

General remarks on the health of English manufacturers : and on the need which exists for the establishment of convalescents' retreats as subservient to the medical charities of our large towns / by John Roberton.

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GENERAL REMARKS
ON THE
HEALTH
OF ENGLISH MANUFACTURERS;
AND ON THE NEED WHICH EXISTS
FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF
CONVALESCENTS' RETREATS
AS SUBSERVIENT
TO THE MEDICAL CHARITIES OF OUR LARGE TOWNS.

BY JOHN ROBERTON,
ONE OF THE SURGEONS TO THE MANCHESTER LYING-IN HOSPITAL AND
DISPENSARY FOR THE DISEASES OF WOMEN AND CHILDREN.

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ADVERTISEMENT.

The first of the following letters was published in the Manchester Guardian of June 18th. The principal part of the second also appeared in the same paper. The third letter, to which the two former are in a great measure introductory, the writer hopes will receive the candid and deliberate consideration of his professional brethren, and of all who profess to take an interest in the well-being of that vast, and certainly, on many accounts most interesting class of our fellow subjects, the operative manufacturers.

APPENDIX

The first of the following tables are intended to be
used in connection with the text of the book. The second and
third tables are intended to be used in connection with the
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LETTER I.

IN a late work, the production of Mr. Senior, entitled, "Lectures on the Rate of Wages," &c. we have the following observations:—"The Englishman's industry may sometimes be excessive, his desire to better his condition may sometimes drive him to toils *productive of disease*, ill recompensed by the increase of his wages; but that such *is not generally* the case, may be proved by comparing the present duration of life in England with its former duration, or with its duration in other countries." It is further stated that the average duration of life appears to have much increased within the last fifty years; that the average mortality amongst savages is the greatest that is known; that on the continent the mortality is *one* in *thirty-four* of the inhabitants yearly; that in England, about a century ago, when more than one-half of the population was agricultural, it was supposed to be *one* in *thirty*; fifty years ago, *one* in *forty*; thirty years ago, *one* in *fifty-four*; and now, when two-thirds of the people are manufacturers, and more than one-third dwell in cities, it is *one* in *fifty-eight*.

Without disputing these calculations relative to England, (although I think some of them might be

shown to be conjectural and improbable,) and admitting as unquestionable, that the duration of life has been progressively increasing during the last fifty years, I shall endeavour, with all brevity, to show the fallacy of Mr. Senior's conclusion,—a conclusion which is not his only, but that of all the political writers, so far as I know, who have touched on this point. The fallacy consists in assuming, that the greater or less prevalence of disease in a population, must *necessarily* regulate the duration of life; or, in other words, that where the duration of life is on the increase, *there* an increasing diffusion of health may be predicated, and *vice versa*. So far is this from being true, that I am persuaded it would be, I do not say *the truth*, but *nearer* the truth, to assert the contrary, namely, that in those states of society where the duration of life is shortest, except, of course, in malarious districts, there the greatest amount of health is enjoyed.

It may be well for me to define what I mean by health. I mean that condition of body in which the organic and animal functions are performed with a *feeling of satisfaction*. Every deviation from this state is disease. When the deviation is slight, there may be only some uneasiness as the result. But when it is such as to affect the whole or several of the functions alluded to, the feeling of satisfaction is lost, and positive unhappiness, as far as the body is concerned, varying in degree according to circumstances, is the consequence. As exceptions to this definition, it may be true that certain affections of the skin, various tumours, and even some incipient diseases of internal

organs, do not perceptibly affect the health. Some of the bodily functions too, may be so slightly and transiently deranged, that the effects shall hardly deserve the name of disease. But no definition of such a subject can embrace every particular. The foregoing is sufficiently precise and intelligible for my purpose.

With regard to the duration of life among Barbarians, which I will first notice, it is certainly lower than in Europe. Perhaps their rate of mortality is even as great as *one in thirty*. What renders it so great, is the question. Is it because they are individually feeble and sickly? According to all the evidence we possess on this point, clearly not. It is not because they are liable to numerous diseases, or that they are unhealthy, but chiefly from the following causes:—first, their entire ignorance of the laws of epidemic and contagious diseases, and likewise of the science of medicine. Secondly, occasional famines, which, in every state of society, powerfully predispose to epidemic influence. Thirdly, war, which they are almost constantly waging, and which proves incredibly fatal, especially to the males. And, lastly, the great waste of life, arising from abortion, infanticide and infantile mortality.

