. 633.

WM. MUIR, Esq., Chief Magistrate of Selkirk.

“ There has been a good deal of expense incurred *during the*
 “ *past year* in consequence of travelling poor and vagrants, and
 “ persons on the tramp taken with illness in the town. Those
 “ people tell pretty uniformly the same story ; they are generally
 “ going either from Glasgow to Carlisle, or from Carlisle to Glas-
 “ gow.”—Vol. iii., p. 651.

In the north of Scotland, and even in Orkney, the same results of the loss of employment in the manufacturing districts shew themselves ; and it is in all equally obvious, that this vagrancy is *excessive* ; it is not a free

circulation of labour, but a clear addition to the previously distressing burden of *mendicity*.

Rev. J. GIBSON, Tough, in Alford.

“ Previous to the establishment of the rural police, the burden of beggars was perfectly intolerable; most commonly able-bodied single women, women with children, and distressed operatives, or parties representing themselves as such.”—Vol. ii., p. 675.

Rev. A. FLYTER, Alness, Ross-shire.

“ We have a great many beggars on tramp from the south—generally men vagrants. I have seen people of respectable appearance, who said they were obliged to beg, because they could not get work in the south. The number has increased within the last two years.”—Vol. ii., p. 31.

Rev. C. CLOUSTON, Minister of Sandwick, Orkney.

“ There is much begging in my parish, almost entirely by strangers. Almost all the beggars who come to us from the south country are, I should think, able to work. Many of them are operatives from the manufacturing towns; at least, this was their own statement.”—Vol. ii., p. 26.

The next extracts more fully illustrate the important general fact of the *diffusion of Fever* (just as in Ireland in 1817–20, and in many former epidemics, succeeding to famine and distress in many other countries) by persons wandering in search of employment.

I stated to the Commissioners, that during the first three months of the late epidemic in Edinburgh (1843), 1-6th of those brought to the Infirmary were wandering strangers “almost all of them in a state of destitution.” The following extracts shew how exactly the same thing was observed elsewhere.

Provost CORBET, Pollockshaws (Surgeon).

“Of late we have had a good deal of fever. During the period
“of depression of trade we had very little. I attribute it to
“infection from Glasgow. *All the cases of fever have been among*
“*the destitute*; I have scarcely had a case among the middle
“classes.”—Vol. iii., p. 412.

Dr JOSEPH BELL, Surgeon in Barrhead.

“There was lately a good deal of fever in Barrhead, generally
“brought by contagion, by *persons coming as beggars* from Glas-
“gow or Paisley. In some cases, I could trace it to *no other*
“*cause than destitution*. Some of the houses are ill ventilated
“and very damp; and in some of them the people are packed as
“closely as space will permit.”—Vol. i., p. 419.

F. GORDON, Esq., Surgeon at Port-Glasgow.

“Since last spring fever has been very prevalent. In some
“cases it may be easily *traced to contagion from vagrants* and
“stranger beggars. I remember, two months ago, a woman from
“Edinburgh, whom I was called to see, sitting on a stair. She
“had fever—no one in the town would take her into their house.
“We sent her to Greenock Infirmary, but it was full. She re-
“turned to us, and was at last received by a married man with a
“large family. *All the family took fever*, and the wife and one
“of the children died of it. I have more than once traced fever
“to common lodging-houses; it has *principally attacked the*
“*lower orders*.”—Vol. iii., p. 383.

W. GIBSON, Esq., Surgeon, Dalry.

“Lately, the fever which prevailed in various parts of Scotland
“has visited us, but not to a great extent. *It was introduced by*
“*operatives who came from another town*,—having the disease at
“the time of their arrival. I could get no relief for them, because
“they had no settlement here, and could not point out where they
“had a settlement. I was obliged to beg for them. *They infected*
“*others who were in employment*.”—Vol. iii., p. 508.

J. GIBSON, Esq., Surgeon and Provost of Lanark.

“ Ten days ago a man and his wife, strangers in search of employment, came to witness—the *woman labouring under fever at the time*; they said they had been turned out of their lodging. Witness went with them to the oldest bailie, who said they were ill-behaved people, and undeserving of relief, &c. Witness answered, that, whatever might be their conduct, the woman was ill of fever, and required attention. The people *were taken to Carluke parish, and left there.*”—Vol. iii., p. 404.

R. BUCHANAN, Esq., Surgeon, Dumbarton.

“ In our locality, Walker’s close, we never fail to have fever; it is inhabited by a very poor population; I believe it is more prevalent there in consequence of the prodigious number of people huddled together there. Some of the lowest lodging-houses, *inhabited by vagrants*, are in that close, and I can enumerate no circumstances more adapted to diffuse fever than the crowding together in lodging-houses, especially when combined with defective drainage. Fever has also *singled out the poorest inhabitants in the town, irrespective of defective drainage.*”—Vol. iii., p. 460.

Dr HAMILTON, Falkirk.

“ The *lodging-houses are the most fertile sources of fever*;—we have sometimes in them a succession of fever cases in the same bed,—one person is seized,—another dies, or is removed,—another is received into the same house and bed,—is attacked in the same manner, and gives way to a successor, who receives the same infection. I have known these houses to be the means, *through vagrants, of introducing fever* from Glasgow and other parts. I certainly hold that destitution is favourable to the diffusion of fever; but I have observed that the strongest and most worthy labourers, in full employment, have been attacked with fever when they came in contact with these centres, as it were, of poison.”—Vol. iii., p. 839.

Dr M'LELLAN, Dumfries.

" I believe fever was first introduced by *wandering unemployed people*, of whom there are so many going about. Half the cases were those of persons wandering about from the West of Scotland, and from other quarters. Generally the *fever patients were destitute*."—Vol. iii., p. 569.

WALTER GRAHAM, Esq., M.D., Hawick.

" The medical men in Hawick have been much oppressed of late by the constant calls on them to attend travelling poor in lodging-houses, for which they are allowed nothing. Many of those persons say they come from Ireland, and others say they come from Manchester, Glasgow, and Carlisle, and are passing to and fro between these places. *Many of them have fever*, some measles, small-pox, &c. In Neil's lodging-house, opposite the Tower inn, there is a case of fever, and two of measles, at the present time. He knows of no precautions to prevent fresh travellers from being put into the beds of those persons when they leave the house. *They are all huddled together in one room*. The man in fever in Neil's house, when witness found him, *had nothing to subsist on for two or three days but what he got from the master of the house*. There is another lodging-house in which there has been typhus fever for some weeks. *Travellers have gone into it notwithstanding, and several have caught the fever*. A man was brought from Galashiels to Hawick, with a view to being passed on to another parish. Dr Blyth was called to him on the evening of his arrival, and *the man died during the night of typhus fever*."—Vol. iii., p. 657.

Dr G. HILSON, Physician to the Dispensary,
Jedburgh.

" There was more fever in the eighteen months prior to the last two, than witness had seen in Jedburgh for twenty years before. *It was brought into town by vagrants*, and spread from beggars' lodging-houses through the town. Almost all the epidemics

“ with which the town was attacked have been *introduced by vagrants.*”—Vol. iii., p. 672.

Dr DOUGLAS, Kelso.

“ When I came to Kelso in 1815 I found a great deal of fever,
“ and had that summer perhaps 300 patients. There has been
“ no epidemic ever since, but I attribute that very much to the
“ dispensary, (which has beds and bedding,) separating them from
“ the mass of the public and taking them in, particularly strangers.’

“ Do you find fever very much propagated by strangers coming
“ into low lodging-houses?” “ *Very much.* If fever was brought
“ into Kelso by wanderers, we always separated them immediately
“ by removing them to the dispensary. Were it not for the dis-
“ pensary, which is not connected with the poor laws, we should
“ be very badly off.”—Vol. iii., p. 690.

On the general subject of the connection of contagious Fever with destitution, I have entered so fully on former occasions, and particularly in my paper on the epidemic of 1843, that I may be excused from dwelling on it again. But I may be allowed to observe how strikingly all the foregoing extracts illustrate the connection of fever with the state of the unemployed and vagrant poor in Scotland. The following are farther illustrations, to be added to many others formerly adduced, of the general efficacy and importance of destitution as a predisposing cause (and only a predisposing cause) of fever.

W. W. GRAY, Esq., Surgeon, Irvine.

“ Last year we had more fever than usual. I attribute this to
“ the hardness of the times. The poor had a greater difficulty in
“ obtaining proper diet. *The fever selected the poorest, and was*
“ *confined to the most wretched* of them, or nearly so. The per-
“ sons attacked usually lived in damp, low, ill-ventilated rooms;
“ and perhaps the fever was partly owing to that cause. But I
“ think *their living in such houses is a consequence of their poverty.*

“ I observed, that during the depression of trade the operatives
 “ descended to worse apartments than they had formerly occupied.
 “ I have observed that the fever was most prevalent in lodging-
 “ houses, and other houses where the poor were most closely hud-
 “ dled together ; but then I think again, *that their being so hud-*
 “ *dled together is, to a certain extent, the consequence of their*
 “ *poverty.* During the late depression of trade, there was also
 “ more low drinking than at other times. Persons in a low state
 “ of poverty, deprived of their usual employment, in a depressed
 “ state of mind, without sufficient food or sufficient clothing, have
 “ naturally a craving for stimulants. In this way, I account for
 “ the excessive drinking among the lower orders during the late
 “ depression of trade. It was not so much the intemperance that
 “ caused the poverty, *as the poverty that caused the intemperance.*”
 —Vol. iii., p. 502.

Dr TEMPLETON, Aberdeen, Physician to the General
 Dispensary.

“ We had a severe epidemic fever beginning in 1837, and ter-
 “ minating in 1840.”

“ Can you assign any cause for the origin of that disease?”
 “ No, I cannot.”

“ Can you state any cause for its extension after making its ap-
 “ pearance ?” “ Yes. *It spreads most rapidly among those who*
 “ *are in miserable circumstances.* We find it so in all cases—
 “ among those who are in want of food and clothing, and in the
 “ inmates of houses that are too much crowded.”

“ Do you find it promoted by bad air and damp?” “ These
 “ are frequent concomitants, but not constant.”—Ib., p. 620.

W. H. FORREST, Esq., Surgeon, Stirling.

“ There have been 240 cases of fever in the last six or eight
 “ months. Thinks it *connected with poverty* and want of proper
 “ sustentation, and with the dirty habits of the people. He has
 “ seen *no cases of this fever on persons who had a sufficiently*
 “ *nourishing diet.*”—Vol. iii., p. 200.

Again—“ The poor of Stirling suffer chiefly from fevers. That

“ this disease will continue to prevail, there is every reason to
 “ believe the causes favourable to its production continue un-
 “ abated, and are rapidly acquiring fresh vigour from the unceasing
 “ wants and privations of the poor. Fever may be emphatically
 “ called the poor man’s disease. It is seldom absent from his
 “ abode, and not unfrequently his whole household are its vic-
 “ tims. In such circumstances he and his family present a miser-
 “ able spectacle.”—“ When the fever subsides, and the appetite,
 “ or rather craving for food returns, the misery which they endure
 “ defies all description. A few cold potatoes, or perhaps a little
 “ oatmeal, the gift very often of a poor neighbour, are very gene-
 “ rally the only means they have of restoring their emaciated
 “ bodies and wasted strength. *For the relief of such persons there*
 “ *are no public funds in this place* ; and only last summer I was
 “ compelled to institute a soup or beef-tea kitchen, supported by
 “ private subscription, which I have no doubt saved many persons
 “ from starvation.”—Vol. iii., p. 973.

It is true that the epidemic fever, which was natu-
 rally to be expected as a result of the extensive desti-
 tution in Scotland in 1841–42, did not (providentially
 for the country) shew itself so soon as might have been
 anticipated ; not until some revival of trade had taken
 place, and the kind of provision made by voluntary cha-
 rity for the unemployed poor, at Edinburgh and Glas-
 gow and various other places, had been much lessened
 or discontinued. But it then not only shewed itself,
 but spread with uncommon rapidity, and went to an
 extent formerly unknown, and which, but for the pro-
 vidential circumstance of its mortality being unusually
 small, would have made it the heaviest infliction on the
 cities of Scotland which has occurred since the time of
 the plague. I have shewn, that, in six months, ending
 January 1844, 3160 patients in this fever were admitted
 into hospital in Edinburgh, being above 700 more in
 six months than were *ever* received in a *year* before ;

and an unprecedented number were refused admittance. We may be certain that, at least, twice that number (probably 7000) cases of fever existed in Edinburgh during these six months; and Dr Perry satisfied himself that in Glasgow 32,000 people, nearly 12 per cent. of the population, had fever within eight months of last year. And on this widely extended epidemic, the following observations have been made with precision:—

1. It is distinctly a “*nova pestis*,” distinct from any form of epidemic fever which has prevailed in this country within the memory of man, particularly shewing its difference from former epidemics in this, that it has affected quite as easily those who had suffered attacks of the usual contagious fever recently as others. Thus it caused 33 per cent. of the whole mortality in Glasgow during a part of 1843, notwithstanding that typhus fever had caused 20 per cent. of the whole mortality in 1837, and again nearly 14 per cent. in 1840, (while the highest mortality by fever recorded in any English town of late years, is less than 8 per cent. of the whole, and even this has only been observed in a single year, and only in Manchester and Liverpool, where a great proportion of the population being Irish, are nearly unprotected by the law). I cannot learn that this peculiar species of fever has shewn itself in any of the English towns; it would seem to have been exclusively a scourge of Scotland.

I may add, that, from the striking resemblance of severe cases of this fever to one form of jaundice, (that from *suppression* of the secretion of bile), and from the known effect of mental emotion in producing that disease, there is more ground for suspecting, in this than in other fevers, that its first *origin* may have been from mental distress and anxiety.

2. Although it fortunately did not shew itself until

the worst period of the distress from want of employment was over, and although it has, like other contagious epidemics, arisen and declined from causes which we cannot explain; yet it has everywhere appeared, even more characteristically than the common typhus, to be "emphatically a poor man's disease," perhaps we should say, still more peculiarly, *a poor woman's*. It was, in the first instance, very much diffused, as already stated, by the vagrants wandering in search of work. It spread through all the poorest districts in all the towns where it appeared, and made no progress among the higher ranks, or even among the working classes in full employment. I found, by inquiries extending to above 1700 persons, that the destitute and unemployed poor (whom we cannot suppose, even in these bad times, to be 1-5th of the population) furnished 2-3ds of the cases of fever in Edinburgh, Glasgow, and Greenock. Dr Watt ascertained, that of an excess of 2340 deaths in Glasgow in 1843 over 1842, chiefly caused by this fever, *nearly the whole* occurred among people so destitute that they were buried at the public expense; and that, when the whole mortality by fever in that of that year was 33 per cent., the mortality by fever in that poorest class of the community was 50 per cent. of the whole deaths. Carrying his inquiries farther back, he found, that, in 1837, the mortality from fever in that destitute part of the population was three times as great as the mortality from that cause in the community at large. And the district surgeons in Glasgow testify, what is also testified by all who saw much of the poor in Edinburgh during the epidemic, that the cause of destitution in almost all the cases where the fever occurred was *want of employment*.*

These facts shew, although there had been some re-

* See my Observations on the Epidemic of 1843.

vival of trade before the epidemic became general, yet the relief by voluntary charity to the unemployed had been withdrawn much earlier than the employment became general; and furnish, therefore, an additional proof of the irregularity and incompetency of that plan of relief. I said formerly, that I was aware that every attempt would be made, by those who were prepossessed against the practical conclusion from these facts, to evade this evidence, and accordingly it has been attempted to make out, that it is only the crowding of many persons together in ill-aired rooms, not the destitution, that gives this increased tendency to fevers in this class of the people. But this attempt I had anticipated (*Observations on the Epidemic of 1843*, p. 12); and having found that the most destitute people are so peculiarly liable to the fever, I am quite willing, for the sake of argument, to admit that it is *only* the crowding (as I have no doubt it is *partly* the crowding) of those persons that gives the predisposition, because I have only to put the question—Among *this class*, what causes the crowding? When we carry the inquiry one step backwards, we arrive at the destitution. We have here only another illustration of the remark repeatedly made to me by the late Dr Cowan, in conversation on this subject,—“Turn which way we will, in seeking for the causes of these epidemics of fever. Destitution stares us in the face,—the main cause of all.”

Notwithstanding all this evidence, the Commissioners will not admit that the extension of epidemic fever in the large towns of Scotland is a fair ground for alteration of the provision against destitution from want of employment; and *in reference to this argument* for a change, they use the expression that “it does seem to

“ us unwise to alter the laws, in accordance with *theoretical speculation*, particularly when other causes may be assigned for the evil.”—P. 56.

As one of those who have certainly indulged in these “speculations,” I might have thought it necessary to set up some defence against this passage, had I not found another passage in the Report itself, which will answer my purpose perfectly.

“ We believe it will be generally admitted, that whenever the constitution is weakened by *destitution, dissipation, or unhealthy atmosphere, the susceptibility of contagion is greatly increased, and we most cordially concur in recommending that legislative measures should be adopted to remove the causes* which predispose the lower classes to attacks of epidemic disease.”—P. 28.

Now the extent of my “theoretical speculations,” as to the predisposing causes of fever in the large towns of Scotland, is precisely what is here stated by the Commissioners themselves. I have given proofs (not speculative, but practical) that, of the three predisposing causes which they have themselves assigned, “destitution” is the most powerful and most fundamental. I have shewn that the unemployed, or the partially employed and destitute poor, not one-fifth of the community, furnish two-thirds of the cases of fever; and that, among this class, “unhealthy atmosphere” is usually only an effect of destitution; common sense and experience teaching us, that when people are destitute, they must and will get into cheap lodgings, and huddle together in cold weather, and the atmosphere of their rooms will become unhealthy. I must, therefore, have the “cordial concurrence” of the Commissioners in wishing that the legislative measures in question shall be specially directed against destitution. And it is surely no “*theoretical speculation*” to wish

further, that these measures shall be assimilated to those means for the relief of destitution, which *experience* of many years standing, in many large towns, has shewn to be attended—*according to the statements of the Commissioners themselves*,—both with a “more comfortable condition of the working classes,” and also, with a comparatively trifling extension of epidemic fever.

But fever, although so peculiarly the poor man’s disease, is by no means the only one which afflicts humanity the more, as unrelieved destitution is more frequent. I formerly stated in evidence that this is true of almost all mortal diseases. The following evidence as to Insanity in Glasgow in 1843 is important.

DR HUTCHISON, Physician to the Lunatic Asylum,
Glasgow.

“Next to hereditary predisposition, the most frequent causes of the disease in the cases admitted last year were intemperance and *want*. For some years the number whose malady may be attributed to these causes has been increasing. The increase has been among the lower classes. In 1841, the causes traced to intemperance were thirty; in 1842, forty-six. In 1841, those arising from want were five; in 1842, seventeen. I have no doubt that the cause of the increase of both is commercial distress, tending to lowness of wages and want of employment.”—Vol. i., p. 482.

“In what precise way does want, in your opinion, tend to produce lunacy?”—“In two ways: want shatters the system; it also makes the individual seek sensual enjoyment—it *makes him reckless, and often intemperate*.”—Vol. i., p. 482.

The Commissioners publish a table of comparative mortality of several towns in England and Scotland for several years, taken from Dr Watt’s paper on the Vital Statistics of Scottish Towns, in the transactions of the

British Association, from which they say it appears that the greater prevalence of fever in Scotland had not influenced the rate of mortality. This table gives a higher mortality to the English towns—particularly Liverpool and Manchester—than any other documents which I have seen ; and I learn from Dr Watt, that the figures here given are, in fact, different, and apply to a different series of years, from those on which he places the most reliance ; and that with respect to several of the Scottish towns, the number of the inhabitants buried in country church-yards is so great as to vitiate in a great measure all such comparative observations. But the important point, to which the Commissioners have not adverted, is the nature of the diseases by which the chief mortality is produced. In these English towns, during three years selected, there was a very unusual mortality by small-pox and measles, diseases which we know become epidemic occasionally in towns of all descriptions, and spread epidemically among persons unprotected against them in all ranks of society ; but the mortality of which falls almost entirely on young children,—not more than five per cent. of it on persons beyond the age of twenty,—and which, therefore, in a political view, are comparatively innocuous ; whereas, in the Scotch towns, at the periods compared, a much larger proportion of the mortality, as we have seen, resulted from contagious fever, which has these important peculiarities: *first*, that its extension as an epidemic is nearly confined to the poor, and especially, as already proved, to the destitute and unemployed ; and, *secondly*, that by far the greater part of the mortality from it falls *on adults* ; 70 *per cent.*, both in Edinburgh and Glasgow, on persons beyond the age of twenty ; and especially on the fathers of families, the

most valuable lives in a community. Hence, in a political view, this disease is of much more importance, and more formidable, than any other epidemic ; and no doubt it is in consequence of its great prevalence in Ireland, that we have the striking differences of the Irish from the English population, so well expressed by Mr Chadwick, and which, I have no doubt, would find a parallel in a comparison of some of the Scotch and English towns. “ Of every 10,000 inhabitants, “ there are in Ireland 125 fewer adults than in England, and this smaller number of working adults, “ with eight or ten years less of life or working ability, “ have 450 more children dependent on them.”

The following are farther illustrations of a very lamentable fact—(which I formerly stated in the Statistical Journal)—the effect of destitution from want of employment in producing Vice in females.