In order to draw a comparison between the health of Englishmen, (I should rather say of English manufacturers, for it is to them I chiefly refer,) and that of barbarians, the fairest method, could we obtain the necessary data, would be to take the average duration of life in each, suppose for the former at fifty years, that is, seventeen thousand two hundred and fifty

days ; and for the latter at thirty years, which is ten thousand nine hundred and fifty days ; and to estimate the average number of days passed by each from birth to death in a state of health. Unfortunately we have not sufficient facts to enable us to make such a comparison with any approach to accuracy. We must therefore be content to reason from the miscellaneous, but still copious information we possess, respecting the less civilized portions of mankind. A brief essay, such as the present, will not allow of this species of evidence being presented in detail ; otherwise I venture to assert, that it would clearly appear that the Englishman's life, although much the longer, includes a far greater number of days passed in disease than the life of the barbarian. To savages, it is well known that death comes generally as a stroke, in the form of war or pestilence. Fluxes and fevers are often so fatal among them, that in a short time powerful tribes are almost completely exterminated. Very few, however, are the subjects of chronic maladies. Their habit of body is singularly good. Grievous wounds, which, under surgery so rude as theirs, would quickly kill a European, seldom prove fatal. It was this remarkable peculiarity which made the great historian of savage life, Dobrizhoffer, exclaim, that it was scarcely possible to kill an Abipone.¹ Upon the whole it seems fair to

¹ " I have often" says the good Jesuit, " beheld many of them wounded with various kinds of weapons, their side pierced, their bones and ribs broken, their breath drawn with difficulty, the blood streaming from their numerous wounds,—themselves, in short, the breathing images of death : when, in a few weeks, I saw these very

conclude that the ruder tribes of mankind, in compensation for the want of intellectual happiness, and the refined enjoyments of civilization, possess a considerable and almost uniform degree of animal vigour; and that though their duration of life is shorter than it is in Europe, a much smaller portion of their existence is passed in bodily suffering, than is the lot of those who compose our great manufacturing communities.²

Abipones riding or drinking, in full health, I could attribute it only to the strength of their constitutions." Vol. ii. p. 36. See also Collins's New South Wales, vol. i. p. 444, where facts of a still more incredible kind, illustrative of the unirritable constitutions of the New Hollanders, and their power of recovery from the severest wounds, are furnished by the eminent writer from personal observation.

² In the form of a note I may mention a few facts in support of this position. It is well known that among savages who inhabit salubrious countries, the hair and teeth are retained to an advanced age. Travellers, who judge only by the physiognomy of the Indians, Humboldt tells us, are tempted to believe that it is rare to see old men among them; which is a mistake: the head never becomes gray, and they are very little subject to wrinkles. The same is asserted by James of the Omawhaws, an Indian race, as yet little removed from their primitive condition. Baldness, he says, appears to be unknown, the hair being always retained, however advanced the age of the individual; and that decayed teeth are rare.—Exped. to the Rocky Mountains, v. i. p. 238. Similar facts respecting other races of savages, are stated by various travellers.

That longevity among the Indian race throughout America, under *favourable circumstances*, is much the same as in Europe, we have abundant testimony, especially that of Humboldt.—Polit. Essay on New Spain, vol. i. p. 151 & 256. See also Dobrizhoffer, v. ii. p. 40.

It is customary in the present day, to represent savages as pos-

The hitherto increasing duration of life in England is no disproof of this latter remark. It is to be accounted for, among other causes, by the extraordinary improvements which have taken place in medicine, and all its collateral branches, within the last eighty years; by the gratuitous medical aid now almost universally afforded to the poor, which places, them in this most important particular, on a level with the rich; and, not least, by the increase which has taken place in the means of subsistence—a circumstance that has been singularly favourable to the rearing of healthy children.

sessing much less physical strength than Europeans: and Peron's experiments with his dynamomètre, are triumphantly adduced as decisive of this question. Doubtless such half-starved savages as the New Hollanders, are comparatively feeble; and in this respect differ probably as much from their neighbours, the New Zealanders, as they do from Europeans. But, in estimating degrees of strength by such feats as the lifting of heavy weights, we ought to remember that barbarians, when matched with Europeans, in contests of this kind, are by no means susceptible of equal emulation with the latter. In order to judge of the vigour of a savage, we must see him at his own *congenial* pursuits. Probably no European could travel farther without intermission than an American Indian; or row a canoe longer against the stream, provided there were an object in view, in its nature calculated to stimulate the savage mind. The opinion of Kroko, a New Zealand chief, admirably illustrates this trait of barbarian character. "If" says he, "you tell a New Zealander to *work*, he falls asleep; but if you speak of *fighting*, he opens his eyes as wide as a tea cup."—Cruse's New Zealand, p. 39. After all, however, there can be no question, that savages attain by practice (and it is only to be attained by practice) that rigidity of muscle which enables them to equal the greatest feats of European strength.

Indeed, it is probable that the difference which exists in regard to *the duration* of life in this country and among barbarians, is owing, chiefly, to the far greater chance of life in infancy, with us, than with the latter. Moreover, there are various peculiar causes which have tended to lengthen the duration of life in England, without producing a correspondent exemption from disease. A century and a half ago, violent epidemics, such as fluxes, agues, spotted fevers, and small pox, as well as inflammatory diseases, were far more common than they are now, and incomparably more fatal. In

The muscular power of the Indian miners is well known. When our Cornish men, during the late mining mania, visited the Mexican mines, they were utterly astonished at the weight of the burdens which the Indians were in the habit of carrying.—See Head's Rough Notes. "They will" says Humboldt, speaking of these miners, "remain continually loaded for six hours, with a weight of from 250 to 350 pounds, and constantly exposed to a very high temperature, ascending eight or ten times successively without intermission stairs of *eighteen hundred* steps." Their food is dried beef and water.—Polit. Essay, vol. i. p. 125.

In regard to the fact, that the list of diseases among savages is small compared with that among Europeans, it is easy of proof; so easy indeed, that it would be superfluous to enter upon it. The reader who is interested in the subject, may consult Capt. Carver's Travels in North America, p. 389; Keeting's Exped. to the Source of St. Peter's River, vol. i. p. 128; James's Exped. to the Rocky Mountains, vol. i. p. 239; Dobrizhoffer, vol. ii. p. 219; also the Observations of Mr. Edwards on the Esquimaux of Melville Island, in Parry's Second Voyage, p. 543. In Humboldt's Travels, and in the Histories of Greenland, by Crantz and Edege, there is likewise abundant evidence advanced in proof of the same fact.

place of these, however, chronic affections, (many of which are compatible with considerable longevity,) originating in the head, chest, abdomen, and pelvis, owing to the artificial life which two-thirds of our population are compelled to lead, have greatly increased; and in thousands of instances, in every considerable town, render existence one long disease. The following is Dr. Heberden's statement of the comparative mortality in London, from acute bowel complaints alone, during three periods of ten years each, in the last century : namely, from 1700 to 1710, from 1750 to 1760, and from 1790 to 1800. In the first period, the deaths from this cause were *one thousand and seventy* ; in the second *one hundred and ten* ; and in the third *twenty*. From the want of similar registers in other parts of the kingdom, we are unable to say whether this train of facts would apply generally ; but the experience of every practitioner of the present day must convince him, that a very small proportion of the adult population are affected with, and die from, any kind of acute diseases ; while, on the contrary, nearly every species of chronic malady enumerated in Good's Nosology, is to be found in the crowded anti-rooms of our public Dispensaries.

Of these Dispensaries it will not be impertinent to say a word. The number of them in Manchester, and still more the amount of patients entered in their registers, demonstrates that a very high proportion of our operative population is annually on the sick list. The number of inhabitants is *two hundred and twenty-seven thousand* ; and, during the last year, which was

by no means sickly, the home and out-patients admitted at the four great general Dispensaries, amounted to *twenty-two thousand six hundred and twenty-six*. This was independent of patients admitted at the Eye Institution, the Children's Dispensary, and the Lock Hospital; of the in-patients of the Infirmary and Fever-wards; of the great multitude of sick connected with the Lying-in Charity; and the numerous poor attended as out-patients by the medical officers of the Manchester and Salford Workhouses; amounting in all, at least to *ten thousand* more. If to this sum we were further to add the incomparably greater amount, of all ranks, visited or advised as private patients, by the whole body (not a small one) of professional men; those prescribed for by the chemists and druggists, scarcely of inferior pretension; and by herb doctors and quacks; those who habitually swallow patent medicines; and lastly, the subjects of that ever flourishing branch—domestic medicine; we should be compelled to admit, that not fewer perhaps than three-fourths of the inhabitants of Manchester annually are, or fancy that they are, under the necessity of submitting to medical treatment.

There are a few incontrovertible facts, not adverted to perhaps by the secluded political writer, but which those who mingle in the busy world of a vast manufacturing community will scarcely refuse to admit. One of these is, that sedentary and other occupations, which wholly seclude the artisan at all seasons (and from a very early age) from the pure air and the green face of nature, generally give rise to some degree of derangement of the health, manifested primarily in the

stomach and bowels, and also render the mind torpid and irritable : further, that this uncomfortable condition of body and mind, existing in almost every individual of great masses of people crowded together in factories, and in the narrow streets and yards where they have their habitations, is apt gradually to increase, and to be aggravated by the very means but too commonly adopted to obtain relief ; which are habitual or frequent drunkenness, the stimulus of crude and fantastical politics, the still stronger stimulus of riot and uproar, and not unfrequently, as the recent annals of our country unhappily attest, of savage or malignant crime.

It is to be regretted that nearly all our recent writers on political economy should have acted too much as the partisan advocates of certain theories, rather than as the enlightened friends of our common humanity. Hence, while they have disclaimed for their science every object except the production of wealth, they have been eager to prove that the increasing wealth of the country has produced, upon the whole, the most happy consequences to all classes of people ; a conclusion which is certainly opposed by a great multitude of incontrovertible facts. It is true that during the last eighty years the middle class, consisting of those who subsist by some business or profession, in contra-distinction to the lower class who live on the wages of manual labour, and the higher class who are born to wealth, has greatly increased in number, opulence, and intelligence. Moreover, this class now occupies a much wider range in the scale of society than formerly ; its upper grades vieing in wealth and

luxury with the gentry, and its lower grades (which include a variety of persons who live partly by mechanical knowledge and partly by manual skill) possessing much general intelligence, and many of the luxuries of life. But notwithstanding this concession, there can be no question that, numerically, the middle class does not bear so high a proportion to the lower class as it did half a century ago. And with regard to the actual condition of the latter, which now composes so overwhelming a proportion of our population, it is, in several respects, in a worse condition than at any period within the last two centuries. At least, I think it might be shown that they are less healthy, according to my definition of health, and more depraved and mal-content than perhaps at any former period.