WM. BREBNER, Esq., Governor of Glasgow Prison.

“ I have known many instances of girls from the country part-
“ ing with every article, till they have been forced to turn to the
“ street—trying to make things better, and regularly making them
“ worse.”—Vol. i., p. 467.

Councillor M'AULAY, Edinburgh, Treasurer to the
Lock Hospital.

“ Have you reason to know that any of the persons in the Lock
“ Hospital are driven by destitution to evil courses ?” “ I believe,
“ in a great many cases, they are driven to prostitution by extreme
“ destitution.”—Vol. i., p. 170.

Mr J. WIGHAM, Edinburgh.

“ If care were taken of the unemployed able-bodied, it would
“ save a great deal of distress, and prevent crime. I have been a
“ director of the Lock Hospital for a few years, where great misery

“ appears. The same conclusion has been brought to my mind in
 “ hearing about the poor girls placed there. The greater part of
 “ the prostitutes of the lower class become such for want of pro-
 “ per attention.”—Vol. i., p. 121.

Mr ALEX. KYLE, Visitor of the Destitute Sick
 Society at Leith.

“ I observe a very lamentable fact in Leith. The number of
 “ prostitutes is, I think, greatly on the increase. A great deal of
 “ it certainly arises from *want of employment*. When we speak to
 “ them in regard to their way of life, they say, ‘What would you
 “ ‘ have us to do ; we cannot starve.’ It would be desirable to
 “ have a *poor-house, and work given them*, in order to raise them
 “ in the scale of moral beings.”—Vol. i., p. 229.

Mr ALEX. ALLAN, Cabinetmaker, Edinburgh.

“ Do you think it desirable to make any arrangement for able-
 “ bodied (unemployed) women under strict regulation ?”

“ I think *it would be most desirable*, and a great preventive of
 “ prostitution ; numbers of servant girls who come from the
 “ country, and have no house when out of place, would be pre-
 “ vented from falling into crime, if they had temporary protec-
 “ tion.”—Vol. i., p. 239.

Any one who reflects on this evidence, and on that which I quoted as to the neglect of orphans, must, I think, be convinced that there must be many individual instances, in all the great towns of Scotland, of young women consigned to vice and infamy merely by poverty, whom a good poor-law, giving ready access to well regulated poor-houses, would enable to live honestly and respectably.

Again, this is at least equally good evidence as to the effect which an effective poor-law must have on the prevention of Crime ; the facts in this part of the subject,

likewise, being supplementary of what was stated in regard to the effects of unrelieved destitution on widows and orphans.

F. HILL, Esq., Inspector of Prisons in Scotland.

" I am of opinion that *the want of an efficient poor-law in Scotland is the cause of much crime*, and that it greatly impedes the effect of prison discipline in reforming offenders, and restoring them to society.

" In what respect do you find the law insufficient ?" " One respect in which it is insufficient is, that *it affords no relief to able-bodied persons* who cannot obtain employment ; and the relief it affords to the young is, in my opinion, often inadequate and ill directed."

" Have you noticed many orphans or deserted children come into prison in an uneducated state ?" " Yes ; and not brought up to any trade or habits of industry."

" The state of the poor-laws in Scotland very greatly enhances the difficulty of restoring offenders to society. The period of liberation is the most trying in the life of a prisoner. When he leaves the prison, he labours under a disadvantage in procuring employment. It very often happens that, with the best intentions, he cannot get employed. He is thus, almost of necessity, driven back into crime. Now, if there were a workhouse to which persons could go, who were willing to submit to the rules, work and live on plain fare, and where they could remain till they could get honest employment, it would greatly facilitate our operations in the prisons. Their disposition to amend their course of life would be seen from the fact, that they had voluntarily placed themselves in a well ordered workhouse, where they must rise early, where intoxicating drinks are forbidden, and where they must give up their personal liberty. There are houses of refuge at present, which have been forced into existence by the want of a general provision, such as an efficient poor-law might readily afford. In these liberated prisoners are received, and less difficulty is found in procuring situations for

“prisoners coming from them than for such as come from prison directly.”—Vol. iii., p. 881.

The following facts may be regarded as an *experimentum crucis*, to indicate what effects may be expected from an effective poor-law, giving a right to relief, under due restrictions, to able-bodied, unemployed females. They establish, as Mr Hill states, the painful fact, “that a large number of persons in Scotland are willing to enter, not merely a workhouse, ut a prison, and to remain there a long time.”

“Some time ago, there were in Glasgow prison a number of *voluntary prisoners*—persons undergoing imprisonment of their own choice. *Two years ago, when there was much distress in the country, that number had risen from eight or ten to nearly fifty.* They were undergoing the full discipline of a prison, including, in most cases, individual separation, labour, early rising, and very plain diet. They had subjected themselves to all the rigour of imprisonment in order to obtain food and shelter. Some of them had been in this state of civil death more than a year. Thus the prison was, to a certain extent, serving the purposes of a workhouse. It being considered inconsistent with the state of the law to allow such persons to remain in prison, an order was issued by the General Board of Directors to put a stop to the practice; and the result has unfortunately been to convert a number of persons into criminals, who had *shewn, by their willingness to give up liberty, to work hard, to live on the plainest fare, and submit to all the rules of a prison, that they were sincerely desirous of avoiding a life of guilt, and living peaceably and honourably.* Nearly half of those thus ejected from Glasgow prison have returned as offenders, and some under serious charges. One of them, a girl of thirteen, who had much pleased the governor by her docility, industry, and good conduct, but who had no good parents or good house to go to, was committed to the prison within one month after she had been compelled to leave, and is now under sentence of transportation.”—Vol. iii., p. 883.

The following simple and affecting narratives of voluntary prisoners (since dismissed) give almost a tragic interest to this part of the subject.

“ M. L., a married woman, aged twenty-seven, neat and active.
 “ —I have been married twice. The friends of my first husband
 “ are very decent people, and take care of my two children by my
 “ first marriage. I thought it sair to part with the second child;
 “ but when, from my imprudent second marriage, I saw poverty
 “ on all sides, I thought it better that my child should be cared
 “ for and brought up among good folks, than that I should look
 “ on it daily. My husband listed for a soldier when his child was
 “ some weeks old; it was a sickly bairn, and when my husband
 “ deserted me I was sair distressed. I carried it in my arms, and
 “ could do little but nurse it and hush its wailings for six months,
 “ when it died. I took the fever, with grief, fatigue, and poverty,
 “ and went to the Infirmary. After I came out I got work for a
 “ time. Then no more work was to be had, and I was sair
 “ pressed. I slept one night at the refuge for the houseless.
 “ There I heard of this place, and came here direct. In a few days
 “ I shall have been here a twelvemonth. I can get a good cha-
 “ racter from the clergyman at Paisley. I did not apply to the
 “ kirk-session, for I thought shame to be refused, and they do not
 “ help the young and active.”

M. S., a young girl, a voluntary prisoner in Glasgow:—“ I
 “ have no friends. My parents died three years ago. I was work-
 “ ing in the mills at their death. I was six years in the mill, till
 “ it was burnt down. I had earned 6s. a-week. After their
 “ death I lodged with a friend, and paid 1s. a-week for my lodg-
 “ ing. After the mill was burnt, I left the decent woman’s
 “ lodgings. I could find no work anywhere. I was idle six
 “ months. I suffered from hunger many a time in that idle six
 “ months. I did not think to try the kirk-session, because I
 “ never heard of a factory girl getting anything. *I never stole*
 “ *till this idle time.* The money got by the theft went to buy
 “ drink. *Those who shared it with me had often been good-na-*
 “ *tured to me.* When out of work, I would have gone to any
 “ hard working decent place, if I could have got bread. I intend

“ to stay as a voluntary prisoner, if Mr Brebner will allow me, till times are better.”

M. A., a decent young girl :—“ My father died ten years ago. My mother a few years back. I worked at the mills for three years after my mother’s death, and earned 5s. a-week ; then the mill was burnt down. Then no work was to be had, so a girl from the same mill, and myself, lifted something. The money went in bread, for we were sore distressed. I have not a place to go to when I leave here. I have a cousin, a clergyman in Ireland, who was kind to my mother, and might be to me, but have neither decent clothes nor money to take me to him. All my clothes went before I stole. I would work hard, or live hard, or do anything, to stay in such a place as a House of Refuge.”—Vol. iii., p. 885.

“ There is one fact which I think rather important, as indicating a greater pressure of distress in Scotland than in England. We know that females have fewer openings by which to obtain a livelihood than males. My district includes two English counties, Northumberland and Durham, and I find that the proportion of female prisoners there is much smaller than in Scotland. There are *nearly twice as many* female prisoners, in proportion to the males, in Scotland than in England,—a difference which seems to me explicable on the principle I have stated.”

“ I had an opportunity, some years ago, of observing the state of things in Jersey, where there is a very efficient poor law, with great facilities for obtaining admission to the workhouse, consequently with this, a great exemption from crime, and complete absence of mendicity. A person who had lived on the island many years told me he had not once been asked for alms.”—Vol. iii., p. 888.

DUNCAN CAMPBELL, Esq., Governor of the Prison,
Dundee.

“ There are a number of cases in which I think destitution has operated *indirectly* as a cause of crime,—where, from the poverty of parents, the children have been neglected, not properly taught, nor furnished with the means of providing for them-

“ selves.” “ What, from your observation, is the cause most influential in producing crime ?” “ Poverty and improvidence.” Vol. iii., p. 164.

Mr JAMES HARESINE, Governor of Fife County Jail.

“ I have distinctly traced, in several instances, crimes committed to inability to find employment. There are eight cases of which I can speak from my own knowledge of the fact, that sheer want led to the commission of crime. I knew the parties before they came into gaol. Two of them had been once of very good character, and five others had been decent people, against whom nothing could be said. One, a cabinet-maker, had been a man of unimpeachable respectability, and was reduced by family losses and depression in trade. He was committed for stealing ducks : he had a family of five children in want, and he took the ducks to satisfy their hunger. I am certain of the motive. I knew the man, and he confessed it to me himself.”—Vol. iii., p. 286.

Mr J. KIDD, Governor of Prison, Dumfries.

“ I have seen cases of individuals who prefer being in prison to being out, from the destitution in which they previously were. I have had three boys, brothers, under my charge, who were in a state of almost total destitution when they came in,—the children of Irish parents, both father and mother dead.”—Vol. iii., p. 570.

Dr J. INGLIS, Inverness.

“ Is it your opinion, that at present a number of able-bodied people are destitute ?” “ A great number.”

“ Do they steal ?” “ I think they do ; they are obliged to do it. They support themselves by three great means : they go to the neighbouring plantations and gather leaves and dung on the roads, to raise their potatoes ; then they get some work during the spring and harvest months in the fields ; and I think there is little difficulty in determining the third means of support, which is, by going to the plantations and fields, and stealing what they can.”—Vol. ii., p. 501.

WM. BREBNER, Esq., Governor of the Glasgow Prison.

" I have known, in many instances, crime come out of destitution—out of idleness. We had a mill burnt here lately, and in the course of a few weeks we had about a dozen of the workers, in consequence of their being thrown idle ; and all public strikes generally send a few to us."

" By idleness, do you mean being unemployed, or being without industrious habits ?" " I mean, in this instance, being out of employment."

" Do you consider that the want of employment leads to crime ?" " Yes."

" Or, as compared with intemperance ?" " Yes. I have known many instances of unemployed persons falling into intemperate habits, and then becoming criminal."—Vol. i., p. 1163.

The following evidence by Mr Brebner, is such as almost to supersede anything farther on this head.

Tabular Statement of Persons committed to Glasgow Prison in 1842, whose crimes can be traced to inability to find employment:—

	15 and under.	15 to 20	20 to 30	30 to 40	40 to 50	50 to 60	60 and upwards.	Total.
Males.	22	49	32	10	16	5	0	134
Females.	6	32	38	29	12	6	1	124
Total.	28	81	70	39	28	11	1	258

Mr Brebner adds,

" None are included in this last table, except those of whom there can be no doubt that it was absolute want and not inclination which drove them to commit the crimes of which they were found guilty. I may say here, as matter of opinion, that if it could be accurately traced, how far inability to find employment has operated in swelling the amount of crime, the result

“ *would be fearful*, whether as respects those driven to commit
 “ their first offences through the pressure of want, or those who
 “ would willingly relinquish a life of crime for one of well-doing,
 “ but cannot, through inability to find employment.”—Vol. i.,
 p. 468.

When the Commissioners assert, that the results of the voluntary plan of relief to the unemployed in the recent depression in the large towns have been “ not “ unsatisfactory,” I reply, that this assertion (besides being contradicted, as will afterwards appear, almost immediately by themselves) is a mere *petitio principii*. Our proposition is, that these results have been *most unsatisfactory* ; that the relief granted under that plan has been generally inadequate, and almost always too long delayed, and too soon withdrawn ; that in consequence “ numbers have perished miserably, whom food, “ fuel, and clothing would have saved ;” that numbers of the destitute have taken fever, which has spread through other ranks ; that numbers have been impelled by destitution to vagrancy and beggary, to vice and crime ; and that the independent and industrious spirit of the people has been miserably depressed ; and on all these points, I think I have given abundant proof from the evidence collected by the Commissioners themselves.

Now, when I state the existence of these various evils, as a perfectly sufficient reason for wishing for a change in the Poor Law, I can hardly think it necessary to say that I do not ascribe them to the existing Poor Law *as their cause*, which the Commissioners seem to think all must do, who wish, on account of them, to see that law changed. These evils existing, the question is, *are they met* by the present law ? The object of all legislation in regard to the poor is to prevent and

mitigate, as far as possible, such miseries and their consequences ; and the Commissioners distinctly say, that they prefer the principle of the Scotch law, not because it is less burdensome to the rich, but *because it is, in reality, more beneficial to the poor* ; the neglect of a “salutary maxim of Scripture” which they denounce in the English law, being, as they allege, more injurious to the poor themselves than to any other class of society. When, therefore, we show that the poor suffer more, physically, morally, and politically, in Scotland than in England, and this not merely temporarily and accidentally, but permanently, or in an increasing ratio as stagnations of trade, or epidemics of disease, or changes in arts, or in the direction of capital, occur,—we do quite enough to shew that the law which is intended for their protection is not doing its duty. We are entitled to call upon those who defend it, as being more truly beneficial *to the poor themselves* than others, to *shew us the practical proofs of that, its alleged superiority*.

The *onus probandi* being thus thrown on those who maintain the superiority of the principle of the Scotch law in regard to the able-bodied poor, let us consider more particularly what is here alleged as the reason for preserving that principle unchanged ; and what other means the Commissioners suggest for mitigating the evils in question.

The principle which the Commissioners state as the basis of the practical administration of the poor law in Scotland, and which they think ought to be the guide of all nations in regard to the relief of the able-bodied poor, (as distinguished from the impotent,) is thus laid down, and demands the more attention, as it is considered by them to be founded on the positive direction of Scripture. “It is simply this, that the circumstan-

“ces of the truly impotent poor give them an absolute
 “*and unconditional right* to the relief necessary for their
 “subsistence, they being prevented, in the course of
 “providence, from earning the means of subsistence
 “for themselves ; while, in the case of the able-bodied,
 “all that humanity, or even Christian philanthropy
 “requires, is, that *we furnish them with the means of*
 “*developing their own resources*. We learn from a source
 “which, if rightly understood and applied, is no less
 “conclusive in political economy than in religion, and
 “the disregard of which, in any relation of life, cannot
 “fail to be attended with injurious results, that ‘ if a
 “‘ man *will* not work, neither should he eat.’ The
 “overlooking of this salutary maxim in the provisions
 “of statutes appointed to regulate the administration
 “of charitable funds, has been proved by experience to
 “be productive of the most serious evils in the social
 “system.”—P. 45.

This is *the single consideration* which the Commissioners state as justifying the practice in Scotland, of giving the able-bodied poor no right, under any circumstances, to claim relief ; and giving the administrators of the poor’s fund no power to assess for their benefit ; *i. e.* of throwing the relief of their wants on voluntary charity entirely,—making it a burden on the charitable portion of the community only, which all who are disposed to be uncharitable may altogether escape.

But, in proportion to our reverence for the authority and wisdom of this salutary maxim, should be our anxiety to satisfy ourselves that it is really “ rightly understood and applied.”

Now, I maintain that this maxim is applicable, as the words distinctly imply, not to *all* the able-bodied poor, but only to those who “*will* not work.” It cannot surely

be the intention of the Commissioners to affirm that *all* who profess to be destitute from want of employment must necessarily, and at all times, come under this description ; for that would be tantamount to making the Scriptures affirm, that the supply of labour can never exceed the demand. But if not, then this “salutary maxim” says positively nothing as to the case before us,—that of the able-bodied poor who are *bona fide* out of employment,—*cannot* get work, and therefore *have no resources*, and are “prevented, in the course of providence, from earning the means of subsistence for themselves,” just as effectually as if they had been palsied or maimed. Do the Commissioners mean to assert, that Christian philanthropy requires nothing to be done for this class ? or that this, the most lamentable perhaps of all kinds of poverty, is to be excluded from the comprehensive precept,—“Thou shalt open wide thy hand to thy poor brother,—*thou shalt surely give him ?*” If this be not meant, then all that can be deduced from the salutary maxim in question, taken in connection with other well known texts of Scripture, is that, in giving relief to the able-bodied poor, we ought to satisfy ourselves that they *cannot* find work ; we ought to establish a test of destitution, and, wherever it is possible, couple that relief with labour.

But this, the Commissioners must be aware, is precisely “the basis of the practical administration of the poor laws,” not in Scotland, where the poor laws do not take cognizance of the able-bodied at all, but in England, and in every other country where there is a reasonable and systematic provision for all kinds of destitution.

I maintain, then, that the intimations of Scripture are strictly in accordance with the principle of the pre-

sent English law, viz. that it is our duty to give relief to all kinds of destitution ; coupling it, however, in the case of the able-bodied, with labour, or at least with such conditions as shall test their willingness to labour. When that test has been applied, the rule of Scripture that we should “ open wide our hands to our poor “ brother,” is equally applicable to those who are destitute from this cause as from any other ; and the circumstance of there being a certain number whom the application of that test excludes, does not absolve us from the duty of effectually relieving all who are not so excluded. Certain additional safeguards are admitted by all to be required in the case of the able-bodied ; but, to support the judgment of the Commissioners, it would be necessary to prove, not that such safeguard should be established, but that the only effectual safeguard is simply to throw the burden of the relief of such cases on the charitably disposed part of the population, and to relieve the uncharitable of it entirely. For this, I confidently maintain that neither reason nor Scripture affords any justification ; and I maintain farther, that the result of experience in regard to it is, that the relief thus given to this description of suffering is often necessarily irregular, often misapplied, and in general utterly inadequate and inefficient.

The real cause of all the difficulties which embarrass the speculations of the Commissioners, as of many others on this subject, is simply this, that they persist in entertaining an apprehension which experience, rightly considered, shews to be visionary. *They have been told*, that “ a provision for general indigence, if “ regularly proclaimed, will be counted on, and be sure “ to multiply its own objects—to create, in fact, more “ of general want than it supplies ;” and they shut their

eyes to the evidence by which it has been clearly and repeatedly shewn, that this *opinion* is fundamentally erroneous,—that any such evils, resulting from a legal provision for the able-bodied, have only occurred under gross mismanagement; that they may be, and have been, corrected, and are still more easily prevented; whereas the evils resulting from unrelieved destitution among the able-bodied poor, are urgent, distressing, injurious in the highest degree to the health, morality, and character of a nation; and nothing has been found effectual in relieving them except *an efficient legal provision*, or such regulations for the constant inspection and uniform relief of destitution of all sorts, as are equivalent to giving the sufferers *a right to relief*.

The statement on which the Commissioners mainly rely, as *the single ground* of their fear of the effect of giving a legal claim to relief to the unemployed poor, is made very distinctly, and in a few words, by the Duke of Richmond, with whose *opinion* they “cordially concur.” “I think, that if it were held out in Scotland that a man would be as well off in a workhouse as in his own cottage, *you would destroy the moral character of that man.*”*

* This opinion is repeated by many witnesses, but I cannot perceive that it is ever attempted to state facts in support of it, on any such scale as to be a fit foundation for legislative measures. Thus, the Rev. Dr Forbes of Glasgow, being asked, “Do you think it advisable to have an assessment for the able-bodied poor?” answers, “Certainly not.” But when questioned farther, “What is your objection to that?” he has nothing more to say than, “I should fear that a great many would have their motives to industry diminished,” &c.; and “*I do not know that it would have a very good moral effect,*” &c.—(Part i., p. 44.) Of the large number of those witnesses who expressed a decided opinion

The answer is simple, and, I think, decisive, because it consists of *facts*, stated in opposition to *opinions*. There are in England and Wales probably two millions

against legal relief to the able-bodied, I have found none who professed to give a reason better founded on *facts*, than the above.

The following extract contains the substance of the only reason given for the opinion in question, and shews on how slender a foundation it has usually been founded.

JAMES SPENCE, Esq., Kirkwall.