They are not the enlightened friends of their country who would seek to increase its wealth without any reference to the happiness of those who produce it. It is truly a singular maxim that the science of political economy has to do with wealth only, and not with happiness. This is about as wise as it would be for a physician to say to his patients, "It is my business only to make you strong; with the maintenance of your health I have nothing to do. I show you how, from a state of comparative debility, you may rapidly become strong and plethoric, but how you are to regulate the production of blood so as to maintain your body in a condition of happy vigour, is foreign to the science of medicine!" It is quite clear that the happiness (and of course the morals) as well as the wealth of the manufacturers of

Great Britain, *must* become the subject of political attention; or, at no distant period, it will be shown, somewhat more ostensibly than it has ever hitherto been, that in the body politic *mere* wealth is as little desirable, as mere plethora is in the bodily frame.³

³ Mr. Senior informs us that it is not with happiness, but with wealth, that he is concerned as a political economist.—Three Lectures on the Rate of Wages, p. 16. Again, “many writers and readers of political economy forget that wealth only is within the province of that science,” p. 35. Mr. Senior’s meaning of course is, that political economy teaches how to increase the wealth of a community, without reference to the individual happiness, or moral condition of its members. That such is really his meaning, the reader will find further evidence by consulting the same work at p. 31. With great deference to the judgment of this able writer, I cannot avoid thinking that if this be indeed the sole object of the science at present, it will not always continue to be so. Judging from much which I see continually occurring around me in society, I should be inclined to say that as the production of wealth is obviously retarded by vice, ignorance, and discontent; and promoted by morality and social happiness, political economy ought to be regarded as essentially a branch of ethics. How greatly, for example, is the productiveness of the labour of a manufacturer lessened, by his spending (as so many of his class do) one or two days weekly in the alehouse! Again, in the numerous long-continued suspensions of production, occasioned by disputes between masters and their workmen, how much wealth is lost, which a different moral and intellectual condition of the parties would have secured to the country! It would be impertinent were I to enlarge upon this topic in a note: many other illustrations of the truth of my remarks will occur to every one practically conversant with the condition of our manufacturing population. I should suggest, as an improvement on Mr. Senior’s definition of political economy, that it be defined as—*The science which treats of the promotion of the physical and moral welfare of the members of a community, by means of the production and distribution of wealth.*

LETTER II.

IN my former letter I endeavoured to expose the fallacy of an opinion of Mr. Senior, that a general increase in the duration of life *necessarily* indicates a corresponding improvement in public health.

In pursuing this argument I attempted to show that although it be true, as he contends, that our manufacturing population have a lower annual mortality than their forefathers had a century ago, and than barbarians have at the present day, it by no means follows that they are in comparison, more or even equally healthy. I stated that from all we can learn of the health of our countrymen eighty or a hundred years since, their diseases were more acute and fatal, but less numerous than now ; that with regard to the ruder tribes of our species, of such at least as inhabit the more salubrious quarters of the globe, they appear to have very few diseases, and to enjoy a considerable, and almost uniform, degree of animal vigour, evinced by their recovering rapidly from severe and extensive wounds and other injuries. Moreover, that the high rate of mortality among them is owing *chiefly* to great infantile mortality, also to their ignorance of medicine, to occasional famines and pestilence, and to incessant,

desolating wars. In respect to our own manufacturers, I attempted to show, that although their annual mortality is considerably less than that of barbarians, their diseases are both incomparably more numerous, and generally of a different description. As for example, that while the few diseases of barbarians are violent and often mortal, those of our operatives, owing to the unnatural mode in which they spend their lives, are less acute, but very often long-continued, so much so, as frequently to become habitual, and thus render existence one long malady.

I shall now state somewhat more in detail, what I conceive to be the condition of our manufacturing population with reference to *health* and *morals*.

I have defined health to be that condition of the body “in which the *organic* and *animal* functions are performed with a *feeling of satisfaction*.” By the organic functions I mean digestion, assimilation, the expulsion of the fæces, &c.,—functions with which the mind has only an obscure connexion: and by the animal functions I mean the use of the senses, as those of taste and smell; the employment of the limbs and other voluntary parts; and the ordinary exercise of the mind, as in remembering, contriving, and the like.

Whoever has attentively studied his own feelings, and the indications of health and disease in others, will, I venture to think, acknowledge the importance and comprehensiveness of this definition. In a state of health we anticipate our meals, and eat our food with a degree of pleasure; the senses, at least those of taste and smell, being meanwhile gratified; and when

our repast is finished, there is a feeling of comfort, of renewed strength, and a disposition to cheerfulness as the consequence. In health, walking, and an infinite variety of exercises of the voluntary powers, are all performed with more or less of a *feeling of satisfaction*: the mind too is employed with like agreeable facility; we are cheerful, we pursue our ordinary avocations with clearness of perception (according to our natural measure of intellect) and our tempers and affections are excited by fit objects, and on proper occasions; allowing, of course, for the diversity of temperament and disposition that exists. Again: when a sense of fatigue succeeds exercise, we sit, or we recline, or we solicit sleep, still with the same *feeling of satisfaction*.