“ I would decidedly disapprove of providing for the able-bodied when out of employment by an assessment. That, *in my opinion, would annihilate activity and enterprise. I think industry would be annihilated by relief given in a workhouse to such parties.*” On farther interrogation he says, “ I have always heard and believe it to be the case, that *the English are a most industrious people.*” Interrogated,—“ How do you reconcile that to the opinion which you have given, that relief in a workhouse would annihilate industry ?” Answer,—“ *The expression is sweeping, but I intended it to apply to the persons relieved.*”—Vol. ii., p. 228. As if none of the industrious Englishmen had ever received legal relief.

On the other hand, various witnesses who had seen much of the habits and feelings of the working-classes in Scotland, give a decided opinion, (without referring, as I think they should have done, to the example of England or other countries in support of it), that no such effect on their character is to be expected from a well-regulated legal system of relief. Mr Henderson and Mr Ferguson, employed as inspectors of the unemployed on the relief list in Glasgow, when asked if a legal provision for the unemployed would impair their provident habits or feelings of independence, answered distinctly, “ I do not think so ;”—the latter witness adding, “ I have a better opinion of the Scotch people ; I have known so much of the Scotch people that I would not say so. When the people know that the laws of their country have provided, in case of emergency, a certain pro-

of labourers. every one of whom knows perfectly that he is entitled, when unemployed, to accommodation and comforts in a workhouse, equal, or superior to

“ vision for them, I do not think such a provision would have a
 “ tendency to lower their morals. If there were any outlet by
 “ which the people could give a return for relief, that would be
 “ the best way of treating the Scottish people, as they have ever
 “ been independent and industrious.”—Part i., p. 434.

Mr Hart, long an elder of Greenock, and member of the Relief Committee, although averse to assessments for the relief of the able-bodied (for what reason does not appear), says distinctly that he does not think such a provision would injure their provident habits: “ I have a better opinion of the Scottish character
 “ than to suppose it would have any such influence.”

The Rev. Mr Baird, of the United Secession Church at Paisley, —asked, “ In regard to the provision which you propose for the
 “ able-bodied,—what would be the effect on their provident habits ?” Answer,—“ *The effect would be advantageous.* I have
 “ a strong impression that the longer you are able to keep up the
 “ general mass of the poor,—the more nearly you can keep them
 “ up to a state of permanent comfort,—the less likely you are to
 “ be troubled with pauperism.”—Vol. i. p. 686.

Mr ALEX. ALLAN, Cabinetmaker, Edinburgh.

“ Supposing relief given, as a general rule, in the workhouse to
 “ able-bodied persons, do you think that might have the effect of
 “ relieving destitution in such a way as not to impair the provident habits of the working-classes ?” “ *I think it might.* I think
 “ it would prevent worse consequences, which follow being totally
 “ unprovided for: *many who, when they come to the last stage of*
 “ *poverty, degenerate into crime, would be kept from that if they*
 “ *had the last resource of the workhouse ;* and when circumstances
 “ altered, they might enter society again, without being reduced
 “ to that stage. It would be a last resource, but one which would
 “ save them from degenerating into a course of crime, *which almost*
 “ *most uniformly follows extreme destitution.*”—Vol. i., 238.

those which he can command at home. Is it a general fact, that the moral character of these men is destroyed? I maintain that the very reverse is distinctly proved by facts which have been laid before the Commissioners, and, in some instances, asserted and reasoned on by themselves.

I must here remind the reader, that I have always explicitly admitted, what is now generally allowed, that the practice of giving *indiscriminate* out-door relief to able-bodied men, without sufficient evidence of their destitution, and usually *in aid of wages*, (*i.e.*, when a known demand for their labour existed), was a decided abuse which did injure the character of many individuals, and, to a certain degree, fostered a morbid increase of population; but it was an abuse which existed only for a time,—between 1795 and 1834,—which was not general over England,—hardly known in the northern counties,—which has now been in a great measure corrected; and which, therefore, is not a necessary consequence of the system of legal protection of the able-bodied poor;—and, accordingly, as Mr Senior has stated, it has existed only in England and the Canton of Berne, of all the numerous countries in which that system is established.

“ Which do you think has the worst effect on the character of the working man, granting him relief on strict conditions, or letting him beg?” “ I think letting him beg. He loses self-respect, and, when that is lost, it has a most baneful effect. If he had relief in a workhouse, on the strictest conditions, and was there kept from bad company, *he would not be nearly so likely to be lowered in his habits as if he were engaged in begging.*”—Vol. i., p. 239.

But it is idle to accumulate *opinions* on this point, or even the speculative reasons for these opinions, when we have it in our power to appeal to *Experience*, on such a scale as to exclude the fallacies attending observations on individual cases.

But let us consider the evidence which we have, and all of which was placed before the Commissioners, as to the general character and conduct (even in spite of this admitted and now corrected abuse) of the labouring poor in England, particularly as to those qualifications which, in a political view, are the most important,—the love of independent industry and sobriety.

Attend, *e. g.*, to the evidence of Mr Revans, Secretary to the Commission of Inquiry which preceded the Poor Law Amendment Act.

“ The impression that the working-classes in England are very
 “ anxious to obtain the public provision, has been generated by
 “ the large number who, from the commencement of the century
 “ to the amendment of the law, received relief from the rates.
 “ *This impression is erroneous. The working-classes did not seek*
 “ *the parish aid. It was forced upon them by their employers,*
 “ who resorted to the scale system to avoid raising wages in pro-
 “ portion to the increased price of corn; and, from that time to
 “ the present, a constant war has been kept up by the employers
 “ in many parts of England against those labourers *who struggled*
 “ *against receiving pay from the poor rates.*”—Evils of the
 “ State of Ireland, &c.

To the same purpose I formerly quoted a passage from the *Quarterly Review*, written, as I am informed, by a gentleman of the highest character in political life.

“ Where parochial dependence has become common among the
 “ labourers of England, *it has been forced upon them by the perse-*
 “ *vering efforts of the administrators of the poor laws, who, con-*
 “ *spiring with the employers of labour to lower the rate of wages,*
 “ *have prevented the labourer from obtaining employment, except*
 “ *on condition of his becoming a pauper.* Mr Hale justly ob-
 “ serves, as the result of long experience, ‘ a poor man will rise
 “ ‘ up early,—he will sit up late,—he will eat the bread of care-
 “ ‘ fulness,—he will undergo the most severe privations, before

“ ‘ he will take a single shilling, so long as he can carry his head
 “ ‘ independently, and say,—I thank God I have never been a
 “ ‘ pauper ; not one of my family ever took anything from the
 “ ‘ parish.’ *We are convinced of the truth of this statement of the
 “ feeling generally entertained by our peasantry towards parochial
 “ dependence, after no narrow experience of our own.*”—Vol. 50.
 p. 359.*

Again, observe the general statement of Mr Nicholls, the Poor Law Commissioner :—

“ The inmates of our English workhouses are as well clothed,
 “ and generally better lodged and better fed than the agricultural
 “ labourer and his family ; but *experience warrants the fullest as-
 “ surance that nothing short of destitution and of absolute necessity
 “ will induce the able-bodied labourers to take refuge therein ; and
 “ that, if driven thither by their necessities, they will quit them
 “ again as speedily as possible, and strive (generally with in-
 “ creased energy and consequent success) to obtain their subsist-
 “ ence by their own efforts. This has invariably been the result
 “ in England.*”—First Report on Poor Laws in Ireland, p. 23.

To the same purpose I formerly quoted the expressions of Mr C. Hamilton, who had been “ chairman of
 “ one of the largest unions in the kingdom since the
 “ passing of the Poor Law Amendment Act, and had
 “ carefully watched its operation”—in the House of
 “ Commons, Oct. 1. 1841 :—

“ One effect had been to *lower wages*. He repeated that,
 “ and could prove it ; and those who maintained the contrary
 “ could know very little of the working of the workhouse test,
 “ which caused *the labourer to accept any terms rather than go
 “ there.*”

* Such facts shew us how absurd is the insinuation contained in many Scottish writings on this subject, (and obviously countenanced by the Commissioners), that the love of independence is a peculiarly Scottish virtue, or that there is anything in our institutions by which it is peculiarly fostered.

I have myself seen quite enough of the hardships and privations to which English labourers (particularly since the passing of the Poor Law Amendment Act) will submit, rather than throw themselves on the parish, to be fully convinced of the accuracy of the above statements. Indeed, I believe that the only question in England at present is, whether the tests of destitution, now applied in the case of the able-bodied poor claiming relief, are not too rigid,—*i. e.*, whether the poor will not voluntarily subject themselves to hardships, injurious to the country as well as to themselves, rather than become paupers on the conditions now prescribed.

A still stronger statement is made by the (certainly well-informed) author of a pamphlet entitled “Remarks on the Opposition to the Poor Law Amendment Bill,” which has been attributed to Mr Senior, in regard to the working of the English Poor Law “*during nearly the whole of the last century,*” after the passing of the acts which gave justices of the peace the power to order relief to all descriptions of the poor; “but which right could not be exercised in favour of those who refused to enter the workhouse. There was a great increase of rates, and much local mismanagement; but no general dissatisfaction or alarm. Agriculture and manufactures improved, *our labourers surpassed, in diligence and activity, those of any other part of Europe, and improved in conduct.*”—Remarks, &c., p. 6, 7.

In fact, the general character of English labourers is such, and so well known, that when it is stated in Parliament, that “their industry is proverbial,”* no one thinks a vain boast has been uttered.

* Lord Howick’s Speech, June 25. 1844.

The Commissioners publish another important evidence to the same purpose.

The Honourable R. C. SCARLETT of Inverlochy, and Abinger in England.

“ The people of England are, perhaps, *the most trustworthy and effective labourers in the world* ; and, so far as I have had an opportunity of observing labourers in other countries, the labourers of England may be said to be *better worthy of their hire than any others whatever. The character of the people in the Highlands has much less of that energy, activity, and love of independence which are remarkable in the English.*” *—Vol. iii., p. 407-9.

I quoted also, and laid before the Commissioners, the testimony of their own colleague Mr Twisleton, and of Mr Power, on the general character of the working men at Stockport, who suffered so severely in 1842.

“ When in the enjoyment of prosperity, they avail themselves to a great extent of provident institutions, and avoid, almost altogether, dependence on poor rates. On the occurrence of general distress, we find them neither a pauperised mass, nor readily admitting pauperism among them, but *struggling against adversity, beating far and wide for employment ; and, in many instances, leaving the country for foreign climates, rather than depend on any other resources than their own industry and skill.* Those among them, who have not been able or willing to leave the place, have been found enduring distress with patience, and abstaining, often to the injury of health, from making applica-

* It is right to add, that Mr Scarlett gives a decided *opinion*, that the English poor law, “ even in the best managed parishes, has a degrading effect on the character of the people,” and therefore, that it ought not to be introduced into the Highlands. How he reconciles this *opinion* with the foregoing statement I do not perceive ; but the opinion makes his evidence only more valuable as to the fact, that after two centuries of continuance of that law which he thinks injurious, the spirit of independent industry is absolutely unbroken.

“ tions for relief.”—Report on the Population of Stockport, &c., p. 67.

Again, as to the supposed necessary effect of a legal provision against destitution, to “ destroy the moral “ character” of the working-classes, I beg farther to quote the distinct and valuable evidence of Mr Little, provost of Annan, given before themselves.

“ In Annan, where I have long lived, I have had particular
“ opportunities of observing the effects of a legal provision, and
“ of voluntary contributions. No better situation could be chosen
“ —I am near England, and acquainted with Cumberland, where
“ the evils of the English system, such as paying wages from the
“ rates, hardly ever penetrated. I have also had opportunities of
“ observing the Scotch counties of Berwick, Roxburgh, Dumfries,
“ Kirkcudbright, and Wigtown. In Berwickshire and Roxburgh-
“ shire, legal assessments have subsisted for a very long time in
“ perhaps every parish. In the western parts of Dumfriesshire
“ they have only recently been introduced, and in many parishes
“ they do not exist, even now; and in Galloway the parishes
“ assessed are perhaps still fewer in number. *Now, my experience*
“ *leads me to say, and to say very decidedly, that while the labour-*
“ *ing classes in Cumberland are, generally speaking, in a better*
“ *condition than the labouring classes in any of the Scotch counties*
“ *of which I have spoken, the labourers in the eastern border coun-*
“ *ties (where there are assessments) are in a better condition than*
“ *the same class in the western border counties (where the assess-*
“ *ments are partial or recent).*—Appendix, vol. iii., p. 588.

Of the superior condition of the English labourers, particularly as to domestic cleanliness and comforts, there is evidence, also, from Dr Douglas of Kelso, and other witnesses near the border; and I willingly leave it to the reader to judge whether this fact, of the *superior condition and comforts* of the English labourer, is compatible with the supposition that the legal protec-

tion against destitution which he enjoys “destroys his
“moral character,” and thereby “creates more of
“general want than it supplies.”

But farther, it appears that the Commissioners themselves have formed a decided opinion, and no doubt on very good grounds, that, in regard to certain important qualities at least, the moral character and conduct of a large portion of the working classes in England, is, on the whole, *greatly superior to that of the corresponding classes in Scotland.* They say—

“If it be asked—Whether, if such amendments of the present
“poor-law of Scotland as have been adverted to be adopted, they
“will of themselves restore the operative manufacturers of Scotland to a healthy social condition, or *place its large towns on a level with those of England* in point of a sound sanitary state?
“—*we must answer in the negative.* If we find that the quantity
“of ardent spirits used by the population of Scotland, as compared with that of England, is in the ratio of almost three to one, and keep in mind, at the same time, the comparatively small quantities of this article consumed in the rural parishes of Scotland, we shall be at no loss to discover that one essential means of promoting the benefit of the manufacturing classes, is to be found in their restoration to habits of temperance and sobriety. *While the striking contrast between the Scotch and English manufacturers*, in this respect, continues to subsist, it may well be doubted,” &c.

Again—

“The Sanatory Reports of Mr Chadwick, and other concurring publications, present us with *an equally marked contrast* between the Scotch and English manufacturing towns in respect to cleanliness.”—Report, p. 55.

I do not observe in the Report so distinct a comparison of the lower orders in Scotland with those in Eng-

land, in regard to the important quality of Industry, as in regard to Sobriety ; but the following extracts shew that they have formed a very unfavourable opinion of the industry of large numbers of the Scottish people, precisely in those districts in which the greatest distress from want of employment exists, and has resulted chiefly from causes over which the working population have had no control. I am persuaded that there is very considerable exaggeration in the statements which have been laid before the Commissioners, and in which they have confided, as to this matter ; but the nearer the approximation to truth in these, the stronger becomes the evidence of what I have always maintained,—that the *existing system* of management of the poor in Scotland, in so far as it is designed to “ stimulate “ the industry of the working classes,” has been (especially in the most distressed districts) *singularly unsuccessful*, and can certainly claim no superiority over that which is elsewhere in force. At present it is not requisite to push the inference farther.

“ According to the view which we have been led to take of the “ matter, the proximate cause of the distress which so often prevails in the Highlands is to be found in the *imperfectly formed “ habits* of the Highland labourer, *in respect of provident and persevering industry*. Under the stimulus of immediate reward, “ he is capable of making very great exertions ; but when the “ task is accomplished, and the price paid, he relapses into *his “ wonted lethargy*.”

“ They are deficient in the knowledge of letters ; they are still “ more deficient in that practical education of civil life, which consists in the mutual attrition and jostling of parties endeavouring to outstrip each other in the acquisitions of industry.”—
Report, p. 49.

Again—

“ There is one class of able-bodied paupers in the large manufacturing towns whose destitution arises from their *unwillingness to work.*”

MR LEADBETTER, of Glasgow, says,

“ In such a town as this, there are always some thousands of people living on their shifts, and not willing to work. Evidence to the like effect was given in most of the large manufacturing towns.” The Commissioners add, that, for adults of this class, “ they fear little can be done, unless recourse can be had to compulsory measures; that, with regard to neglected children, from whom the evil often springs, they recommend farther and more regular provision for their education from the poor funds; but that they are convinced that educational measures on a far larger scale will be necessary before society can be purged of its *able-bodied idlers.*” —Pp. 54 and 55.*

* The difficulties which the Commissioners have felt as to this class of the poor, are exactly those which were expressed—and on which, as I think, a perfectly sound judgment was delivered—by the government of Denmark nearly half a century ago. “ At the introduction of the new system, it was natural to direct attention to the possible injurious effects of a public arrangement, which made it a compulsory duty for each citizen to contribute (according to the judgment of authorities appointed for the purpose) all that the indigent members of the State seemed to require; inasmuch as the sluggard, the spendthrift, and the profligate, might thereby find opportunity to support themselves at the expense of the industrious and frugal. But, on the other hand, we must recollect that we do not get rid of these evils, by leaving the needy to depend on the charity of their fellow-citizens. On the contrary, he who would rather live at the cost of others, than support himself by his own industry and economy, will often find more encouragement to this, from the irregular help he expects to obtain from his fellow-citizens, who do not scrutinize either his necessities or his behaviour, and do not compel him to work, than from the help given by a public authority, *which narrowly investigates his want, has inspection over his conduct, and keeps him under a corresponding discipline.* It was considered as good policy, besides, that the State, merely from motives of public safety, should secure to each individual the possibility of having the first wants of nature supplied without resorting to crime.” —Quoted in “ *Management of the Poor in Scotland,*” second edition, p. 79.

I have found this judgment, as to the proper mode of dealing with destitute

Thus it appears, that, in the judgment of the Commissioners themselves, as regards temperance, cleanliness, and “a healthy social condition,” the English manufacturing poor, who enjoy the legislative protection against destitution, are (as I stated in my first pamphlet) not only not inferior, but decidedly superior, to the corresponding classes in Scotland ; and that, in regard to industry, also, if they have not pronounced a decided opinion, they have at least heard strong evidence in favour of the English manufacturing poor, and have formed a strong opinion against the Scotch.

This being so, was it not clearly incumbent on the Commissioners to point out distinctly what are the practical evils resulting from the English Poor-law, and affecting the *character* and *condition* of the English working-classes, which they are so desirous of avoiding, that they wish at all hazards to maintain the principle of the Scotch law, rather than run the risk of encountering them ?

I must profess myself, after some reflection on the subject, wholly unable to conceive what better evidence can be desired than that which I have thus adduced to prove, that the moral character and conduct of the English working men *are not injured* by their enjoying a legislative protection against destitution. We may not, perhaps, feel justified in going so far as one who certainly knows them well, and has laboured hard in their

able-bodied idlers (*i.e.*, offering them relief, always coupled either with work or with confinement, and then putting the laws in force against them if they persist in begging rather than accept such relief), so generally recognised and acted on in other countries, that I cannot help regarding the hesitation and difficulty expressed by the Commissioners, as evidence that they have not studied the subject as they might have done, in the great school of Experience ; and that they are, therefore, in some degree liable to the same censure which they cast on the poor Highlanders—of being “behind their neighbours in the march of civilization.”

service, (Lord Ashley,) who asserts that the working classes in England are "the noblest people on the face of the earth;" but how, after attending to this evidence before them, and after expressing their own conviction as to the general character and conduct of the lower orders in England, the Commissioners could have come to the conclusion that a man's "moral character" "must be *destroyed*," if he is allowed a similar protection against destitution to that enjoyed in England, is to me utterly incomprehensible.

And as I think I have already shewn that the *onus probandi* rests on those who assert, that great injury results from extending to destitution from want of employment, that legislative protection which *all now admit* to be just and expedient in regard to other kinds of destitution, it is not incumbent on me to do more than stand on the defensive on this point, and merely repel the argument which had been directed against it; *i. e.* merely maintain that a legislative protection is not necessarily destructive, nor even injurious, to the moral character of those receiving it, without asserting that it is positively beneficial.

But I will go a step farther, and assert, without fear of contradiction by those who have really studied the general feelings of the lower orders, that an effectual provision against destitution elevates and maintains their character, and that nothing is so certainly ruinous to the love of independence and industry as a long period of abject destitution and despondency; therefore, that all the sufferings of destitution are not only unavailing for any useful purpose, but are positively and permanently injurious; and that it is the interest, as well as the duty, of every well regulated state to confine them within as narrow limits as possible.

This, indeed, may be said to have been illustrated sufficiently by what has been already stated, in regard to the effect of destitution on vice and crime ; but is a point of such importance as to merit the fullest discussion.

In opposition to the *opinion* of the Duke of Richmond, and of the Commissioners, that the moral character of a man is destroyed by his having a legal protection against destitution, I place the *opinion* of almost all those who have studied this subject carefully in England,—that such imperfectly or tardily relieved destitution as degrades a poor man in the eyes of his neighbours, and deprives him of all his usual comforts, instead of “stimulating his industry,” breaks his spirit, and either unfits him for active exertion, or excites him to violence and crime. And afterwards I shall quote *facts*, observed by various practical men, and stated in evidence before the Commissioners themselves, to shew that this last opinion is well founded.

Mr Palmer of the Inner Temple, in an excellent and instructive work lately published, expresses himself thus:—

“ By relieving destitution, and preventing idleness and vagrant
 “ mendicity, the legal provision for the poor *prevents general de-*
 “ *moralization*, relaxation of energy, indolence, despair, moral
 “ apathy, recklessness, the loss of self respect, the evil eye to
 “ others, and the practice of intoxication, often used at first to sup-
 “ port strength, and drown care, but presently ripening into a
 “ habit fertile in vice and crime. It is difficult, as Lord Thurlow
 “ said, to make an empty purse stand upright, and the etymology
 “ of the word *rogue*, (*qui ostiatim rogat*,) attests the connection of
 “ mendicity and crime. ‘ Nothing, perhaps,’ writes Archbishop
 “ Whately, ‘ tends more to deteriorate the human character than
 “ ‘ the pressure of severe distress, *male suada famas*.’ ‘ Whole

“ ‘ bodies of men,’ writes Mr Senior, ‘ will not tamely lie down
 “ ‘ and die, and witness their wives and children perishing around
 “ ‘ them.’ ‘ It will be long,’ writes an eye-witness of the recent
 “ ‘ distress in Paisley, ‘ before these poor people can obtain any-
 “ ‘ thing like an adequate income; and it will be longer still be-
 “ ‘ fore they overcome *the deteriorating moral effects* of the misery
 “ ‘ and destitution to which they have been subjected.’ *

“ ‘ Rightly understood and administered, the legal provision
 “ ‘ should be a bond of union between the rich and the poor; and
 “ ‘ a bond for attaching the poor man to his country and its laws,
 “ ‘ supplying in him the want of the golden links of property and
 “ ‘ station, which strengthen the patriotism of the rich and noble.
 “ ‘ If its abuse has sometimes produced the indolent masterful pau-
 “ ‘ per, *its use has also contributed to the independent and indomi-
 “ ‘ table spirit of Englishmen.*’—*Principles of the Legal Provision
 for the Relief of the Poor*, p. 43–46.

This principle I hold to be as fully illustrated as could possibly be desired, by statements which were laid before the Commission, and which were made by men in the habit of frequent personal communication, on a large scale, with people in that lamentable state. Who, that has often witnessed such scenes, will deny the truth of the representation given by Dr Stoker of the degradation of character of the poor population of Dublin, produced simply by want of demand for their industry, while no legal protection against destitution was extended to them? “ ‘ Many years continuance of
 “ ‘ misery have nearly extinguished all that hope and
 “ ‘ buoyancy of spirits, for which the poor people of this
 “ ‘ city were remarkable in their better days. These
 “ ‘ have been succeeded by indifference to their situation,
 “ ‘ —to the approach of disease, and even of death, sur-
 “ ‘ prising and unaccountable to a casual observer, and

* Letter from Paisley, dated 11th February 1843.

“ the more to be lamented, as it leads many of them
 “ to neglect the means of preservation.” *

The description, by Messrs Fullerton and Baird, of the broken spirits of the most destitute of the Highlanders, is exactly similar. “ A long course of poverty, “ with scanty fare and inadequate clothing, have greatly “ deteriorated this remarkably fine race of people.”—*Report on the Highlands*, p. 45.

That the object which the Commissioners seem to have so much at heart, of “ stimulating the industry of “ the poor,” should be much better accomplished under the operation of an effective provision against destitution, than where they are “ thrown on their own resources,” on the failure of employment, is easily understood by those who have observed, that all the greatest efforts of human industry, in all ranks of society, are made under the exciting and animating influence of *Hope*, not under the depressing and slavish feeling of *Fear*. I formerly quoted the just and profound observation of the late Dr M‘Gill—that “ the great “ error in many speculations on this subject is the notion that the only motive that stimulates the labouring “ orders to activity, is the fear of want. On the contrary, the love of distinction, the hope of reward, the “ fear of shame, the sense of duty, the welfare of friends, “ and neighbours, and relations, are daily stimulating “ men of the lowest condition (just as decidedly as those “ of the higher ranks) to active exertions.”

But whatever be the general explanation, the *fact* of injury to character, by imperfectly relieved destitution, both as to the adults themselves, and still more as to

* Quotations in *Observation on the Management of the Poor in Scotland*.—2d Edition, p. 4.

their children, is fully ascertained on such a scale as to be a fit ground for legislation.

When we consider that beggary, in one form or another, and very often in children, is in fact the chief resource of most of those who are destitute from want of employment in Scotland, we shall perceive the importance of the following evidence :—

Mr BREBNER, Governor of the Glasgow Jail.

“ Do your prisoners like working ? ” “ Yes. One punishment “ is to take work from them. *I would except beggars ; this seems “ to have no effect on boys or girls brought up as beggars ; work “ seems to frighten them more than any thing else.*”—Vol. i., p. 466.

The following quotations express the impression made on practical men by the sight of sufferings from this cause, on a large scale, in exact conformity with these statements.

The Rev. R. DOUGLAS of Kibarchan, says,

“ The effect of this distress on the character of the people has “ been unfavourable. *It has broken down their independent spirit. “ In a great number of cases it has made them lose heart.*”—Vol. iii., p. 410.

Mr R. BARBOUR, Kirk-Treasurer, Lochwinnoch.

“ I think the distress had *a bad effect on the character of the “ operatives.* When they found themselves unable to maintain “ themselves by their own labour, they became exasperated, and “ inclined to go to any excess. They were *disheartened*, by being “ obliged to spend their hard earned savings.”—Vol. iii., p. 418.

Mr P. FERGUSON, one of the Inspectors of the
Unemployed in Glasgow, says,

“ I don't see why a man out of employment, without fault

“ of his own, should not be provided for, with his wife and his children. When he is out of employment for any length of time *it demoralizes him ; it lowers him.*”

“ How does the present system tend to demoralize the able-bodied poor ?”

“ Because, when a man has nothing but the horror of starvation before him, when he sees his children starving, and has nothing to do, he is prepared to do anything. When he has nothing to live upon—is reduced to extremity—*I know it sinks a man, it breaks down his constitution and his mind ; it lowers his self-command and self-respect*, and a man in such circumstances is prepared to do many acts, from which he otherwise would shrink.”—Vol. i., p. 436.

The Rev. ARCHIBALD BAIRD, of the United
Secession at Paisley, says,

“ I have of late seen much of the evil which arises from allowing people to fall into circumstances, when they look, as it were, starvation, extreme misery, in the face, having no legal right of any kind to fall back upon,—I have seen it frequently *unmanning the minds of those people*—driving them to courses of conduct which in other circumstances they would never have thought of pursuing—familiarising their minds with thoughts and feelings that must be very detrimental to their moral and religious character, and to their usefulness as citizens.”

“ Is it consistent with your observation, that a considerable proportion of the population are deteriorated in character ?”
“ There is a considerable proportion who would not now make all the sacrifices which they were accustomed to make before receiving eleemosynary aid.* *The principle of independence has received a very severe blow.*”—Vol. i., p. 634.

* The expressions here are ambiguous ; but the context clearly shews Mr Baird's meaning to have been, that on another occasion these persons would apply for charity before submitting to many sacrifices.

To the same purpose Bailie MURRAY of Paisley, says,

“ The stagnations of trade for the last ten or twenty years have
 “ *acted prejudicially on the character of the people, by lowering the*
 “ *scale of comfort.* They are obliged to pawn their clothes, and
 “ as they lose comfort in their persons and dwellings, *they lose*
 “ *self-respect.* I think the young people getting up have not had
 “ the same education, either intellectually or morally, that their
 “ fathers had, *from the parents getting careless themselves,* and
 “ from their setting them early to work.”—Vol. i., p. 615.

As this *degradation and injury of character, resulting naturally from imperfectly relieved destitution*, is the essential point of the argument which I urge against the judgment of the Commissioners, I make no apology for multiplying quotations, which are the record of extensive experience upon it.

The Rev. Dr. GORDON, Edinburgh.

“ Is it the practice of the poor to support their aged parents ?”
 “ Wherever you find persons who have not lost a sense of self-
 “ respect, you will always find them entertaining great respect
 “ for their parents, and a disposition to aid them as far as they
 “ possibly can. But I am sorry to say that *that feeling is con-*
 “ *siderably broken down from destitution.*”—Vol. i., p. 48.

Mr A. JACK, Manager of the Charity Workhouse, and
 Member of the Destitute Sick Society, Edinburgh.

“ The poor are deteriorating in character, as well as in circum-
 “ stances. There is gross neglect of the moral well-being of their
 “ children, as well as of their external comfort. One cause
 “ strongly impressed on my mind is the great influx of Irish.
 “ The vast number of them that settle here has prodigiously
 “ lowered the price of all labour; and thus families of the same
 “ grade, who used to be comfortable, *are in reduced circumstances,*

"and the poverty endured by that has an effect on the moral character."—Vol. i.

Mr R. MILLER, one of the Managers of the
Charity Workhouse.

"We had a degree of prosperity before 1826, and the privations of the poor, excepting from intemperance, were not extreme; but since that time the condition of the poor has been always going from bad to worse."

"And their moral character, is that improved or deteriorated?"
"You find the two very clearly connected; *when the one goes down, the other also goes down.*"—Vol. i., p. 34.

Mr. J. SMITH, Governor of the Edinburgh Prison.

"I have frequently thought, that to prevent the unemployed poor getting worse—*getting down in society—losing heart, as it were*—it would be desirable to give them relief occasionally."
—Do., p. 69.

Rev. T. GUTHRIE, Edinburgh.

"Many a man turns to drinking when he is stricken with poverty. He drinks, as the Scripture says, 'to forget his poverty' 'and remember his misery no more.'"—Do., p. 92.

Rev. J. HUNTER, Edinburgh.

"An individual who has been honest and industrious is out of employment for some weeks, and is obliged to dispose of his Sunday's coat, and his wife of her gown. They come in this way to neglect religious ordinances and disregard the Sabbath. Drunkenness follows, and this shews the great importance of placing in the hands of the kirk-session, or of some body of that kind, money to prevent such persons from becoming regular paupers."*—Vol. i., p. 57.

* Or rather, regular beggars, the law preventing their becoming paupers, in the strict sense of the word, in Scotland.

Mr C. R. BAIRD, Secretary to the Glasgow
Relief Committee.

“ My experience with the working classes has been very intimate. I conceive that the poor *would be on a more independent footing, and would not be so much debased, if it were declared that they had a right to the relief which they get, instead of going to ask it as a charity.* They struggle on to the last before they do this. They pawn everything in their houses, and suffer the greatest privations, before they come before the Committee.”

“ Would not a law to this effect tend to make the poor less provident in their habits ?” “ With some it would have that effect ; but the present system tends to *drive them to desperation and intemperance, and to other evils greater than would result from having such a law.* While intemperance is frequently the cause of poverty, I am convinced that poverty is often the cause of intemperance ; they act and re-act on each other. The want of a legal claim for relief drives those people likewise to crowd together in large masses in lodging-houses, and there they are peculiarly subject to disease, and this accounts for the fearful epidemics which have ravaged Glasgow for many years. When parties are timeously assisted, they get over their difficulties, and come again to support themselves. *Children as well as parents, under the present system, become the most abject paupers.*”
—Vol. i., p. 393.

Mr. P. Blair, Writer, Irvine.

“ The distress had *a certain deteriorating effect* upon those who were previously provident, and in better circumstances, as they were for a time thrown into the same class with individuals previously below them.”—Vol. i.

The Rev. Dr WILLIS, lately Member of the
Associate Synod, Glasgow.

“ I have been deeply impressed with the shocking misery, and I may say the deaths, that have come under my observation under the present system in Scotland. I am deeply impressed with the misery, as *detrimental to the moral interests of the poor.*”

“ I find, in my experience, that the working of religious institutions is impeded by the debasement of the circumstances of the people.”—Vol. i., p. 381.

Bishop MURDOCH, of the Roman Catholic Church,
Glasgow.

“ Do you not find extreme destitution a great impediment to moral and religious influences ?” “ Yes, I do. *Those who are in that state I cannot make anything of.* I cannot get them to go to church, or attend to their religious duties.”—Vol. i., p. 399.

The Rev. Dr BURNS, Paisley.

“ If things are to remain as they are, you must pay the able-bodied men from the assessment, because they cannot live as decent men ought to do. Had they no pawns to redeem, no rent to pay, no children to educate, no delicate wives to provide for, they might live ; but with these, and any periodical depression, *they are incapable of living as working classes ought to live,* and did live, in my remembrance. More than half the friendly societies in Paisley (36) may be said to be dissolved, or in a state of bankruptcy, in consequence of so many of their number being unable to pay up their dues.”—Vol. i., p. 565.

Dr HUTCHESON, Physician to the Lunatic Asylum,
Glasgow.

“ It may be said that when wages are low, and occupation difficult to be got, men will have less money to spend, and will drink less. A pretty extensive observation of the different grades of the working classes, for upwards of fifteen years, has convinced me that this opinion is erroneous ; for I have generally found *want and intemperance to go hand in hand.* When a man falls below a certain point in physical comfort, he becomes reckless, and sensual enjoyment proves his only pleasure. These habits of enjoyment are often found in seasons of distress, which the individual, in more favourable circumstances, finds it difficult to lay aside. Temperance and total abstinence societies,—mechanics institutes,—and large singing assemblies, will attract the attention of the more comfortable artizan, and be beneficial

“ to him ; but *but when the wants of nature are insufficiently supplied for a length of time*, and squalid poverty and misery are the lot of the individual, *the offer of moral and intellectual enjoyment is looked on as sheer mockery*, and will be rejected with contempt, if not with loathing. Even the more powerful influence of Christianity is paralised, and withers in the presence of starving wretchedness. I look on it as a vain effort to attempt any moral or religious improvement, unless, at the same time, the wants of the body be supplied.”—Vol. i., p. 482.

HUGH BARCLAY, Esq., Sheriff-Substitute, Perth.

“ I find that intemperance is the effect as well as cause of poverty. I am quite satisfied on that ; and I do not say it from mere charitable feelings, but from conviction, *forced upon me by experience*, that individuals are driven to take refuge from their anxieties in intemperance. I am satisfied that a great deal of intemperance in women is brought on by the ill usage of husbands.”—Vol. iii., p. 252.

J. MUIR, Esq., one of the Magistrates of Newton in Ayr.

“ The spirit of the times is such, that persons now come to apply for relief as a right, who, twenty-five years ago, would never have thought of applying. The pressure of the times has changed the spirit of the people.” Interrogated.—“ Can you explain how the pressure of the times has produced this change ” Answer.—“ *The people are much poorer and worse off than they were twenty-five years ago. This applies both to labourers and operatives. When men suffer privations to a greater extent, they are more liable to lose the spirit of independence.*”—Vol. i., p. 702.

Rev. D. STRONG, First Minister of Kilmarnock.

“ Children of the working orders are but poorly educated ; they are kept a very short time at school, and very early put to work ; and that is owing to the working population often coming down to the lowest level ; and in addition to this, when wages are

“ low, they cannot keep their children at school at all. Has
 “ sometimes gone round and asked questions at children at the
 “ Sunday school, as to whether they had attended school during
 “ the week, and the proportion who had not was surprisingly
 “ great; the physical condition of the poor is intimately connected
 “ with their moral condition. *Depressions of trade and low wages*
 “ *operate most powerfully against their moral condition.* Has seen
 “ instances of adults, who, when reduced in circumstances, lost
 “ first their church-going habits, and next not a little of their de-
 “ cent moral character. Perhaps the first circumstance that in-
 “ duced them to keep away from church was, that they could not
 “ appear there in such decent clothes as they had been accustomed
 “ to: and then they lost taste for what they had not the means of
 “ enjoying.”—Vol. i., p. 709.

Rev. D. ARTHUR, Parochial Missionary, Kilmarnock.

“ The poor here, since he come to Kilmarnock, have been *morally*
 “ *sinking.* Attributes this deterioration *partly* to the present
 “ depressed state of trade; they have been obliged to sell their
 “ clothes, and have thus been prevented from attending church,
 “ in consequence of which they have fallen into evil practices.”—
 Vol. i., p. 716.

Rev. Mr M'INDOE, Minister of the Reformed
 Presbyterian Church of Kilmarnock.

“ There is one point connected with pauperism, which is parti-
 “ cularly distressing, in this town, the circumstance that *hundreds*
 “ *of families* are unable to give education to their children; and
 “ that hundreds of children are growing up without the simplest
 “ elements of instruction. The parents are too poor to pay the
 “ school fees; hundreds of *industrious and sober parents*, owing
 “ to the depression of business, want of employment, and lowness
 “ of wages, are unable to pay these small fees; so that, although
 “ a good education has a tendency to check pauperism, *poverty has*
 “ *also a tendency to prevent the diffusion of education; means for*
 “ *the physical and moral improvement of the people should go*
 “ *hand in hand.*”—Vol. i., p. 712.

JAMES ADAM, Esq., Editor of the Aberdeen Herald.

“ I have had opportunities of seeing the poor, particularly the
 “ unemployed, when making complaints, and that has led me often
 “ to think of the condition of the unemployed during temporary
 “ distress. It would be most advantageous if some means were
 “ contrived for permanent relief to them at such times, in the shape
 “ of work. In consequence of temporary want, *they fall into des-*
 “ *titution, and lose their spirit and good character.* I met a poor
 “ man this summer going along the water side crying ; he had
 “ evidently been taking drink. He said he had been a workman
 “ at one of the factories ; that he had been eight or nine months
 “ out of work ; he had been obliged to sell some articles of furni-
 “ ture, and at last a good room’s furniture had been poided for
 “ rent. I went along with him to see that his statement was cor-
 “ rect, and found that he had had at one time a room furnished
 “ at what would have cost L.30. All was packed up to be taken
 “ away, and he was hopeless of getting any thing to relieve him-
 “ self. He appeared to be a decent man, and if he had had any-
 “ thing like constant employment, at reduced wages, he would
 “ have been prevented from falling, as he will fall, into the lowest
 “ class of destitute characters.”—Vol. ii., p. 615.

Mr T. M’KENZIE, Teacher, Inverness, and Secretary
 to the (abandoned) Ladies’ District Visiting Society.

“ I would ascribe the neglect of education chiefly to inability
 “ to procure work ; and I think they *fall into such low spirits as*
 “ *frequently to be indifferent whether their children are educated or*
 “ *not.* They cannot clothe four or five of them. The children
 “ often cannot be got to attend school.”—Vol. ii., p. 483.

Mr ROBERT M’LACHLAN, City Missionary, Dundee.

“ They have been obliged to keep many of their children from
 “ school, when otherwise they would have been at it. My mind
 “ has been impressed with the fact, that many little children are
 “ kept in the house, literally from want of clothes to go out with,

“ —partly the children of paupers, partly of others, owing to the
“ lowness of wages.”

Rev. J. BAIRD, City Missionary, Dundee.

“ There is great destitution, and gross ignorance, among the
“ rising generation of those that are poor—both native and
“ strangers.”—Vol. iii., p. 168–9.

I shall conclude these extracts with some questions put to Mr R. Steele at Greenock, and his simple and straightforward answers to them. I think the three last must strike every reader as embodying, in a very few words, the general result of observation and reflection on the *respective provinces*, (not the *comparative merits*, which is an idle subject of discussion, where it is obvious that *both* are required), of moral and physical remedies for the numerous evils included under the term Destitution.

Mr R. STEELE, Shipbuilder, Greenock.

“ There is an immense number of idle persons connected with
“ shipbuilding, thrown adrift in consequence of the insolvency of
“ some establishments here. The work people employed by them
“ have been, in a great measure, idle during the whole winter. They
“ supported themselves by disposing of their clothes and furniture,
“ and many were left in a total state of destitution by selling and
“ pawning.”

“ Is it usual to give relief on account of want of employment ?”

“ They do not give to any who are out of employment.”

“ Do the rich give much (private) charity to the poor in this
“ town ?”

“ *Some are very well disposed—others not.*”

“ Do you think it desirable to change the law with respect to
“ able-bodied persons ?” “ When a man is unable to get work he
“ ought to have relief from the public. Some means should be
“ devised, by which men in their circumstances should receive re-
“ lief from the public.”

“ On what conditions ?” “ *On shewing that he is in want, and without means of employment.*”

“ In giving relief to able-bodied persons, would it not be essential that the conditions annexed to the relief should be such, as that the state of a man receiving it should be less desirable than that of an independent labourer ?” “ Surely.”

“ Supposing a system of relief devised, with such conditions, do you think it would prevent a person receiving it from emigrating, or seeking employment elsewhere ?”

“ I think, if at a low figure, it would not.”

“ If an adequate provision were made for moral and religious education, would that tend to check pauperism ?” “ *You would require to lift them first out of the degradation in which they are sunk physically, before you could do much in the moral way.*”

“ By what means ?” “ *Feeding and clothing. When people are in a state of starvation, it is of little use to talk of educating them.*”

“ Would you have faith in raising their allowances, as a means of elevating their character, without education ?” “ *Certainly not. They ought to go together.*”—Vol. i., p. 530-2.

I think I am fully justified by these statements in maintaining, not only that the refusal of legislative relief to the able-bodied unemployed poor, is not justified by any injury to their character, usually resulting from that relief; but that a very serious and lasting injury to their character, and to that of their children, results from that abject destitution, which the tardy and inadequate voluntary relief necessarily implies;—therefore, that the allegation of injury to character, which the Commissioners assign as their reason for deciding against the legislative relief for that description of the poor, is not only erroneous, but the very reverse of the truth.