In disease, even although it be slight, the change which takes place in the state of the feelings is remarkable. Let it be only a slight cold, a fit of indigestion, rheumatic pains, sick-headach, disordered bowels, gravel, and the like, it will be found that the *feeling of satisfaction* which attends the healthful performance of the animal and organic functions, is diminished, if not entirely removed, and that more or less of discomfort occurs in its stead. The meal is not anticipated with the same pleasure; the food loses some of its wonted relish; and when the meal is over, the feeling of discomfort is perhaps rather increased than diminished; instead of cheerfulness, there is silence or moroseness; and there is inaptitude for bodily exercise, and yet restlessness in repose. The mind too is languid, and is only to be brought into activity by a vigorous effort, or by some powerful external

motive ; the temper is disturbed or wayward, and the domestic affections are generally torpid.

If this be correct as a general statement of the effects of even the slightest class of indispositions, occurring in the middle ranks of life, where ordinarily every description of alleviating circumstances is to be found, it will apply with very different force to the manufacturing poor ; and if it be true (as who will take upon him to deny ?) that they are the frequent subjects of every known variety of chronic malady, the foregoing definition of health will enable us to perceive how very often *their health* must be invaded, and how little reason we have, with Mr. Senior, to boast of the increasing healthiness and comfort of English manufacturers.

Undoubtedly the hardest part of the operative's lot consists in his being so very liable to disease, without at the same time possessing the power of relaxing from his labour. Day after day, the mule or the loom moves the accustomed number of hours, and the full amount of work must be done. There is not, and in the present state of things there cannot be, two grades of labour—one for the whole, and another for the sick. The consequence is, that hundreds of instances of indisposition, which at the beginning might soon have been removed by repose and relaxation, become, owing solely to the want of these, confirmed and more and more inveterate, till the stock of vigour is entirely exhausted, and the health ruined ; or in such a state as to require months for its re-establishment—an alternative fraught with the utmost pecuniary difficulty

in many cases, and the want of proper cordials, nourishment, and the requisite change of air, in nearly all.

If it be said that these hardships are not *peculiar* to our manufacturers, I reply, that although it is true that they are not peculiar to them, yet they press upon *them* incomparably more than upon those who labour at less exhausting and more healthful employments, and who live in circumstances more favourable to morals. The reasons which have led me to this conclusion are these.—I view it as a misfortune for an operative family to have become resident in a densely peopled community like Manchester, where the working class are numerically, to the upper classes who live within the limits of the town, at least ten to one. Hence we have large districts in which, besides the publican and the small shopkeeper, operatives compose the entire population;—in which there is hardly an individual (possibly not one!) to whose superior habits and manners they can look up as to a proper example, or upon whose more enlightened advice and sympathy they can depend in their various domestic exigencies; advice, and sympathy, such as in a differently arranged community the better sort are accustomed to extend to the families of the poor.⁴

⁴ In order to exhibit the great numerical preponderance of the operative classes, over the other classes in Manchester, I shall mention a circumstance which appears to me as furnishing conclusive evidence on this point; particularly as it has reference not to the whole of the operative population, but only, (it is to be presumed,) to the poorer portion of it. It is this: the number of mar-

There are a multitude of other evils resulting from this mal-arrangement of our population. It is owing to this that almost every variety of vice multiplies itself with such astonishing rapidity. When, in every second or third dwelling, we may find a drunkard, a profane or an obscene person, (and in many districts such charac-

ried women delivered annually by the Manchester Lying-in Charity, on the average of the last two years, is upwards of *four thousand three hundred*. Now it is well known to those conversant with statistics, that the number of baptisms occurring annually in England is in the proportion of one baptism to thirty-four inhabitants nearly. This is about the average for the kingdom. But the births are somewhat more numerous than the baptisms; because some children are still-born, others die before they can be christened, and some are christened whose names are not entered in the public registers. When we have made allowance for these incidental circumstances, the annual rate of births in Manchester may be stated to be at the very highest, as one to twenty-eight of the existing number of inhabitants; perhaps one to every thirty would be nearer the truth.

The application of this rule, with the view of showing *what proportion* of the inhabitants *produce* the number of births attended annually by the Lying-in Charity, is a sufficiently simple process. Taking it for granted, that the four thousand three hundred births before mentioned, is the average annual number that may be anticipated regularly to occur, (and I am sorry to say, that there is no prospect of the number decreasing,) it follows that since the production of one birth annually requires twenty-eight inhabitants, the production of four thousand three hundred births will require one hundred and twenty thousand four hundred inhabitants: in other words, if we take the population of Manchester at two hundred and twenty-seven thousand, we thus have considerably more than one half of the whole, who are in so destitute a condition, (or if you will—so degraded,) as to have their offspring brought into the world by the aid of a public charity!

ters are even more plentiful than this,) who can escape the influence of evil example? When vice is daily (and nightly too) familiar to every eye and ear, what but a miracle can prevent general corruption? *Here* are to be seen early profligacy, contempt of parents, improvident marriages, neglect of religion—even to utter heathenism, insubordination to superiors, the most sluttish waste, dishonesty, general tippling in both sexes, pauperism, gloomy discontent, and the frequent occurrence of disease. These are the circumstances, surrounded by which a well-disposed operative has to encounter the ordinary difficulties of his lot.

Again: I hold it to be a misfortune for a family to form part of a congregation of operatives, amounting perhaps to *eight hundred or one thousand*, all employed in the same factory, and by a single employer. A certain regular gradation of rank in society is unquestionably natural. If the master acknowledges no common bond as existing between him and his labourers; if he does not even know their names and faces; if he avowedly or practically (which is the same thing) disclaims all regard to their conduct, except *as manufacturers*; if, in fine, he keeps wholly aloof from them, (and under present circumstances it is not easy to conceive how he can act otherwise,) then it is clear that some of the best feelings of our nature—I mean a sense of dependance and gratitude—can never be called into exercise in the breasts of the operatives: hence must originate a condition of mind at once low, conceited, and insolently disposed—a very hot-bed for turbulence and crime.

Further, I regard it as a misfortune for an operative to be obliged to labour for so long hours as is common in this quarter, at an exhausting occupation, and in a confined, and often in an impure, atmosphere:—a misfortune which is greatly heightened if this is the case with both the parents and several of the children of the same family. I consider this circumstance as one of the chief causes of the astounding inebriety of our population. After the toils of such a day are over, how is the torpid and, generally, uneducated mind to obtain a comfortable sense of existence? Most readily, doubtless, by means of stimulating potations. These kindle a temporary vigour, and dissipate the dulness which overpowers the faculties. In such a family, the instruction of children, and all the necessary detail of domestic management—*most necessary* indeed if the poor are to derive any comfort from their earnings, are but too commonly neglected. What are Sunday schools (numerous as they are) likely to effect for the education of so vast a population, where there is generally no co-operating domestic, or other instruction during the week? It is mere delusion to think that Sunday schools, however well organized, together with the small existing number of charity schools, are adequate to the diffusion of education in our manufacturing districts: and not less defective or *inefficient* are the means of religious oversight.

To conclude, I cannot help regarding the great manufacturing system of this county, grouped and arranged as it now is, as being an experiment, the results of which are not yet determined. The system

has only existed about forty years. It has grown to its present magnitude, and assumed its present integral condition, by the influence of circumstances which the master manufacturers individually have had little ability to control. It has not produced a healthy population, since, notwithstanding all our array of gratuitous medical aid, the annual mortality of Manchester is *one in forty-five*, and that of Glasgow is still greater, while that of England as a whole is only *one in fifty-eight*. Neither has it produced a population that is contented, well-instructed, and provident, but one in which there exists always considerable, and sometimes general poverty, an anomalous temper, and an extraordinary amount of petty crime.

LETTER III.

HAVING said so much of the evils which beset the operative poor in our large towns, it will naturally be expected that I should attempt to show how they may be remedied. Were I to do this, I fear I should afford little satisfaction either to my reader, or to myself. I therefore gladly leave all such remedies as are properly moral and political to others, trusting sincerely that they may be devised and applied before it is too late. My attention shall rather be directed to an important consideration of a physical kind—the means best calculated to counteract the effects of those protracted deviations from health which I have shown prevail so extensively in our population. In pursuing this subject I shall confine my remarks to the inhabitants of Manchester:—whatever means are applicable in their case, will apply more or less in that of the people of any other large manufacturing town.

For many years it has appeared to me that a considerable number of the patients who apply at our public charities, are in a condition to derive little, and sometimes even no benefit from the most skilful medical treatment. They are suffering under some form of chronic disease, which in its nature may, or may not,

be incurable : while under treatment they are generally compelled to pursue their ordinary avocations : their residence, in perhaps a majority of instances, is a cellar : their food continues the same as before, or becomes of a worse quality, owing to their being less able to earn a living. In other words, the patient remains in precisely the same circumstances as those in which he was immersed when he fell sick, saving that few who are ill can prevent their condition from becoming gradually worse. It is hardly necessary to remark that this description of patients is in want of *something* besides medicine : they are in want of such a change in *external condition* as shall remove them from under the influence of those depressing causes, which, if not the sole origin of their complaints, have tended to aggravate and increase them ; and a continuance of which must hinder their speedy, or even ultimate cure.