I can conceive the Commissioners to have expressed themselves to the following purpose :—We regret very much to have seen so much evidence of misery and disease, connected with destitution from want of employment of late years ; and should have rejoiced if we could

have felt justified in recommending that a similar protection against destitution, to that which is enjoyed by others of the inhabitants of Britain, should be extended to these sufferers ; but we have seen so much evidence of the good effect of withholding such protection, on the industry, sobriety, and religious and moral character of the people, and find them so superior in those respects to the working classes in those parts of the country where such protection exists ; we find the distress in Scotland to have been so regularly met, and the degradation of the habits of the people naturally consequent on it, to have been so effectually prevented, by the voluntary contributions of the higher ranks ; and we find the prudent and provident habits of the people who have suffered from this kind of distress to have been so distinctly promoted,—that we are compelled to conclude, that any alteration of the present system would be dangerous. This statement of facts I should have thought contrary to evidence ; but the premises and conclusion would have been adapted to each other. But the statement of the Commissioners, in regard to the character of the people, in those parts of the country where the distress has for a long time past been the greatest, is as nearly as possible the reverse of this. They declaim against the indolence, the intemperance, and improvidence of the poor in those districts ; nay, they contrast the character and conduct of the poor in those districts of Scotland with their more healthy social condition in the most distressed parts of England, they take no notice of the copious evidence which I have quoted, to prove that the destitution, and the vices and crimes of the people, are not merely associated, but very generally connected, as cause and effect ; but they infer, that the system under which the moral character, as well as physical condition and comforts of the poor, have been thus

rapidly deteriorating, must, at all hazards, be maintained, *for the sake of the character of the poor themselves*. Surely in these admissions they have done enough to shew, that in regard to those very effects for which they profess to recommend it, the Scottish system has been “weighed in the balance and found wanting.”

If it be true, as I maintain, that the ultimate recommendations of the Commissioners, on this part of the subject, are quite at variance with much of the evidence which came before them, and which must have impressed them at the time it was delivered, we may expect to find that some of the incidental observations, contained in their Report, will be very inconsistent with their ultimate conclusions; and I find this to be the case in a degree which, as it seems to me, ought to destroy the confidence of any careful reader in their judgment, and in their practical recommendations. Thus, I have stated the obvious inconsistency of their general argument, that a legal provision for the unemployed poor must destroy the moral character of the working-classes in Scotland, with their admission, that, in point of sobriety, comfort, and a “healthy social condition,” the English working-classes, in the manufacturing towns, who have the benefit of such a provision, are much superior to the Scotch;—and again, the obvious inconsistency of their general condemnation of any proposal to alter the law on account of the prevalence of fever, in the large towns of Scotland, with their distinct admission, that “*destitution* and unhealthy atmosphere “greatly increase the susceptibility of contagion,” and their “cordial concurrence in the recommendation of “*legislative measures* to remove *those* predisposing “causes.”

The following are equally striking examples of inconsistency :—

1. The argument of the Commissioners, that a legal provision for the unemployed poor must be injurious, because it will be known and reckoned upon, and impair the provident habits of the working-classes, is manifestly inconsistent with their admission, that a legal provision for the *aged* poor is advisable (Report, p. 53). They must be aware, that such provision for this kind of “ general indigence ” is condemned by Dr Chalmers and others, on the very same ground on which they condemn the provision for the unemployed. Nay, it has been reasonably argued, that there is a better ground for granting relief, from a legal fund, to destitution from want of work (of course, properly tested and ascertained) than from age, because every man knows that he must be disabled by age, and ought to make provision against it ; but no manufacturer knows whether he may be thrown out of employment by fluctuations in trade, or by new inventions, any more than whether he may be disabled by disease.

I think, indeed, that Dr Chalmers’s principle, that any proclaimed relief will be reckoned on, and, by causing relaxation of the provident habits of the people, will cause more general indigence than it relieves, goes farther than he is willing to go himself,—that it tells against legal relief in case of sickness (which may be, and to a certain degree is, provided against by savings), as well as against such relief in case of age. But it seems to me quite clear that the Commissioners, adopting this principle, in regard to indigence from want of work, are bound, in consistency, to apply it to indigence from age ; or rather, that being satis-

fied, as they are, and as ample experience shews they ought to be, that the principle is not truly applicable in the latter case, they ought to have abandoned it in the former also.

2. The Commissioners say in one place, in reference to such urgent and distressing cases of misery from want of employment, as they admit to be of frequent occurrence in Scotland, that a man “who has exerted
“ himself to the full development of habits of industry
“ and economy, should misfortune deprive him of the
“ expected recompense, must be allowed to have a title
“ equally just to the sympathy and beneficence of his
“ fellow-men. Not only should his necessities be supplied—not only should the relief of such necessities
“ be afforded without prejudice to his feeling of independence, but full scope should be given also to the
“ exercise of charity in ministering to his comforts.
“ To such consideration he is entitled by his merits, and
“ *it is* THE BUSINESS OF A RIGHTLY CONSTITUTED POOR-
“ LAW *to provide for him accordingly*” (Report, p. 54); and as they afterwards allow (what was certainly fully proved before them), that “the distress lately experienced exposed many respectable persons to severe
“ privations,” this plainly implies that a rightly constituted poor-law would have provided for the comforts as well as the necessities of many such in Scotland.

They add to this, that “when the destitution of an
“ able-bodied man is the result of improvidence or other
“ reckless habits, it ought ever to be kept in mind that
“ there is a fault to be corrected as well as a want to
“ be supplied. An enlightened humanity will aim *at*
“ *relieving the necessity*, without effacing the remembrance of the fault. In such a case, as far as relief
“ is concerned, the bare relief of the actual want is all

“ that, in the first instance, can be held to be advisable.” With this statement of the objects of a legal provision for such cases I fully concur,—only regretting the vagueness of some of the expressions. In particular, the phrase, “ bare relief of actual want,” is vague, and will be held by some to apply to the relief of various privations—fuel and clothing, for example, as well as food—while others will consider food and shelter to be the bare relief of actual want.

Again, by what standard are we to judge whether a man has “ exerted himself to the full development of “ habits of industry and economy ?” Almost every individual case of the kind will be found to lie in the intermediate ground between the two cases above described ;—there will be evidence of industry and economy in a certain degree—and, on the other hand, evidence of occasional acts of improvidence, or reckless habits. “ There is not a human being (as was well “ observed to the Commissioners by the Rev. Mr “ Hunter), I dare say, who has not been less provident “ than he should have been ;” and, I apprehend all that can be done, in order to carry into effect the principle above stated, is to direct that relief to necessities shall be granted in all cases, and leave a discretionary power with the administrators of the relief, to couple it with as much of the means of comfort on the one hand, or with such restrictions and safeguards against abuse on the other, as a proper system of inquiry and inspection may suggest ; and this is precisely what is done in England, by regular inspections and examinations by the guardians of the poor and their officers, and the application of the labour-test, or the workhouse-test, as the circumstances of individual cases or districts may require.

But then, the Commissioners say, that “with reference to their provisions for the able-bodied, the English and Scotch systems of poor-laws are essentially different,” and truly incompatible; and the essential points of difference which they wish to perpetuate in the Scotch law are simply these: that there is *no right to claim relief* on the part of the sufferer, and *no power to assess*, for the means of giving relief, on the part of the administrators of the law.

But if the law gives no power to provide the funds, and no power to enforce their application, is it not an absurdity to say, that any relief granted to such cases is given by the law? All that the Commissioners propose, as to raising funds for this purpose, is, that *a part of the population* (viz., those who adhere to the Established Church) may, *if they please*, deposit offerings at the church doors—a *part of which* the kirk-sessions may, *if they please*, apply to the able-bodied poor. And for extraordinary occasions of distress, their only resource is a voluntary contribution, which the higher ranks may raise *if they please, and when they please*. But all this is exactly what is now done; and in all this, it appears to me that the law is absolutely passive and inoperative; and yet it has been expressly avowed that it is “*the business of a rightly constituted poor-law to provide for*” such cases;—“supplying actual want” in all cases—and “ministering to comforts” besides, in cases of good character.

There being this manifest inconsistency in their views, we cannot be surprised at finding them assert—*first*, that the plan of relieving the unemployed poor, on occasions of emergency, by voluntary contributions (with which, as I apprehend, the law has no concern),

“ has answered the object contemplated, *in a manner*
 “ *not unsatisfactory*” (p. 58);—and *secondly*, almost
 immediately after, that “ the effect of continuing to
 “ provide for unemployed operatives by means of sub-
 “ scription is *anything but satisfactory*.”—P. 60.

3. Again, I beg it may be observed that the principle
 which I have stated as the main reason for giving a
 legal right of relief to the able-bodied poor, when ren-
 dered destitute by want of employment, is distinctly
 recognised by the Commissioners themselves in the fol-
 lowing remarkable passage:—“ The evidence of all
 “ who have had practical experience in the manage-
 “ ment of the poor *demonstrates very strongly the advan-*
 “ *tages which arise from affording assistance to persons*
 “ *who have been reduced by any temporary calamity, so*
 “ *as to save them from sinking in the world, and lower-*
 “ *ing their position in society.*” “ Small sums,” they add,
 “ privately given by the minister or elders, whether as
 “ charity or loan, will often help to rouse the dormant
 “ energies, and sustain the drooping spirit; and by such
 “ well-timed assistance, a man may be enabled to get
 “ over his difficulties, and resume his station in the
 “ world without the consciousness of having been de-
 “ graded to the state of a pauper.”—Report, p. 37.
 And, in illustration of this, they refer, *inter alia*, to the
 evidence of the Rev. W. Dunbar of Westerkirk, which
 is to the following purpose:—“ He considers that a
 “ great *practical advantage* is gained by the session
 having funds at their disposal, “ to give temporary
 “ relief to individuals in distress, many of whom are
 “ thereby prevented from coming on the regular poor
 “ roll.” “ He has known several instances, where such
 “ interference on the part of the session has prevented
 “ industrious persons from falling into poverty. Last

“ year, an able-bodied man, with one child, was relieved to the extent of L.1, on account of temporary want, brought on by the failure of a person in whose hands he had lodged money. In the previous year, no able-bodied man was relieved either on account of sickness or *want of employment*. Some *ought to have been so relieved*, and, if they had been, there would not have been so many of those persons now on the roll.”—Vol. iii., p. 638.

Let us reflect a little on the import of these statements, which are just similar to one formerly quoted from Eyemouth, and to other evidence collected in those few parts of Scotland where a part of the parochial funds have been for a long time past similarly applied. If there be “a great practical advantage” from such assistance given to able-bodied men, when visited by calamities, and threatened with destitution, it must be right and beneficial to the country to secure that advantage in as large a number of cases of such calamity as possible.

Now, it is precisely with this view that, in England, and in all other countries where the right to relief, merely from destitution, is recognised, the legal relief is offered to a poor man who has been reduced, by failure of employment or other accidental calamity. He is either set to work, or taken into a workhouse, and maintained there in comfort, sobriety, and decency, and his children instructed there, till better times come round; and then he returns to his employment, without having been reduced to the necessity of pawning his clothes, begging, or sending his children to beg. He is “saved from sinking in the world, and losing his position in society.” We should expect that the Commissioners would approve of this system,

as doing, on a larger scale, precisely what they have seen the "great practical advantage" of doing, on a small scale; such well-timed assistance, as they state, "rousing the dormant energies, sustaining the drooping spirit, and enabling a man to get over his difficulties, and resume his position in the world."—P. 37.

But the Commissioners say, on the contrary, that if a man knows he is entitled to protection and comfort in a workhouse, his moral character must be thereby *destroyed*; and so convinced are they of this, that *for this reason, and this only*, in face of the facts which they put on record, as to the distresses, the degradation, and mortality of the unemployed poor in Scotland, they "strongly advise that, on this point, the poor-law of Scotland shall remain unchanged."

Here the question immediately presents itself, what is the "difference between that kind of assistance to persons reduced by temporary calamity, which the Commissioners recommend, as fitted to "sustain their drooping spirits," and "rouse their dormant energies," and thereby "produce great practical advantage," and that "which must destroy their moral character?"

The only peculiarities (so far as I can see) of that kind of assistance which the Commissioners recommend in the passage in question, (p. 37 of the Report,) as distinct from that which they so strongly condemn, are two: *first*, That it is "bestowed by ministers and elders;" and *secondly*, that it is bestowed "privately." Thus they say, it enables a man to get over his difficulties "without being degraded to the state of a pauper."—Now, let us consider these points.

As to the *first*, I trust there can be no difference of opinion; because I have always said that I see no objection whatever to the relief given in all such cases

being given by ministers and elders, provided only *that it is given regularly*, (which the Commissioners from their sense of its advantages, must wish it to be).

It is only in the case where the relief in question cannot be given by ministers and elders, that I should wish to see it given by any one else. As there are many Dissenters, Catholics, and adherents of the Free Church, to whom it is equally given and equally useful, as to the members of the Established Church, there must be an enlarged constituency in most parts of the country for dispensing this as well as other relief; but to this it appears distinctly from the Report, that the Commissioners make no objection.

It remains, therefore, that the circumstance of this relief being given *privately*, is the main recommendation in the eyes of the Commissioners; which makes all the difference between that relief which is to be a great public advantage, and that which is to be destructive to the moral character of the recipient.

But can they really suppose that assistance thus given by ministers and elders, to sustain the drooping spirits of men in difficulties, and help them over their difficulties, can be given *privately*? Do they imagine, that the relief given in this way in the parishes of Westerkirk or of Eyemouth was not thoroughly known and fully canvassed by the inhabitants of those parishes; or that it will not be reckoned upon by others in the same parishes, who may hereafter fall into similar misfortunes? I have not the smallest doubt that it is just as well known there, as the aid given by the voluntary contributions to the Destitute Sick Society here, which is given privately, but known and reckoned on with at least as much confidence as the legal relief given in any part of Scotland, or as the voluntary subscriptions

for giving work to the unemployed at Edinburgh or Glasgow. In fact, the benefit which is conferred on individuals and on society by such assistance, is one which cannot be both given and concealed. The suffering poor, on occasion of such misfortunes, must either have timely aid or not have it. If they have it not, you forego the great practical advantage, of preventing them from sinking in the world, which the Commissioners think demonstrated. If they have it (from whatever source derived), you incur the risk, that it will be reckoned on by others in a similar predicament, and may injure their provident habits. You must make your choice between giving such relief as a principle, or withholding it. The only sure way of making the choice is by appealing to Experience; and the great practical advantage alluded to by the Commissioners is just an example, on a small scale, of the same principle, which is illustrated by many other facts, on a much larger scale, collected by themselves—"the comparatively healthy social condition of the working classes in the English towns,"—the "wonted lethargy" of the Highlanders—the number of "able-bodied idlers" in Glasgow (just in those districts where there has been most of the calamity from want of employment, and the least protection against it), all of which experimentally demonstrate, that the advantage of regular relief is *great and permanent*, and the risk, under prudent management, *comparatively trifling*.

That a certain risk exists of abuse of this, as of all other charities, no one doubts; but it attends equally the voluntary as the legal relief—equally the relief of the aged and infirm poor, who may be, and are, in part supported by their relations, as that of the able-bodied poor, who may be, and are, in part supported by their

savings. It attaches itself to any form in which charity can be bestowed, and experience has sufficiently shewn how it is to be obviated; viz. by *regulating* the relief given everywhere, not by *refusing* it, in cases of real destitution, anywhere.

Again, when the Commissioners speak of avoiding the "degradation of being made paupers," I reply, *first*, that a man who partakes of the occasional relief of the kirk-session is equally a pauper as a labourer in England, who receives out-door relief during a term of depression, and is struck off the list when trade improves. *Secondly*, I ask, is there no degradation in begging? or what alternative is there, in the case of the great mass of unemployed operatives, as the evidence already quoted demonstrates, but Pauperism, or one form or other of Mendicity? Is it not mere mockery, or a striking proof how much "*verba vim suam super intellectum retorqueant*," to talk of refusing a man relief, lest you make him a pauper, when by that refusal you make him a beggar?

When it is clearly understood that hundreds of thousands of those Englishmen,—whose industry is proverbial, whose love of independence is described by Mr Twisleton, by Mr Scarlett, and others, in quotations already made, and whose sobriety and "healthy social condition" are attested by the whole Commissioners themselves,—are paupers, and the children of paupers, I cannot help thinking that the idea of any peculiar degradation, necessarily attached to the word pauper, must appear as a mere fallacy.

It is clearly for the public interest, that the relief given to this, as to other kinds of destitution, should be *discriminating*, that it should be founded on careful inspection of those receiving it, be proportioned to their

necessities, and regulated by their characters, and that it should be such as to give no impediment, but every encouragement, to the recovery of employment and of independence. When these conditions are fulfilled, experience shews, that in comparison with the only alternative usually existing, viz. mendicity, its general effect is beneficial, not injurious, to the character, and particularly to the love of independent industry, of those receiving it. But when it is made *voluntary*, and therefore dependent on the pleasure or caprice, “partial knowledge, or narrow views,” of those affording it, a new element is introduced, which I maintain to be altogether opposed to the public interest; because we know *by experience*, and by none more decidedly than the experience of Scotland, that the general result is, to make the relief given irregular,—sometimes excessive, much oftener defective, almost always tardy,—to make it involve degradation of the habits of the poor,—and to lay it as a burden on a certain portion of the rich, while justice and policy demand, just as clearly in regard to this as to all other public burdens, useful to the several interests of the state, that it should press as equitably as possible on all members of the community who are capable of bearing it.

The following quotations illustrate sufficiently what I have stated, as to the impossibility of following out the recommendation of the Commissioners, of sustaining the drooping spirits of the poor, by assistance given them under such calamity as the loss of employment, without incurring the risk, such as it is, of reliance being placed on this resource; and they shew, at the same time, that one at least of the Commissioners (certainly the most experienced in such inquiries) is quite of my opinion on this point.

REV. J. HUNTER.

“ At Swinton, I often gave relief to individuals, and did not keep a record of the names of the persons receiving it; because the circumstance of their names being put on the parish record would have been hurtful to their feelings, and probably might have deteriorated their characters.”

“ Suppose there was a fund of any sort in the hands of the kirk-session for that purpose, do you conceive, from the character of the Scotch people, that operatives *would know of its existence?*” “ *Yes; they would in all probability know of its existence.* Still, I am of opinion it would be *very advantageous.*”

“ In order to prevent any abuse of that kind, would not the conditions under which it was given, be of more importance than any attempt at secrecy of its existence?” “ *Yes; I fear that secrecy as to the existence of such a fund is a thing unattainable.*”
—Vol. i., p. 58.

MR PETER ANDERSON, Inverness.

“ I cannot perceive the smallest difference between a public fund of any kind for the relief of the poor, and a legal fund; if any, the advantage is in favour of a legal fund. *The attraction consists in the existence of a fund; not of a legal more than a voluntary fund.*”—Vol. ii., p. 459.

J. KER, Esq., Elder in St Andrew's Parish, Greenock.

“ Speaking of large towns generally, must it be expected that such stagnations of trade as you have had lately must from time to time occur?” “ I should think so.”

“ Thus, during such stagnations, it would be out of the question to leave the people to starve; they must be provided for in some way or other?” “ I should think so.”

“ Then, can you not calculate with certainty, that, in such circumstances, there would be a relief fund raised from some source or other for the maintenance of these persons?” “ Certainly, when their necessities are quite obvious.”

“ You could calculate on such relief being given with cer-

"tainty?" "Yes; calculate from what has been done. A public meeting is held—a statement is made, shewing the necessity of an extra provision, and that hitherto has never been withheld."

"And in such circumstances would be done again?" "Yes."

"Then, if you could calculate on such a course being adopted, why should not the operatives make the same calculation?" "It is probable they would do so."

"Does not the manner in which the (voluntary) relief funds are administered depend, to a considerable extent, on accidental circumstances, such as the views of the leading authorities at the time?" "No doubt; but they call in the aid of persons who are engaged in the ordinary supply of the poor."

"Which would you think would tend to pauperize a community most—a fund to be administered for a year, and ill administered; or a fund constantly in operation, and well administered, with proper safeguards?" "I have a difficulty in answering that; because all charity, public and private, however administered, is liable to be abused."—Vol. i., p. 507.

Another very respectable witness makes a more candid answer when questioned, in like manner, as to the grounds of his belief of the superiority of the Scottish system of management, in the case of the able-bodied poor.

Dr HENDERSON of Aberdeen.

"Do you approve of the Scotch law, that able-bodied men are not entitled to relief?" "Yes."

"The motive for industry is, that, if they do not work and save, they are to starve?" "Yes."

"Do you consider that as a moral motive?"

"A moral motive, when family is connected with it."

"You would condemn the English system, as a mechanical system, of affording relief to able-bodied persons in a workhouse to preserve them from starving; while you would approve of the Scotch, as a moral system, of giving no relief at all in cases of extreme destitution?"

“ I look on it as more a speculative than a practical question.
 “ I do not know that there were ever instances of greater destitution than we have now. As long as the independent spirit of
 “ the people was kept up, they found maintenance for themselves.*
 “ *But I am nearly gravelled with that question, because it shews*
 “ *that you have been thinking more of the subject than I have been.*”
 —Vol. ii., p. 656.

The truth is, that (generally speaking) the practical difference, as regards the poor themselves, between a regulated legal provision, and a variable and capricious voluntary assistance against destitution is this, that the one barely preserves *existence*, the other secures some degree of *comfort*—the one *degrades*, and the other *maintains*, the habits of the working-classes. And if we lay aside all moral and religious considerations, and confine ourselves strictly to the political view of the subject, the important practical warning is simply this, that wherever we have degradation of habits, we incur an imminent danger of an excessive and morbid population.

Reserving this point, however, for the present, let us consider what practical measures the Commissioners have to propose, to improve the provision for the frequently recurring and urgent distresses of the unemployed poor which have been illustrated. They speak of the “ keenness with which this question has been of late years agitated by men of *speculative minds*, and “ of the conflicting conclusions to which *such parties* “ have come concerning it ;” and we might, therefore, hope that they have something practical and definite to propose, as the result of their extensive observations

* A moment's consideration is enough to shew, that another element enters here into the question, viz., the proportion of the supply of labour to the demand, which is beyond the control of the people.

and inquiries, liable to no such imputation, of speculative and doubtful character ; but so far is this from being the case, that the disquisition which follows, (Report, p. 45, *et seq.*) beginning with the assertion already considered, that the Scriptural maxim, “ If a man *will* “ not work, neither should he eat,” is the true principle on which relief to the unemployed able-bodied must be based,—seems to me peculiarly speculative, and incapable of precise application. They lay down, for example, with great formality, the following principle, in which I must confess that there seems to me to be more profusion of words than precision of thought, “ If “ we would devise measures of amelioration which may “ be justly expected to prove effectual, we must keep “ steadily in view the whole man, and rely chiefly for “ the accomplishment of this benevolent object on such “ measures as may call forth in him the intellectual, moral, religious, and therefore, under God, self-dependent man,—bringing into harmonious co-operation with “ themselves the indestructible sympathies of our common nature.” The only commentary that I would make on this, is to repeat the shrewd and just observation of Mr Steele of Greenock. “ You would require to lift them “ first out of the degradation in which they are sunk “ *physically*, before you could do much in the moral “ way.” No one doubts that religious and moral instruction are the main agents for the improvement of the human race ; but, in the case of persons in a state of destitution from this or other causes, human charity is an essential preliminary, and we do not do justice to any measures for those purposes, and cannot expect them to be really useful, unless we avail ourselves of that auxiliary.

Again, the Commissioners lay stress on the old argument, that a poor-rate for the able-bodied is ne-

cessarily a *tax on industry* ; and that “ the comforts “ of the producer, in whatever way the tax on his “ labour may be levied, must be narrowed ” by it. It might be sufficient to ask, in reply, How comes it that the comforts of the working-classes in the north of England, where this tax is levied, are so much greater (according to the evidence taken by the Commissioners themselves) than those of the corresponding classes in Scotland ? But we may reply, farther, that a poor-law is essentially a tax on *capital*, and that it is mendicity, (the alternative for the poor-law), as the evidence already quoted demonstrates, which is the heaviest tax on industry. It is true, that a tax on the capital, and on the luxuries of the rich, carried too far, *may* become a tax on industry, by diminishing the fund by which the industry of the country is maintained ; but whether it is to do injury in that way, will depend on the manner in which the provisions for this purpose affect the *population* of the country ; to which subject I shall advert presently.

There is likewise, in this part of the Report, a long commentary on the English plan of relief for the able-bodied, on which it is enough to say that it begins with an assumption strangely inaccurate in point of fact, viz., “ that by the system now in use, relief is afforded to “ the able-bodied *only* through the medium of a work- “ house.”—P. 46.

The following extracts, from examinations by Mr Twisleton, might have instructed them as to the real nature of the relief given in the manufacturing districts in England.

Provost HENDERSON, Paisley.

“ Are you aware what is the practice in England, in manufac-

“ turing districts ; is it your impression that relief is only given
 “ in workhouses to such persons ? ” “ *No ; but they make it a test,*
 “ *when they suspect imposition.* ” — Vol. i., p. 591.

The Rev. Mr BAIRD, Paisley.

“ Are you aware, that in depression of trade in England, it is
 “ *never attempted* to give relief in the workhouse ? ” “ I was not
 “ aware. ” — Vol. i., 685.

Again—

Mr T. HOLMES, Paisley.

“ Would it be preferable that, in times of distress, the major-
 “ rity of the unemployed should receive relief in return for work,
 “ and *a certain number* should be tested by the workhouse ? ”
 “ Clearly. ”

“ The case might be dealt with, in times of depression, by the
 “ *labour test* for the greater number, and the workhouse for the
 “ improvident and dissipated ? ” “ Yes ; this would be a much
 “ better way. ” — Vol. i., p. 20.

This is the simple and effectual mode of providing
 which Mr Twisleton recommends in the following sen-
 tences of his Reasons of Dissent. “ The managers of the
 “ poor should have a discretionary power, with consent
 “ of a Board of Supervision, to assess the inhabitants for
 “ the purpose of *setting to work* destitute and unem-
 “ ployed persons, *without requiring them* to enter
 “ such poor-house. The aid of a poor-house, with
 “ wards for able-bodied persons, materially facilitates
 “ the operations of those who, in periods of depression
 “ of trade, undertake the duty of giving out-door relief
 “ to a certain number of that class. ” — (Report, p. 77.)
 This, it will be observed, is merely regulating, and
 rendering uniform in the manufacturing towns, sup-
 porting by means of assessment, and at the same time

regulating, by help of a workhouse, the plan for relief of the able-bodied, which has been partially acted on by voluntary subscriptions in Glasgow, and more or less in other towns in Scotland, and which is described in the following evidence.

Mr J. SCOTT, Manufacturer in Glasgow (11th April 1843,) Chairman of Committee for Unemployed Poor.

“How many are now receiving relief from the Committee?”

“600 males, and 213 females.”

“Whence do the funds proceed?” “From private subscription.”

“What class are unemployed at present?” “A class different from last year or 1837. Then the greatest number of unemployed males were weavers. At present I do not think we have more than 20 or 30 weavers on the roll. They are chiefly labourers, engineers, and mechanics of all kinds.”

“Do you ascribe the number of unemployed to intemperance or improvidence?” “One third of the poverty is at all times ascribed to early improvidence.”

“How have they been employed?” “In 1842 they were employed in digging, lowering a hill, and they broke metal for the roads. At present, stone-breaking is unprofitable.”

“Is a permanent system of that kind necessary?” “I cannot see an opening for them at present. If work could be had for them, it would not take a great deal to keep them.”

“How much do they earn in a day?” “We try that their earnings (paid by the yard) shall not exceed 1s. per day, that they may be looking out at all times for work for themselves.”

“Do you consider that workmen look to you rather than to their own exertions?” “No; *they are anxious to get clear of me*. They have heavy work, and a low rate of payment.”

“Do you find many changes among them?” “Every week a number are leaving, having found work for themselves, and about the same proportion coming in. I expected before this,

“that many of them would have found employment in field labour.”

“Do you find them grateful?” “Yes. They are just as content and as easily dealt with as any class of men can be. *A great deal depends on the way in which they are treated by the managers.* I was particular in selecting a proper person for managing those employed in the digging.”

“Do you make a distinction between single men and men with families?” “We make no distinction.”

“Are you of opinion that they would be glad to get constant employment from you, rather than occasional employment from others?” “They are more willing and anxious to get it from other hands.”

“Even though inconstant and variable?” “They have a strong desire to procure other work. The roll is not called till seven in the morning, to give them time to look out for other work, and they attend very regularly at the cross with this view.”

“If their employment is inconstant and variable in other quarters, do they come and work with you the days they are unemployed?” “No.”

“Do they take out a fresh schedule?” “Yes.”

“The relief committee was dormant for a time?” “It was left very much to the Lord Provost and Captain Miller. It has become *almost a local system in Glasgow now.*”—Vol i., p. 377.

The arrangements here described seem to me to be quite in conformity with sound principles, so far as these have been ascertained by experience, as to the relief of this description of the poor;—the only defects being, that the system is worked at the expense of a part of the community only;—that, from that cause no doubt, it operates only partially, and particularly, does not prevent vagrancy as much as it ought;—and that there are not sufficient means of discrimination according to the conduct of individuals; all which defects Mr Twisleton’s suggestions would supply.

Now, if we compare with this system, improved and legalised as Mr Twisleton recommends, the practical proposals of the majority of the Commissioners for meeting the important and lamentable case of the depression of trade in large towns, I cannot help saying that the one is a means of fairly meeting the evil, the other a hint for evading, and striving to forget it.

As a part, and indeed almost the only practical part, of their plans for "developing the resources" of labourers out of work, they propose that such men should be advised and encouraged, "*partly, perhaps, by small pecuniary donations, and partly by friendly communications relative to their capabilities or views, to go in quest of employment for themselves*" (all which may be done, and is done, under the operation of a poor-law for the relief of the unemployed, at least as effectually as on the voluntary system); but then, while with this *slender* and *partial* assistance as an outfit, all the unemployed poor, with their wives and families, on occasions of public distress, are to be dispersed over the country, "stringent means should be adopted for suppressing vagrancy;" and especially the old recommendation, of "getting the public to refuse serving beggars" is anxiously enforced.

Then, when the unemployed poor (shewn by evidence before them to be already the most numerous, most distressed, and most troublesome of the vagrants) are thus to be diffused over the country, and whenever they appear as vagrants, "stringent measures" are to be taken to suppress them, and all people strongly dissuaded from helping them, the Commissioners add, as a peculiar recommendation of this scheme, that we shall secure "the full sympathies of the poor on the side of their benefactors."

I have already stated, and given evidence, that one of the great evils which result from the failure of employment, on occasion of embarrassments in trade and manufactures, is the number of men who wander over the country in quest of work, often deserting their wives and families, and, instead of getting employment, take fever, and spread it wherever they go. Of these evils, we have seen that the evidence before the Commissioners gives many examples; and I leave it to any one, who has had practical experience of their extent, to judge how far this proposal of the Commissioners is likely to be beneficial to the poor.

The authorities of Dundee seem to have acted very much on the recommendation of the Commissioners; they have encouraged the dispersion of the workmen from thence, and “*sometimes, perhaps, with small pecuniary donations*” (viz., 6d. to each), have helped them across the ferry into Fife. But what was the result? That we have the Provost of Kirkcaldy making grievous complaints of the number of operatives “starved out of Dundee,” and inundating Fife, and calling for a general fund to relieve operatives in their circumstances, and keep them at home. (See his Evidence, and that of Mr Carnaby at Forfar, *supra*, p. 188.)

In saying that the plan proposed by Mr Twisleton is the only one which can really and effectually meet the evil in large towns, I do not mean to deny that occasions will occur in the manufacturing districts, in which the burden thus imposed may be greater than any one district should, in wisdom or justice, be called on to bear. This may be, in a great measure, met by making the assessment for such purposes extend, as several witnesses recommend, and as the voluntary contributions in such cases do, to the surrounding districts,

which profit so much from the industry of the manufacturers. Thus Mr Baird states, that, "in the county of Renfrew, there were ample means of meeting the whole distress at Paisley." But farther, we know that on those occasions of unusual distress in the manufacturing districts, voluntary assistance from other parts of the country may very generally be reckoned on. If the public are assured that such aid will be expended on a uniform and tried system;—that by so relieving the poor, we do *not* contribute to their increase;—*and that the district most immediately concerned in any such case has already assessed itself fully*,—such aid may be confidently reckoned on, and a permanent central fund for such purposes, as in other countries, may even be expected. (See my *Observations on the Epidemic Fever*, p. 43.)

It must be added, however, the Commissioners have another plan, to which they confidently ascribe a much greater and more lasting effect, and which they describe in terms of enthusiastic, if not extravagant, expectation. They say that "it should be the object of an enlightened Government to provide that the working-classes be supplied both with an educational and industrial training, such as, by enabling them to vary the application of their labour according to circumstances, may elevate them to a higher level, &c.; and if sufficient means be provided for the varied application and expansion of the industrious powers of the operative manufacturer, we confidently anticipate that the time is not distant, when questions as to modes of relief will have less interest for him, and when he will seek, except in sickness, no other ground of reliance than the energy or the cunning of his own right hand."—(P. 61.) In short, all destined for manufacturing in-

dustry are to be taught different trades ; and then *they trust*, that when the demand for one kind of skilled labour is deficient, that for another kind will always take its place.

On this suggestion, I need hardly say, that it can avail but little for the relief of the present generation ; and even if it were carried fully into effect for the benefit of the next, it is quite obvious that its efficacy, as that of all other expedients for the prevention of this kind of distress, will depend on various contingencies,—on the progress of inventions,—on the judgment and foresight with which investments of capital are made,—and, above all, on *the progress of population* in the mean time, and therefore on the amount of the supply of labour, as proportioned to the demand. We have here, therefore, only another illustration of the importance of that fundamental question, in all discussions regarding the poor—Under what system of relief does population, as proportioned to the demand for labour, make the most rapid progress ? This question admits of solution only by experience. I have always maintained that experience is quite decisive in regard to it, and think I can shew that the evidence taken by the Commissioners is in exact conformity with that which I have formerly adduced.

The Commissioners, indeed, have avoided this question altogether ; and I cannot help thinking that this omission is in itself sufficient to make the whole of their practical suggestions unsatisfactory to any intelligent reader ; for it surely requires very little penetration or previous instruction to perceive that the question, as to the most fitting mode of relief for the poor, resolves itself, as was long ago pointed out by Malthus, into the question—Under what system will the greatest amount

of population, requiring assistance in future, be engendered?—and cannot be determined until we can satisfy ourselves how the population of a country is affected by the mode of management of its poor. The opponents of the legal relief were very anxious to bring the matter to this issue formerly, when it was generally supposed, in accordance with the opinion which Malthus at first announced (but afterwards very candidly acknowledged to be doubtful), that the decision, on this ground, was against such relief. But since it has appeared, on further examination of the subject, that the facts lie the other way, and that the principle of legal relief is supported by the ascertained facts as to the population of the countries where it is established, they have generally avoided the question altogether, or represented it as of too speculative a nature to be introduced into this discussion. Dr Chalmers laid it down as a principle, at the meeting of the Association at Glasgow, that where poor people did not appear in decent clothing at church, and send their children decently dressed to school, it was always owing to want of inclination; and that, if they were duly impressed with the importance of attaining these objects, “they would always find ways and means of doing so;”—on which I took the liberty of observing, that it only shewed that he had not contemplated the case, unhappily so frequent in Scotland, where the population, at least for a given time, and in a given district, is distinctly *redundant*; no demand whatever exists, for a length of time, for the labour of a large portion of the people; and they are therefore compelled, not only to part with their property, but to throw themselves on one form or other of charity, for subsistence. This state of things seems to me to be more than sufficiently

demonstrated by many of the quotations already made, from the evidence taken by the Commissioners; but nevertheless, they express themselves in this discussion, in regard to the “ diversified expansion of the industrious capabilities of the operative classes,” just as Dr Chalmers had done, as if the demand for labour, of one kind or another, were a given quantity; and the only question were, how the labourer is to be qualified, and how his industry is to be stimulated, so as to bring him fairly in contact with the work to be done.

For example, referring to the evidence of Messrs Wright, Allan, and Slater, in Edinburgh, relative to the Caledonian Youths’ Society and other associations, among the skilled workmen in Edinburgh,—because a certain number of young men, joining these associations, and improving themselves by emulation and reading, have gradually raised themselves in the world,—they seem to think, that by dint of education they can secure similar good fortune for all, who may betake themselves to any department of operative industry. “ The results,” they say, “ afford *incontrovertible proof*, that, with a “ proper education and industrial training, the *independence of the labourer* (using the term, let it be observed, in the abstract) *would be adequately secured.*” —Report, p. 61.

That this sentence should occur, in a Report on the evidence which has been published by the Commissioners, does seem to me very singular. Do they really suppose that this description of the poor are to “ cease out of the land?” Have they forgotten, or has their experience of the world not confirmed to them, the maxim of Scripture, “ that the race is not always to “ the swift, nor the battle to the strong; but that time “ and chance happen unto all?” Have they duly re-

flected on the facts which came before them, as to the general and simultaneous depression of the *whole industry* of the principal towns, and of many of the smaller towns in Scotland, in 1841 and 1842? Do they really suppose that any demand existed in Scotland at that time for the labour of those numerous and miserably distressed men and women, whose condition was described to them by Mr Johnstone, or Dr Clark, or Mr Hunter in Edinburgh, by Dr Baird at Paisley, Mr Baird or Captain Miller at Glasgow, Mr Steele at Greenock, Bailie Forbes at Aberdeen, Mr Anderson at Dundee, and many others? Have they reflected on the facts stated to them in the following evidence? or do they suppose that, by any “expansion of the industrious capabilities of the operatives,” they can prevent the frequent recurrence of such cases as these?

Mr JOHN GRAY, Manager of West Church Charity Workhouse.

“ I know many of the working classes (I was a manufacturer for twenty-five years), for whom I feel very much—*that are as virtuous in principle as I am, and deserving to be cared for*. It is for want of work that they are not able to do. I know a great many who are as desirous to do what is right, and as willing to work for their bread as I was, and who *wrought for it up to the time they could find no more employment*; and they tried to find employment in the most likely places that occurred to them, *and have been defeated*; and I think in my own mind, what could I do if I were so placed,—if I could get no relief by my own exertions,—in that case I would be as helpless as the aged, who are unable to work. I could come to no other decision than this, that they ought, for the time being, to be supported.”—Vol. i., p. 45.

To me it appears perfectly obvious, that the demand for many kinds of labour in this country must be ex-

pected to continue very fluctuating ; that there is always a natural tendency of the supply to exceed the demand ; and that the question of Poor-Laws can never be satisfactorily considered otherwise than in connection with the question, how the population of a country is affected by any system adopted for the relief of the poor.

On this point, Dr Chalmers still says, that the English Poor Law “ induces a general recklessness, which
“ extends over the whole habit, and manifests itself
“ especially in reference to marriage ;” but, then, “ that
“ although there is this stimulant, there is also a high
“ standard of enjoyment among the people, and the
“ effect is to check the excessive growth of population.”
—(Vol. i., p. 275.) But how this high standard of enjoyment, restraining the population, came to be established among a people to whom an “ artificial stimulus to
“ population,”—viz. a poor-law, had been applied, so as to induce “ *a general recklessness, extending over the
“ whole habit, and manifesting itself especially in refer-
“ ence to marriage,*” he does not explain ; but contents himself with saying that it is a complicated subject how to “ secure a right habit at the time of marriage,” and so leaves it.

His evidence, however, goes distinctly this length, that a full, and even profuse, expenditure under the Poor-Law in England, is *quite compatible, on a large scale, with* a high standard of enjoyment, checking early marriages and excessive population ; while, on the other hand, the absence of any legal relief is equally compatible, on an equally large scale, with “ a total
“ want of a proper, dignified, and high standard of en-
“ joyment, sufficiently accounting for the high popula-
“ tion of Ireland.”—(Ib., p. 273.) And this is enough to shew that there can be no objection to a poor-law, on

the score of fostering an excessive population. I go only one step farther, maintaining that a well managed poor-law not only *attends*, but *constitutes* a restraint on excessive population, and this in two distinct ways; *first*, it maintains many persons, and, above all, many destitute children, in habits of comfort, and enables them to acquire artificial wants (as is distinctly seen by comparing the pauper children in England with the beggar children in Scotland and Ireland), and so directly and obviously keeps up the "standard of enjoyment," which Dr Chalmers himself regards as the most powerful preventive check. *Secondly*, that it makes it the obvious interest of landholders and proprietors to discourage early marriages, and prevent the settlement of people on their property, who cannot shew evidence of probable employment and comfortable subsistence. Accordingly, I stated it to be a general fact,—not confined to a comparison of England and Ireland (although that alone I hold to be decisive), that population makes most rapid progress among a neglected and unprotected population, and in the poorest portion of that population, and is most effectually restrained where an effective protection against extreme destitution exists; and of these truths there are many illustrations in the evidence before us.

The Commissioners state, indeed, that "improvident marriages at an early age are not common in Scotland," and that the increase of the population in Scotland, from 1831 to 1841, was less than in England, as 10·7 to 14·5. But as to this last point, it is obvious, as I have repeatedly observed, that it is not the *absolute* number of the people, but their number *relatively* to the demand for labour; which determines their comfort or destitution; so that a population may

be ruinously redundant, though decreasing in amount. For example, we know that the population in the counties of Argyll and Sutherland was less, (chiefly by reason of emigration), by more than 3 per cent. in 1841 than in 1831, and that, in the former county, it was even less in 1841 than in 1821; yet there are no counties in Scotland in which more painful examples of redundant population and extreme destitution exist.

Although I think the Commissioners are rash in the assertion, that, excepting in the Highlands and Islands, the supply of labour in Scotland seldom exceeds the demand (*e. g.* the supply of *female* labour), yet I hope and believe that they are correct in asserting that early and improvident marriages, in the great majority of the population of Scotland (as might be expected from their intellectual character and education), are not common. But there is abundant evidence, that among *those portions of the population* where employment, or adequate remuneration for employment, is obtained with most difficulty, and therefore destitution most common, early marriages are a prolific source of evil, and are distinctly traced by various practical observers simply to the want of habits of comfort. The following is the general result of Dr Watt's inquiries on this point:—

MR ALEXANDER WATT, Glasgow.

“ I drew up a paper for the British Association, which I
 “ understand is printed, in which I have shewn that the mar-
 “ riages are as the poverty—that there is the greatest amount of
 “ marriages where there is the greatest amount of destitution;
 “ for instance, look to Dundee. It is difficult to ascertain the
 “ exact amount of poor in any place; but there is one criterion,
 “ viz. the burials at the public expense. In Dundee there are
 “ about 11 per cent. of the whole burials at the public expense;

“ and marriages are, in that town, as 1 to 111. In Perth, where
 “ there are comparatively few poor, the burials at the public ex-
 “ pense are 4 per cent, and the marriages are 1 in 140, I think.”
 —Vol. i., p. 365.