Without in the slightest degree underrating the importance and value of the *materia medica*, when skilfully employed for the cure of disease, I cannot conceal from myself the fact that medicine, in a variety of cases, comes merely *in aid* of other means, and deservedly ranks as secondary and inferior to these. A man I shall suppose, (and I choose a familiar illustration,) of delicate constitution, of sedentary occupation, residing in a confined situation, and who has to provide for a large family, becomes the subject of chronic dyspepsia. Anxiety, unsuitable diet, unremitting labour, combined with the want of even the occasional inhalation of a pure atmosphere, tend to aggravate the disease. He is admitted on a Dispensary. His sallow, desponding

countenance, and other prominent symptoms, speedily reveal the nature of his malady. He is forthwith put under the most judicious treatment. For a time he appears to have obtained relief. The alterative has perhaps corrected the vitiated state of the excretions: the prussic acid, or the strychnus, has eased the pain of the stomach; but these indications of amendment are of short continuance. After a few weeks they are vanished. The medicines are now varied; and new hope is held out; but "the bloom of hope" is gone. The patient returns to his last, his needle, or his loom; and no less to his cares, long hours, close confinement, and vegetable diet; and in due time his name appears on the Dispensary Register, as one of the "Irregular;" an appellation which has the merit of saving the credit of the physician, by throwing the blame of failure on the patient. In this case it will surely be admitted that *something* besides medicine is wanted.

In illustrating this most important point, I shall confine my remarks to a class of patients, with whose diseases, and personal circumstances, I have now for a number of years been familiar, I mean the patients of the Manchester Lying-in Charity and Dispensary for the diseases of women and children. The following is a case which is far from uncommon. The mother of a family has a miscarriage, attended with hæmorrhage, which leaves her in a state of abject weakness, a prey to a train of nervous symptoms. What is the fate of this poor woman? She attends at the Dispensary, week after week, with a straw-coloured melancholy visage, a hurried circulation, headach, feeble digestion,

swelled ancles, and other indications of debility. The surgeon does his best, but he knows that his patient, notwithstanding her weakness, has daily to undergo the drudgery of doing, single handed, for her family ; that her residence is a cellar, or some other equally unpropitious dwelling in a confined situation ; that her diet, which ought to be better than common, is the ordinary diet of a poor family, and altogether unsuitable to the sickly appetite of such an invalid. After long-continued, persevering, but fruitless attempts to benefit his patient, the surgeon is fortunate enough, (such fortune, I may remark, is rare,) to obtain for her a Southport-charity ticket, with which she is immediately despatched to the watering place of that name, for the prescribed term of three weeks. Here a *total change* in her circumstances takes place. She breathes a pure bracing atmosphere ; has clean airy lodgings ; plenty of wholesome food ; and no other duties to perform than those arising from the care of her person and her daily walks. And what is the effect ? Her appetite and spirits return ; (begin to return perhaps the very day she arrives ;) and when, on the expiration of her term she returns to her surgeon, he finds her perfectly, or nearly, recovered ; and gladly admits that in such forms of disease as this, coupled with the already-mentioned adverse circumstances of a personal kind, a *temporary change of condition*, such as this removal produces, has incomparably more influence in the restoration of health than the most skilful medical treatment has in thrice the time without it.

This is one example.—Another of equally or still more frequent occurrence, is the following. A weakly woman, after a lingering confinement in child-bed, (exposed to constant toil in the discharge of her domestic duties, and probably on scanty fare,) has felt it her duty to suckle a vigorous infant for ten, twelve, or fifteen months. The train of symptoms, which this practice induces under such circumstances is extremely distressing: the digestive organs are seriously impaired; there is extreme paleness of countenance; headach, giddiness, and ringing in the ears; distressing flatulence; a capricious and feeble appetite; irregularity in the alvine functions; a frequent sense of faintness; severe pains across the loins; general muscular debility, particularly of the lower extremities; irritability of temper, and mental despondency. In such a case, what can medicine effect without other means? Absolutely little or nothing. I may venture to assert that the scientific practitioner has the least reliance, in such cases, on the *unaided* powers of the *materia medica*: without neglecting medicine he has recourse to other helps. They are the ignorant only who appeal, under all circumstances, to the laboratory.

During the last spring, this subject—the necessity of a temporary change in the external condition of certain descriptions of patients, in order to their recovery from disease, or the effects of disease, was painfully, and I may say powerfully, impressed upon the attention of the medical officers of the Lying-in Charity. The puerperal fever had raged epidemically from the preceding December, in every quarter of the town: and those

who recovered from its immediate effects generally remained long in a state of exhaustion, from which some did not recover even after months of suffering and privation. There was besides much general sickness among puerperal women, exhibited particularly in the forms of irritative fever and bronchitis. A more than usual number of those who had no marked disease, had lingering recoveries: and the consequences resulting from all these various causes, to mothers of families, who were compelled by their hard lot, during weeks or months of weakness and languor to perform their household duties, were often such as are hardly even conceivable by the fortunate matron whom Providence has exempted from the *res angustie domi*.

It is not my intention to enter into a minute description of the various forms of disease occurring in Dispensary practice, which require, in the subjects of them, *a change of personal condition*. It will suffice that I mention three classes of such patients. In two of these classes such a change is *desirable*. The first is composed of convalescents from acute diseases, in whom delicacy of constitution, or poverty and other adverse circumstances, retard recovery: and the second, of those affected with chronic diseases, in their nature curable; but whose cure is retarded by personal circumstances. The third class is undoubtedly the most important: it consists of those whose complaints are in their nature curable under favourable management, but which may be reckoned nearly *incurable*, without that temporary change of condition which I have repeatedly specified. In this class are

included many who are affected with diseases peculiar to females ; and those in the puerperal state, who fail to regain their strength ; also children who are the subjects of marasmus, and of various other cachectic diseases.