Such observations, however, extend to too great a number of persons, and may be affected by too many causes, to be relied on in illustration of the point now under consideration, unless supported by others on a smaller scale; but of such there is no deficiency. I stated formerly, on the authority of Mr Baird in Glasgow, that early marriages are more common among the hand-loom weavers in Glasgow, *i. e.* the worst employed and most frequently destitute of the working classes, than among any others. The very same observation is made at Forfar, where, as is stated by Thomas Carnaby, Esq., “ the chief part of the population consists of hand-loom weavers, whose employment has been slack of late, but not more so than for the last 6 or 8 years, the power-looms encroaching on them, and forcing them to work at less wages.” This witness further states, that “ the causes of pauperism in this part of the country are apparent—redundant population, want of employment, and low wages; and, in the town of Forfar, *early and improvident marriages.*” —Vol. iii., p. 83.

But the most striking examples of these early marriages among the most destitute of the population, are in the Highlands and Islands, as appears from the following extracts, which likewise shew that one cause, here as in Ireland, which perpetuates this evil, is the fear of aged persons, that they will fall into distress unless they can get their sons married early and kept with them; and again, that by a little care on the part of the proprietors, for which I am persuaded that a good

poor-law would be the best security, the evil would be gradually corrected.

Rev. J. M'RAE, Minister of Knockbain.

“ Early marriages are in general more frequent than formerly,
 “ I hardly know how to account for this, except that the popula-
 “ tion in a given space is greater than formerly. But there is
 “ one thing I observed also in the island of Lewis, which may
 “ account for it—*people there married earlier than here, and they*
 “ *are poorer than here*; and I think the increasing poverty may
 “ lead to early marriages. It may be difficult to account for how
 “ poverty operates on the mind in producing early marriages;
 “ but *I have distinctly observed the fact*, that early marriages are
 “ most frequent in the poorer districts.”—Vol. ii., p. 9.

Rev. N. M'LEAN, Minister of Tiree and Coll.

“ They have a great inclination *to contract early marriages in*
 “ *Tiree*, and marry without much consideration, to which he attri-
 “ butes a great part of the over-abundant population.”—Vol. ii.,
 “ p. 131.—(Ex. *infra*, p. 279.)

THOMAS HUTTON, Esq., Kirkwall.

“ The people here are in the habit of contracting early mar-
 “ riages. For example, the men marry when about 22 years of
 “ age, and the women at 17 or 18. I attribute these early mar-
 “ riages to thoughtlessness. I do not think that a fisherman,
 “ who has a wife that performs certain offices for him, is better
 “ off than a fisherman who is unmarried.”—Vol. ii., p. 233.

Mr FARQUHAR KENNEDY, Poolewe (Ross-shire).

“ I consider that pauperism has been much increased among
 “ us, and that a large proportion of the working classes have been
 “ greatly deteriorated, by the contraction of early marriages. It
 “ is quite a common thing for parties to marry at a very early
 “ period of life, before they have made any provision for a family,
 “ and to build a cottage for themselves on a lot of land rented by
 “ the parents of one or other of the parties. In the parliamentary
 “ parish of Pool Ewe alone, the population of which is from 2000

“ to 3000, I remember that, in 1839, the number of marriages
 “ in one month, the month of March, amounted to 45. It is
 “ generally at that season of the year that the labouring classes
 “ marry. There might be some of these marriages, contracted
 “ by parties living without the district of Gairloch, assigned to
 “ the parliamentary parish, as the minister of the original parish
 “ was then indisposed ; but I know that, besides the 45 of which
 “ I have spoken, there were other parties married during the
 “ same season, by the minister of Gairloch himself. I am not
 “ able to assign any particular reason for these early marriages,
 “ except the *recklessness and improvidence of the parties.*”—Vol. ii.,
 p. 427.

Rev. J. FINLAYSON, Cross, Presbytery of Uist.

“ You state in your return, that early marriage is one of the
 “ causes of poverty in the parish?—Yes ; the males generally
 “ marry between 22 and 24 years of age, sometimes younger.
 “ When the parents become old, they insist on their sons marry-
 “ ing, to help to maintain them.”—Vol. i., p. 761.

Rev. R. FINLAYSON, Lochs.

“ The parents *are afraid to give their children too good an*
 “ *education, in case they leave them.*”—Vol. i., p. 763.

Rev. ADAM RITTIR, Evie and Rendall,
 Presbytery of Kirkwall.

“ Are early marriages frequent with you ?” “ Yes, too frequent.
 “ *They marry frequently when they have no home to go to, and*
 “ *live for a considerable time in the house with the wife's rela-*
 “ *tions. That is a very common thing.*”

“ Do you ascribe that to the low standard of living that pre-
 “ vails among them ?” “ I should think so.”—Vol. i., p. 766.

The Rev. CHARLES GORDON, Minister in Assynt.

“ During the first 10 years of my incumbency, marriages—and
 “ a large portion of these early marriages—were very frequent.
 “ Latterly, there has been about one-third less. The Duke of

“ Sutherland’s agent has done what he could to discourage improvident and early marriages. I attribute their previous early marriages to their having a very low standard of comfort.”—Vol. ii., p. 292.

Rev. F. M’RAE, North Uist.

“ There has been a great deal of emigration for many years back, assisted by Lord M’Donald; notwithstanding we have only 200 less of a population than before the last census.”

“ Are there any cases of great destitution in your parish, which are not supplied by private charity and the public funds together?” “ Not at present that I am aware of. Years ago there were.

“ Marriages are *not so early*, generally speaking, as they were when I entered the parish.”

“ Are early marriages more prevalent among the poor or the better-conditioned classes?” “ I should say more general among the poorer.”

“ Is the standard of living very low?” “ Yes, but better than in the neighbouring parishes.”—Vol. i., p. 758.

It is true that several other witnesses state that early marriages in those districts have become less frequent than formerly; but the broad and undeniable fact is this, that in those Highland districts, where the poor-law is a dead letter, the population, although not now increasing, has advanced to, and remains close on, the verge of starvation; it is difficult to understand how so many human lives can be maintained as actually exist there, and it is but too obvious that the extension of the population is restrained by the positive check of misery, and not by the preventive check of moral restraint.

It is stated in the account of the pauperism of Berne, that there are examples of families of paupers living for successive generations “ *en parasite*,” on the

labouring population ; and this has been regarded, with justice, as a clear indication of an ill-regulated and injurious poor-law ; but the following extracts shew, that where no poor-law is enforced, a neglected population, running to redundancy, may be burdened with a greater proportion of such *parasites* than is to be found in Berne.

DONALD LINDSAY, Esq., Accountant, Edinburgh.

“ In Tiree the destitution was very great during the time I
“ was in the management, and in Mull also ; but more particu-
“ larly in Tiree.” “ Does it occur to you how that state of des-
“ titution might be relieved ?” “ The only permanent relief, as it
“ appears to me, would be by removing the surplus population.
“ The island does not afford the means of maintaining the exist-
“ ing population.

“ The surface of the island of Tiree extends, in all, to about
“ 11,000 acres, but of that number there are not more than from
“ three to four thousand acres of arable land. The inhabitants
“ of this narrow territory consist of about 600 families, compris-
“ ing not fewer than 5000 souls. The island, with the exception
“ of two or three farms of larger size, has, for a long course of
“ years, been parcelled out into small crofts or holdings, varying
“ from about two to three acres. Upon these small possessions,
“ which are cultivated with great industry, there are, in favour-
“ able seasons, raised tolerable crops of barley and potatoes. In
“ this way, a certain proportion of the inhabitants have, in
“ ordinary seasons, the means of subsistence ; but there are not
“ fewer than 400 *families, comprising, in all, about 3000 souls,*
“ who have only patches of potato ground, which are allowed to
“ them with their cottages free of rent, but which are quite inade-
“ quate to provide more than *a few weeks’ maintenance for the*
“ *families.* *There is no employment to be found on the island for*
“ *these cottagers ;* the manufacture of kelp, which formerly enabled
“ them to maintain their families, having now entirely failed.
“ The people are themselves most anxious to go either to Aus-
“ tralia or Canada, if they could obtain a settlement there ; and it

“ may be asserted with confidence, that there is no class of her
 “ Majesty’s subjects who would be more useful as settlers in either
 “ of these colonies than the honest, sober, intelligent, and loyal in-
 “ habitants of these islands; but unless the aid of Government is
 “ speedily given for the removal of a sufficient number, and some
 “ immediate supply of food provided, it is much to be feared that
 “ many of them will perish of actual hunger, and many more of
 “ the diseases consequent upon the want of wholesome and suffi-
 “ cient food. In proof of the truth of this statement, it may be
 “ mentioned, that even at this early period of the winter (No-
 “ vember), *the people have of themselves come to a general resolu-*
 “ *tion to confine themselves to one meal in the twenty-four hours.*”
 —Vol. i., p. 728–30.

Parish of South Uist.

Population in 1841, 7329.
 No Poor-roll kept.

MR MURDOCH M’LELLAN.

“ Has been tacksman of the farm of Milton for sixteen years.
 “ Cannot say that he is intimately acquainted with the state of the
 “ poor in the parish, but has seen a great many of them. There
 “ is scarcely a day in the summer time that there are not three or
 “ four of them at his door begging,—most of them females. He
 “ certainly thinks *there are a third too many crofters and cottars*
 “ *upon the ground.* A good many of them are certainly in a very
 “ poor condition. They have nothing but straw in their beds:
 “ at this time it is very scanty. He believes them to be very
 “ badly off as to bed-clothes. The children are clothed with
 “ pieces of blankets, made by themselves, which they call ‘kelt.’
 “ The crofters are clothed in the same way; *many of them are in*
 “ *rags.* Some of them get a little crop off the ground, but it does
 “ not serve them, and *they are obliged to beg to make up the dif-*
 “ *ference.* There are a great many poor widows amongst them,
 “ and a great many infirm old men. He *never knew of any relief*
 “ *being given by the session* to poor people. The people in the
 “ parish *marry very early.* There has been no kelp made this
 “ year: that of last year is still on the shore, no market having

“ been found for it. *There are sometimes two or three families on one croft*, and they must live very poorly. He cannot say the people are industrious in their habits.”—Vol. ii., p. 364.

MR ALEX. MACDONALD, Gaelic Teacher, Dalibrog,
South Uist.

“ The maintenance of the poor by charity forms a very heavy burden on those in the parish who give it. Within a circuit of seven miles round Dalibrog there are 127 poor people who live partly, or almost wholly, by charity, or at least would require to be supported. These people are going about getting meal, grain, or potatoes daily, and if the value given in that way were reduced to money, it would amount to a very considerable sum.”—Vol. ii., p. 365.

REV. JOHN CHISHOLM, Roman Catholic Clergyman
of South Uist.

“ *There are many of the cottars who have no means of living at all*,—except what they get from their neighbours. The cottars have no land attached to their houses. Crofters have some land, and in that are distinguished from the cottars who have none. He has found several of the cottars dependent on charity, without bedding or bed-clothes ; and he must say the same with regard to many of the crofters. He attributes the deterioration of their condition to a number of small farms being thrown into large ones, and the former holders of them being thrown a burden on the community ; and hence the poor press more than formerly upon those living by their own means. Some of the cottars alluded to as having no means of employment were able-bodied men. He has not considered how these persons might be employed, but thinks the proprietor might find ways and means of doing so. They have not the means themselves of engaging properly in fishing.—*They cannot procure boats and tackling* ; those who are already engaged in fishing are very ill off on that account. The destruction of the kelp trade has been a great cause of the increase of pauperism ; and, if no substitute is found for it, the whole population will

“ be paupers. Fifty crofts, at the very least, have been thrown
 “ into large farms, and all the families who dwelt upon them have
 “ *fallen for support upon the community*,—except a very few who
 “ may have emigrated.”—Vol. ii., p. 365, 366.

Extract from NOTES of CASES visited in the Parish of
 Duirnish, (Skye.) July 1. 1843.

“ *Pollusken*.—Alexander M'Dermot, *æt.* fifty. Has no land.
 “ Can work a little; but his health not good. *Wife and six*
 “ *children*. Children *pretty nearly naked*. No bed-steads. Scarcely
 “ any straw on the floor of the sleeping-room, and what there is
 “ has been long used. A few ragged bed-clothes,—his own clothes
 “ in rags. Division from compost heap only half high. Division
 “ from sleeping-place, four boards. All his furniture, *a board*
 “ *supported on stones; a stone seat; one pot; one basin; a plate*
 “ *and a half*. He gets ground for potatoes which keep him till
 “ May. After that, he has only what little fish he can catch,
 “ and shell-fish, to live on. Has no boat or long lines; what he
 “ catches is with a rod and line off a rock. Has had no meal or
 “ potatoes this week. This family seems in the lowest state of
 “ indigence. *No parish aid*.

“ *About a dozen families in the same place,—all in the same*
 “ *state*.”—Vol. ii., p. 392.

MR JOHN NICOLSON.

“ Has lived almost all his life in Skye. The poor that he saw
 “ to-day with the Commissioner in Fasask, Pollusken, &c., *are a*
 “ *fair specimen of the poor in Skye*, with whom he has been ac-
 “ quainted.”—Do., p. 393.

Now, when we compare this state of things in those
 rural districts in Scotland, where the poor-laws are a
 dead letter, with the condition of the population as
 to the great requisites of *employment, comfort*, and cha-
 racter in Berwickshire, where the legal allowances to
 the poor, and the whole system of management, (long

established) approach nearest to the arrangements in England, I maintain that we have sufficient evidence (in confirmation of much which I have formerly stated as to other countries) to prove that a poor-law, administered with common prudence, beneficially restrains the population of a country, in the two different ways which I have already explained. But it is not necessary for practical purposes to push the inference so far; it is sufficient to state, what I think no one can deny, that such a poor-law does not foster or stimulate population; and therefore, that the *undeniable advantages* of this mode of providing for the poor, in point of certainty and efficiency, relatively to the poor, and justice and security against abuse, relatively to the rich, may be obtained without that risk of injury, either to their numbers or their character, which has been so industriously represented as its necessary result.

Still it will be said, and certainly with much truth, that in regard to the population of the Highlands and Islands, there is an ulterior difficulty, of great importance, which has been thus stated by the Commissioners. "We allude to the insufficiency of the whole rental of certain parishes to meet the demands of an assessment, which would make even a moderate provision for the relief of the unemployed able-bodied poor, particularly on occasion of deficient harvests or failure in the fisheries.—(Report, p. 52.) Nobody can doubt this is a difficulty of great practical importance, and it is one on which it would be presumptuous for me to express myself with confidence; but, in making the following observations, I think I am on safe ground.

1. The fact of a population having so completely

“run to seed” in these circumstances, when strictly “thrown on its own resources,” and where the poor-law is a dead letter, must be allowed to be the strongest illustration possible of the truth of the statement I have often made, as to the effect of a legal provision, or the want of it, on population. Can any one suppose that there is the slightest chance of the population of Berwickshire, the condition of which is described above, getting into this state of redundancy? Or, what faith can we put in the assertion, that the poor in Berwickshire lie under the influence of a ruinous stimulus to population, which is happily absent in the Highlands? I know it will be said that a similar condition of some parishes in England existed under the old poor-law; but I reply, that, so far as I have been able to learn, the condition of those parishes in England was, *not* that the *unemployed* population was more numerous than the rental of the parishes could support; but that an excessive burden of payment of the *employed* population was thrown on the proprietors of the land, by the system of *allowances in aid of wages*, instead of resting where it ought, on the employers of the labourers. Accordingly, when that system was broken up,—the workhouse offered to the unemployed poor who could not find work, and those who could find it thrown on their employers for subsistence,—those parishes *righted themselves*, without any one supposing it necessary to refuse the right of relief to the able-bodied.

Again, it will be said that the excessive population of the Highland districts, is not owing to neglected destitution, but simply to ignorance. But to this it is sufficient to reply, that in many of these Highland districts the people are much better educated than

they are, (or till very lately have been) in many parts of England ; in which, nevertheless, the preventive check of moral restraint (being in fact dependent, not on *knowledge*, but on *habits of comfort*) acts with a degree of force which, as Mr Farr, speaking from official documents, observes, “ will hardly be credited when stated in figures.”

Before going any farther, therefore, into the subject of the unemployed poor in those Highland parishes, I assert with confidence, that in them, just as in the condition of many parts of Ireland, we have an impressive and awful warning, of the consequences to be apprehended from the law allowing proprietors of land to “ throw “ the poor on their own resources ;” and while they absent themselves from their properties, and retain connection with them only by drawing their rents, to suppose they have done their duty to their poor ; because they *have been told*, that “ the more you do for the poor, “ the more you contribute to their increase,” and that “ all sympathies should give way to general principles.”

2. It is, no doubt, quite possible that the population of a district in which the poor have been thus neglected, may outgrow, not only the existing demand for labour and means of comfortable subsistence, but the *possible* demand, and the *possible* means of subsistence, which the land can supply. If we suppose this to be the case generally in the Highlands, the inference is, that the only resource by which the condition of the poor can be improved, is Emigration ; and unless assistance from Government, or from the voluntary contributions of other parts of the country, were afforded with that view, I would perfectly agree with the Commissioners that, *in that case*, “ an assessment for the able-bodied would, “ in the first instance, ruin the holders of property,

“ without conferring any sensible benefit on the parties
 “ to be relieved.”—Report, p. 52. —

Although incompetent to give an opinion on the real state of the fact on this part of the subject, I certainly *suspect*, from what I have heard, as well as from what is stated by some of the witnesses examined by the Commissioners, that a few parts of the Highlands and Islands, (*e. g.* the Island of Tiree,) have actually arrived at this state of redundancy ; that nothing but removal of a part of the population can restore the inhabitants to comfort ; and that the remaining resources of the country do not enable the proprietors to effect this object without extraneous assistance.

But it appears to me, that the Commissioners distinctly take the general case of the Highlands out of this category, when they say that “ it has resulted from
 “ their investigations that *profitable investments of labour are fairly open to the Highland labourers ;*” and that “ much more than has been done may still be done
 “ by enlightened proprietors, in *opening up the resources of the country*, and its surrounding ocean, and especially in fostering in their tenants a spirit of independence and enterprise.” “ Employment in the fisheries
 “ is already abundant in the Highlands ; and employment in the inland parishes, through *the adoption, on the part of the Highland proprietors and tacksmen, of the system of thorough drainage, for the improvement of sheep-walks, already practised with success in other parts of the country*, may be soon expected to become
 “ almost equally abundant.”—(Report, p. 50.) This statement opens a much more pleasing view of the matter, and the evidence of several witnesses bears the Commissioners out in these assertions ; but I cannot agree with them when they add, that “ *the only* amelioration

“ really required is the full development of industrious
 “ habits on the part of the labourer ;” and that, “ to pro-
 “ vide for his wants in such circumstances by assess-
 “ ments, would be in fact taking the most effectual step
 “ for arresting his advancement towards the acquisi-
 “ tions of an honest and independent industry.”—Ib.

This is the turning point of this part of the contro-
 versy. What the Commissioners say here would be
 perfectly true, if the assessments were to provide sub-
 sistence, *without labour*, for the unemployed labourers.
 But when it is distinctly understood, that the assess-
 ments are to be employed in “ setting the people to
 “ work,” and to be available only for those of the able-
 bodied who will work ; and when it is known that
 “ profitable investments of industry ” are open in the
 country, what is the natural inference ? That the heri-
 tors, knowing that they must set the people to work,
 will employ them at those “ profitable investments of
 “ industry,” rather than at unprofitable work ; and
 that the people, knowing that subsistence superior to
 what they now enjoy is provided for them, but that
 they must work for it, will have their “ industrious
 “ habits developed ;” more effectually than by carefully
 educating them (as proposed by the Commissioners),
 and then turning them adrift, almost without clothing,
 and wholly without money, to find work for themselves
 in a country where nobody chooses to employ them.

I apprehend, that for profitable investments of labour
 two things are required, not only *industry*, but likewise
capital ; and that while this last is withheld, the “ pro-
 “ fitable investments ” may be indeed open to the poor
 Highlanders, but it is only in the same sense in which
 “ the law is open to all men, and the London tavern to

“ all men in London ; but it is not every man that can
“ go in.”

The amount of capital required for setting on foot various improvements in the Highlands would seem, from the evidence of several witnesses, to be but small, and the lines of industry which may be opened to be more various than the Commissioners have stated ; in some places the mere draining of lands already in culture ; in others, the inclosing and bringing into cultivation moors and mosses ; in many places it would seem that the chief obstacle to the beginning of works by the Highlanders is the want of the small capital requisite for decent clothing and implements ; just as I have no doubt, that the reason why so few Highland shearers now appear in the Lothians is, that few of the people have sufficient capital to fit them out for the journey. In some instances, what appear to be chiefly wanted are the superintendence and the direction of the works to be undertaken by persons of competent skill and experience. In some places, as stated above by the Rev. Mr Chisholm, the fitting out of fishing boats would be the most important assistance to the industry of the people. And in others, assisting a certain number to emigrate, seems to be all that is requisite to set free the industry of those who remain. But in all these cases it is obvious that, besides good disposition of the people, *a certain command of funds* is requisite before the improvements can commence. The Commissioners have said much, and very justly, of the importance of stimulating the industry, and extending the education (particularly in the English language), of the poor themselves ; I take upon me to add, that it is obviously necessary besides, to stimulate the liberality and enterprise of the capitalists belonging to the country, and

for that end the most useful expedient, and the only constitutional security is, such a poor-law as shall make it incumbent on them, wherever profitable investments of labour exist, *to provide some kind of work* for the people.