In Hospital practice, every intelligent surgeon will admit that after important operations, and in cases of severe mechanical injury, the removal of the patients into country air is often strongly indicated. When the wounds become indolent, or assume an unhealthy appearance, change of air will often, in a few days, work a remarkable improvement. Here it is change of air solely that is indicated, as it may be presumed, that within the walls of an hospital the want of fresh air is the only privation experienced. I am desirous, however, my reader should understand, that I do not plead, with reference to the classes of patients which I have enumerated, for change of air *merely*. *That*, without other concomitants, would do little. Along with change of air, they need *other changes also* ; a change from a meagre to a plentiful diet ; from unclean and stifling dwellings, to clean and well-aired apartments ; from the cares and duties of home, to complete relaxation of both body and mind ; and from in-door confinement, to unshackled, agreeable exercise.

These remarks naturally lead me to attempt to sketch the outline of an Institution, which I cannot but hope the humanity of the public will ere long cause to be established—I mean a Retreat for Convalescents.

For a number of years there has existed a “Stran-

ger's Bathing Charity," at Southport, supported by public subscription. Although limited in its means, this charity affords relief annually to a number of poor who resort thither, affected with forms of scrofula and other complaints, supposed to be peculiarly benefited by sea-bathing and sea-air. But out of the vast population of this town, probably not many more than *one hundred* persons annually obtain its aid, and of these, some are not of the poorest sort. Such an institution, therefore, highly useful though it undoubtedly is, differs from *that* which I propose to have established as subservient to our Medical Charities; and a brief prospectus of which, I would now respectfully submit to the public, and more especially to the candid consideration of my professional brethren. I shall at present merely venture the sketch of a plan, feeling, that should the *principle* of my proposal be favourably received, there will be little difficulty in filling up the outline.

I propose first, that an Institution be founded, (to be named a Retreat for Convalescents,) in some salubrious, and otherwise eligible situation, at a distance from town, and if possible on the sea coast, for the reception of such patients of our Medical Charities, as the committees of these Charities may recommend as fit objects.

Secondly, that the convalescents shall be accommodated in a suitable building, to be under the superintendence of a responsible married couple, who shall officiate as governor and matron respectively, of the establishment.

Thirdly, that the expenditure of the Retreat (I am assuming that the buildings, &c. have been erected by public contributions:) shall be sustained by annual subscriptions chiefly, not omitting other means of income: the number of convalescents admitted annually to maintain a strict relation to the income of the current year, whatever that may be.

Fourthly, that the Retreat shall be open for patients, during eight months of the year, namely, from the first of April to the thirty-first of October.

Fifthly, that a regularly qualified apothecary, resident in the neighbourhood, shall be appointed to the Retreat, whose services shall, if possible, be obtained gratis.

From known data, I am warranted in assuming, that a clear income of twelve hundred pounds per annum, would allow of at least one thousand patients spending each three weeks at the Retreat, in the enjoyment of plain, wholesome food. And further, that for the accommodation of this number, about fifty beds would be required, with half a dozen spare beds, in case of accidental sickness; it being understood that no persons labouring under active forms of disease, should on any account find admission.

From this outline, the reader will form some idea of the nature of the Institution which it is my object to recommend. It has been suggested to me, that the Retreat ought to be within six or eight miles of the town, rather than so far off as the coast; but there are many reasons why it should not be within a short distance of Manchester. In the first place, it would

require the expensive purchase of a large space of ground, in order to secure to the convalescents sufficient room for exercise : whereas on the sea coast there is, (with the most perfect change of air, and what is of importance to people from inland parts, complete novelty of scene,) unbounded range, without risk of trespassing on private property. In the next place, it is essential in such an institution, that it be quite removed from the intrusion and frequent visits of the relations and friends of the convalescents ; and this could only be secured by *distance*. It is moreover to be observed, that such is the facility, and cheapness of transit from this town and neighbourhood, to the more accessible parts of the Lancashire coast, (a distance varying from thirty to forty miles,) that the expense of passing to and from the Retreat, if so situated, would be as little as it would be, were it to be erected in the vicinity of Altringham, which is only eight miles distant.

In drawing public attention to the necessity which exists for the establishment of a Convalescents' Retreat for the poor, I may be allowed to remind the more affluent classes, that there has long been a great number of Retreats appropriated for their sole use and benefit. They will not fail to recollect, that the whole line of English coast is thickly studded with watering places ; which have been called into existence for their accommodation : to say nothing of such inland haunts of the wealthy invalid, as Bath, Cheltenham, Buxton, &c., where thousands resort annually in the two-fold pursuit of amusement and health. If, then, the opu-

lent have long since discovered that a Convalescents' Retreat is good for them, will any one venture to say that it is not equally good, and infinitely more necessary, for the feeble and disabled of our manufacturing population, to whom poverty, in every instance, imperiously prohibits the luxury of a lengthened convalescence.