I know it will be said that the chief difficulty lies merely in the “fearful laziness” of the Highlanders; and I really believe that, for the present generation at least, there is a considerable difficulty from this cause. Neither do I deny, that a part of this comparative inaptitude for regular and laborious exertion is to be regarded as a hereditary defect of the Celtic race. But the *main* causes of this unfavourable peculiarity of their character are apparent. When we remember the depressing effect, already described as the natural result of a long course of privations and suffering from want of employment,—when we remember the observation of Mr Brebner, that the children of beggars seem more afraid of work than of anything else,—and reflect on the mode of life on which many of these Highlanders have been necessarily dependent during childhood and youth,—we cannot wonder that so many of them should be habitually averse to labour. The following statement of Dr Mackenzie, as well as that of many others who were examined by the Commissioners, shews that there is nothing incorrigible in the idle habits of Highlanders.

JOHN MACKENZIE, Esq., M.D., Kinellan.

“The inhabitants of the east coast of Ross-shire are much more
“industrious than those in the west. They are quite a different
“race of beings: it is curious that those people on the west coast
“who are so idle at home, when transplanted elsewhere, are as
“industrious as others.”—Vol. ii., p. 35.

Surely a change of circumstances, and a short change of habits, a little patience and management on the part

of their employers, and the gradually increasing experience of the fruits of industry, may be expected to act as beneficially on the character of others of the Highlanders, as the mere change of place has done on some.

I beg it may not be supposed that I am wandering so far from my province as to propose measures for the guidance of the Highland proprietors as to the management of their estates. I do not propose a poor-law as a means of improving the Highlands, but wish for a good poor-law for that, as for other parts of the country, as the only means which I believe to be effectual for the relief of much misery, and the prevention of many national evils, in which all the citizens of a free state are interested; and then I adduce the evidence of various persons, well and practically acquainted with the Highlands, to shew, that there are various methods of improvement applicable to the Highlands, which the introduction of a poor-law, making some kind of provision for the unemployed compulsory, would in all probability force into existence, and which may be expected to compensate to the proprietors for the increased expenditure on the poor which would be required.

Of course, the increased number of labourers that might obtain employment in the Highlands, if such measures were taken, would very soon tend to a morbid increase of population, *if the habits of the people in other respects were to continue as at present.* But I rest my argument on this point,—That if a good poor-law has the two distinct effects which I have repeatedly pointed out, and illustrated by experience, viz., that of elevating the standard of comfort in the people, and securing the attention of the proprietors to their numbers,—it will *restrain the increase of population.*

Then it is also to be considered that many of the good qualities of the Highland poor—their patience under privation and suffering, their martial virtues and devoted fidelity,—have long commanded the admiration and gratitude of their southern neighbours ; and it cannot be doubted, that if it were distinctly shewn that the proprietors in the Highlands were already as fully assessed as those in other parts of the country for the benefit of their poor,—that farther assistance was required for emigration,—and that measures were in progress for the employment of the people at home, and for subsequently restraining their increase,—assistance would be procured from other parts of the country to assist in the good work, as readily as it has been obtained in former times, for the mere temporary benefit of arresting famine. Indeed, if the scheme, which I cannot help thinking quite feasible, of a central fund for the assistance of distressed portions of the community were ever to take effect, there can be no doubt that the case of some parts of the Highlands would appear a very fit one for its application.

The following are some of the extracts from the evidence, which seem to me to point out, most distinctly, the practical measures of improvement which are most essential, and which, under the salutary influence of a good poor-law—making some change obviously necessary for the immediate interest of the proprietors—might be expected to be adopted in the Highlands. They will likewise shew that many of those who have given an *opinion* against a legal provision for the able-bodied poor in the Highlands, have mistaken the question, and supposed that it was subsistence, without labour in return, that was proposed.

The Rev. LEWIS ROSE, of the Gaelic Church, Duke Street, Glasgow.

“ I should like if there were a national system of poor-laws. That would be a sort of *inducement to proprietors to provide work for their people*, so as to render them independent, as far as possible, of poor-law support.

“ Can you state the nature of the national system of poor-laws you would propose ?” “ It would be somewhat on the principle of the English system, and of the old Scotch system also. Let there be a union of parishes. Take a whole county if you like, and make it one thing for the whole kingdom. I would recommend very much, also, making provision for more fisheries.”

“ And how would you provide for extension of the fisheries ?”

“ I believe all the people want to set them a-going, is to provide them with *boats and fishing-tackle*. They are so poor that they cannot provide themselves with the necessary apparatus.”

“ No merely parochial remedy would be suited to the Highlands. An unkind proprietor turns away perhaps 1000 people from his estate, careless what becomes of them. Then, there is *no poor-law in operation* ; and if there were, who is to put it in force ? You cannot get the ministers and elders to put it in force. Then there is another proprietor who is kindly disposed towards the people, and will not remove them—nay, from kindness of heart, will give refuge to those who have been driven away from another man’s property. By making the system a *parochial one*” (he should rather have said, by having no law for relief of the able-bodied), “ you punish the good man who keeps the people on his property ; and you free the cruel man, who turns away his people, from any burden at all.”—Vol. i., p. 656.

J. BOWIE, Esq., W.S., Agent for LORD M'DONALD'S
Property in Skye and North Uist.

“ During four years, ending 1842, we have successfully and comfortably removed, without pressure, or force, or coaxing, 3250 people from these estates. The Committees in Edinburgh

“ and Glasgow, who had charge of the surplus fund raised by
 “ subscription for the relief of the Highlands, set apart £1300,
 “ to be paid as soon as I produced certificates from the ministers
 “ and elders, that the parties had actually sailed, and had drawn
 “ an equal sum from Lord M'Donald. The Committees paid on
 “ this principle, and Lord M'Donald paid the same, and a great
 “ deal more. Though 3250 left the estates, not above 40 of
 “ them were on his Lordship's rent-roll, or paid him any rent.
 “ They were principally what may be called squatters, the poorest
 “ of the poor. They had erected bothies, and, by the kindness of
 “ the tenants, had been allowed to plant a few potatoes for them-
 “ selves.*

“ I have known cases where the emigrants have written home,
 “ strongly urging their friends to leave destitute Skye, and join
 “ them in Australia. A deputation from Cape Breton returned
 “ to the Long Island, to urge their friends to follow them out,
 “ and in consequence several hundreds have gone out. During
 “ my experience I have as yet met with no complaint on the part
 “ of any emigrant because he had left the Highlands. On the
 “ contrary, I have received several most grateful letters from
 “ emigrants, thanking me for having induced them to take the
 “ step they did. Between 500 and 600 went to Australia, the
 “ remainder principally to Cape Breton.”

“ Finding a stop, in a great measure, to emigration, I com-
 “ menced a correspondence with the factors in Skye and North
 “ Uist, to direct the attention of the people to an immediate im-
 “ provement of the soil. The experiment began last year in
 “ Skye.”

“ There are 15 crofters on one large farm on the sea-coast, who
 “ had been there 30 years, and till last year did little or nothing
 “ to improve their possessions. The factor told these people they
 “ must either improve or move. The answer was, Shew us the
 “ way and we will do it. In consequence, the factor engaged a
 “ person at the expense of the proprietor, whose sole occupation
 “ is to attend to such people, and point out to them how they are
 “ to proceed in cultivation, draining, and enclosing. Happening

* Another proof of the extent of this “ parasitical population” in some parts of the Highlands.

“ to visit Skye last summer, a few months after these improve-
 “ ments commenced, I heard some of the poor people who held
 “ this land say, that it would have been well for them if they had
 “ been forced to do this twenty years ago.* The factor was
 “ with me last week, and told me that each had already drained,
 “ on an average, more than an acre; each of these acres will
 “ produce this year 80 barrels of potatoes, worth L.10, so that
 “ the 15 crofters will now draw L.150, the value of potatoes, from
 “ land which did not formerly yield one farthing. The outlay can-
 “ not have been great; for the whole labour was done by themselves,
 “ and the only actual expense is the price of a little manure. We
 “ tell the crofters, You must go on improving; you shall sit at
 “ the same rent, say L.2 for five or seven years, till you have drawn
 “ more than will compensate you for all your labour, and not
 “ till then will any increase of rent be exacted.”

“ They are as sober and honest a people as ever I met with,
 “ *anxious and willing to work, if employment can be found for them.*”

“ Are they more energetic than others?” “ They are just, in
 “ this respect, like the people in all other parts of the Highlands.”
 —Vol. i. p. 37-9.

MR DONALD SCOTT, Factor for LORD WARD
 in Glengarry.

“ There has been some improvement by crofters, who have got
 “ the assurance, that if they improve their crofts, they will get
 “ them from 5 to 10 years at a low rent, and have land given
 “ them gratuitously. This has been for the last 2 or 3 years;
 “ and as far as we can learn, no improvements had taken place
 “ on the crofts for a great many years before. There is a great
 “ quantity of land fit for improvement, and it may be done at a
 “ cheap rate. The proprietor might profitably employ them in
 “ bringing wild land into cultivation. *Witness knows it would pay,*
 “ *because he has tried it.* If proper education were given to the
 “ children, and employment to the able-bodied workmen, the
 “ whole population might be maintained with profit to the pro-
 “ prietors.”—Vol. ii. p. 412.

* Here the question presents itself—Would it not have been likewise well for the proprietor, if he had been forced to set them to such work twenty years ago?

Mr D. M'INTYRE, Farmer, South Lassren.

"Has been in this country 25 years, and knows the situation of the crofters. He thinks their condition might be improved by giving them waste lands to cultivate. He thinks, if they had leases, and got the land for nothing for some time, they would be able to bring it in without assistance. He has not the least doubt their condition might be improved by adding waste lands to their crofts. There is not much such land in this part of the country; but in other places with which he is acquainted, there is plenty."—Vol. ii. p. 417.

Rev. A. D. LAIRD, late of Abbotshall.

"I should be unwilling to see destitute able-bodied persons starve, but I should be alarmed at the idea of attempting to relieve all such persons from an assessment, *unless it could be done in the way of requiring them to perform work*, and giving them relief in return. If work could be given them, I should not object to relieving such persons from an assessment."—Vol. iii. p. 341.

Rev. JOHN NOBLE, Minister of Fodderty.

"I should fear, that if there were an assessment for able-bodied persons out of employment, they would become lazy, and lose their industrial habits, *unless some work were imposed on them as a test*; but there should be, I think, a discretionary power to grant relief. The number of poor on our roll is no criterion as to the number of destitute poor in the parish, who do not allow their wants to be known."—Vol. ii. p. 25.

Mr JAMES SINCLAIR, Stronsay.

"The chief causes to which the indigence of some of our labourers may be ascribed, are either their own want of activity, or the rack-rents at which, in some cases, their little possessions are held. I could not in justice characterize our labouring population, as a whole, as deficient in activity and industry. In some cases, where they are over-rented, our labourers are

“ *neither sufficiently fed nor clothed*; and this may account for
 “ their apparent want of activity and energy.”—Vol. ii., p. 257.

The Rev. ALEX. ROSS, Minister of Ullapool.

“ They are very poor, and it would be necessary to *give them*
 “ *some assistance before they could commence any new course of*
 “ *enterprise* or industry. Very few of the oldest of the adult
 “ population can read; but all the rising generation are taught
 “ to read the Bible, and the majority of the boys can write.

“ I think an assessment for the able-bodied would have a ten-
 “ dency to make them idle, and indispose them from emigrating,
 “ or from going to other parts of Scotland for work. Such an
 “ assessment might, however, make the heritors more anxious to
 “ promote emigration; and if there had been one originally, per-
 “ haps *they would not have allowed such a redundant population*
 “ *to have grown on these coasts.*”—Vol. ii., p. 423-424.

THOS. MACDONALD, Esq., Fort-William.

“ Those whose crofts are situated in rugged, stony land, would
 “ reap no advantage from having their crofts enlarged, because
 “ the labour and expense of bringing in such land could not be
 “ remunerated. But where the crofts are in the neighbourhood
 “ of bog or moss land, or moorish land, that is, moss earth lying
 “ upon clay, if a sufficient quantity of it, such as ten or twelve
 “ acres, were added to these crofts, and a lease given to them for
 “ fifteen or twenty years, at a nominal rent, and with an obliga-
 “ tion, under forfeiture, to enclose the whole, and cultivate an
 “ acre yearly, so as to have the whole in cultivation at the expiry
 “ of twelve years, the condition of the crofters would be yearly
 “ improved, and gradually becoming more comfortable; and by
 “ the end of his lease he would be very well remunerated for his
 “ labour, while *the landlord would have the value of his land very*
 “ *much increased.*”

“ The crofters on the Ardgour estate have good houses, their
 “ portions of land are in good order, and they have constant em-
 “ ployment from Mr Maclean. He knows no one who pays such
 “ attention to the condition of the crofters as Mr Maclean. By
 “ the same attention, the condition of the people might be raised

“ in other parts of the district. The difficulty would be to dispose of the surplus population. Somehow or another, Mr Maclean’s estate is *not over-peopled*.”—Vol. ii., p. 397.

ALEX. MACLEAN, Esq., of Ardgour.

“ In 1802, he divided two or three farms into crofts in this way,—he drew a head-dyke to separate the pasture part of the land from what ought to be arable. They have not improved so much of the waste land as he expected, or as they ought to have done. He believes that those who have improved most, are satisfied with the returns which these improvements have made them. There was no obligation laid upon them to improve. He is quite sure, that if they had been bound to improve a certain portion of the waste land yearly, they would have been in a better condition than they are at this day. If they had applied their labour continuously to their crofts, their labour would have produced more to them than what they have gained by fishing, or by working for day’s wages.”—Vol. ii., p. 398.

REV. ANGUS MARTIN, Minister of Duirnish.

“ He is acquainted with Ardgour and the Airds in Argyllshire, and seeing the crofters much more comfortable there than here, he inquired into the reason, and found that they derived a great part of their subsistence from the *employment* afforded them by their landlords. Their crofts afforded them a dwelling and the necessary provisions for their families—the rent being paid by their labour. The improvements at present carried on in the Highlands, and *in this parish in particular*, are confined very much to the farms of the proprietors ; *the small tenants have no encouragement to improve*. If they had portions of land of a proper size let to them, *and a capable person were to point out those parts of them which were to be improved, and the mode of doing it*—and if they were taken bound, by their leases, to bring into cultivation a certain portion yearly, it would be the cheapest and most effectual mode of improving the land, *and be ultimately very advantageous to the landlord*.”—Vol. iii., p. 393.

CHAS. GORDON ROBERTSON, Esq., Sheriff-Substitute of
Orkney.

“ My attention has never been especially directed to the subject
“ of an assessment for the aged and infirm ; but my opinion is,
“ that providing relief from an assessment to those who are abso-
“ lutely destitute, and who can neither work nor obtain work,
“ might be beneficial. My answer is not limited exclusively to the
“ aged and infirm. If you take the case of an individual who has
“ used his utmost exertions to get work, and has failed, I think it
“ would be desirable to have an assessment for him ; but if you
“ take the case of an individual who might, by his exertions, ob-
“ tain a livelihood, it would be inexpedient to give him relief from
“ an assessment. Drawing a distinction, with justice, between
“ the two cases, would depend very much on the machinery you
“ framed for administering relief.”—Vol. ii., p. 238.

Notwithstanding the incredulity of some of the witnesses, I believe that, under proper management, work-houses in some of the larger villages or towns might be safely and beneficially introduced into the Highlands, for the classes of the poor peculiarly adapted to them ; but it is obvious that the *labour test* must be the chief safeguard for preventing abuse, when relief is given to the able-bodied poor in such districts. And I cannot doubt that the introduction of work, done by paupers at the public expense, into the country, would be the true stimulus, now wanted, to induce the landlords to set on foot those different improvements, which require, indeed, some outlay and much attention on their parts, but which, according to many witnesses, would furnish a profitable investment for labour in almost all parts of the country.

In the case of the Highlands, then, equally as of the Lowlands, I maintain that the objections made by the

Commissioners, to the principle of compulsory relief to the able-bodied, are utterly fallacious; while they have left untouched the overwhelming arguments in favour of this kind of relief: 1. That it is, under proper management, uniform, adequate, and sufficiently early to arrest the progress of degradation, and frequently the extension of disease: 2. That it is equitable to all classes of the higher ranks, and brings forward many persons quite able to bear a part of the burden, but who would otherwise escape: 3. That it is found, by *experience*, to meet much more effectually the various evils of destitution, whether resulting from injury or disease, or failure of work: 4. That it especially tends to check the progress of population, by keeping up the standard of comfort among the people; and 5. That it makes it permanently and obviously the interest of all proprietors to watch and check, by all legitimate means, the increase of population.

I have only to add, that notwithstanding the difficulties which have long obstructed, and for a time must continue to obstruct, the introduction of a really improved system of management of the poor in Scotland, I entertain a confident hope and belief, that the arguments in favour of such a system will gradually make their way, and end in its establishment. This belief is founded, not merely on what seems to me the ascertained fallacy of the arguments opposed to them, but also on the observation of the gradual improvement in Public Opinion on this subject,—in that power which, as I before said, is not to be trusted for regulating details, but is nearly omnipotent in establishing general principles in the conduct of human affairs, particularly on those subjects in which the moral feelings are involved.

The tendency of the present age is undoubtedly towards more charitable views of human nature, and more liberal and humane measures, than were popular with our ancestors ; and this change is so consonant with the spirit of Christianity, that I cannot doubt of its being progressive in a nation which stands at present at the head of the Christian world. In legislation and various departments of human affairs, it is certain that less is trusted to fear, and more to the excitement, and cultivation, and encouragement, of the better and higher feelings of our nature. The great public duty of the education of the people is more generally recognised ; and the natural inference is, that we must be prepared to treat all classes of society as men to whom the blessings of education have been imparted ; that it is unwise to treat even the lowest of the species as if they were capable of being influenced only by fear, and that it is safe to trust to the power of more elevated and generous motives. This gradual change has not only been going on, but has been found by experience to be safe and beneficial. We observe this tendency in the present views of mankind as to slavery, and as to colonial policy in general. We observe it in the management of our prisons, and still more in the improvements in our criminal law. When Howard began to propose measures for the physical and moral purification of the inmates of jails, he was met by the very same objections that are now stated to a more liberal and merciful treatment of the poor ; that the objects of this “ false and ill-directed philanthropy ” were so debased, so improvident, lazy, and intemperate, that all kindness bestowed on them was thrown away, and would only serve as an encouragement to vice and crime in others ; but the progress of those improvements has shewn, that the

more liberal and charitable view of human nature was the more just.

As late as 1810, when it was first proposed to repeal the punishment of death, as applicable to shoplifting to the value of five shillings, the Chief Justice of the Court of King's Bench in England expressed himself thus :—
 “ With all my deference to those who propose this innovation, and giving them every credit for the ingenuity of their speculations and for the purity of their motives, yet I trust your Lordships will pause before you assent to an experiment *pregnant with danger to the security of property* ; before you repeal a statute which has been long found *necessary for public security*, and which I am not conscious has produced the *smallest injury to the merciful administration of justice.*”
 On that occasion, Sir William Meredith reminded Parliament of the case of one Mary Jones, as an example of what was then called the “ merciful administration of justice.” “ This was at the time when press-warrants were issued on the alarm about the Falkland Islands. This woman's husband was pressed, their goods seized for debt, and she, at the age of 19, with four young children, turned into the streets to beg. She went to a linen-draper's shop, took some coarse linen off the counter, and slipped it under her cloak. The shopman saw it, and she laid it down. Her defence was, that she had lived in credit, and wanted for nothing, until a press-gang came and stole her husband from her ; but since then she had no bed to lie on, nothing to give her children to eat, and they were almost naked ; and perhaps she might have done something wrong, for she hardly knew what she did. The parish officers testified to the truth of the story. But it seems there had been a good deal of shoplifting

“ about Ludgate Hill, and an example was thought necessary ;” and not “ sixty years since ” it was thought wise and judicious to hang this woman, for the comfort and satisfaction of some shopkeepers on Ludgate Hill.* I do not believe it will ever be thought so again ; and having observed the undeniable progress of public opinion in this country, as to the value of human life, and the consideration due to human suffering, in questions of criminal law, I think I can hardly be wrong in believing, that the same humane spirit is likely in future to extend its influence over questions regarding the management of the poor, even in this northern division of the empire.

At the present day we see the safety of various ameliorations of the law, which have been made in this spirit. We see that property is not less safe, because we no longer hang thieves and forgers,—that crimes are not less detested, because we do not immure criminals in receptacles of physical and moral infection,—and that Religion is not less respected, because we have ceased to burn heretics. So also, we may be assured that industry and independence will not be less valued, when we shall cease (as cease we shall) to believe, that the only security for the maintenance of those virtues among the poor, is to leave them and their children exposed to such sufferings and sorrows, as I have taken upon me to describe and to denounce.

* See Writings of Sidney Taylor, p. 190.





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