

**Letter to the Rt. Hon. Sir George Grey ... / from Charles Purton Cooper ; with papers respecting the sanitary state of part of the parish of St. Giles in the Fields, London.**

**Contributors**

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Royal College of Surgeons of England

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6.  
L E T T E R

TO THE

RT. HON. SIR GEORGE GREY, BT., M.P.,

HER MAJESTY'S SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE  
HOME DEPARTMENT,

FROM

CHARLES PURTON COOPER, ESQ., F.R.S.,

WITH

P A P E R S

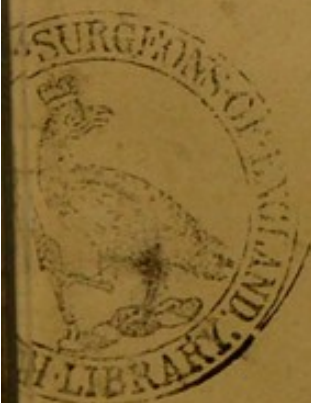
RESPECTING

T H E S A N I T A R Y S T A T E

OF PART OF THE

PARISH OF ST. GILES IN THE FIELDS,

LONDON.



PRESENTED  
by the  
AUTHOR.

LONDON :

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TO THE  
RIGHT HON. SIR GEORGE GREY, BART., M.P.,  
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT.





SIR,

THAT part of the parish of St. Giles-in-the-Fields to which the ensuing Papers relate, is beginning to attract the notice of foreigners anxious to acquire information respecting our social position in all its parts—the bad as well as the good. During the months of September and October it was visited by several; among them, by three Frenchmen and two Americans (natives of New York), with whom I chanced to have some acquaintance during their stay in this country.

It is not necessary that you should have the mortification of reading the remarks, which I have had the mortification of hearing. My object may be attained without the infliction of that pain, it being merely to apprise you that the state of things, to which it seems your notice was drawn in May last, remains unaltered; and that without your intervention, it will, I greatly fear, remain unaltered when the Exhibition of next year opens.

The curiosity of strangers with respect to the spot in question—little at the present moment—may then grow great; the human mind is apt to delight in contrasts—and how humiliating will then be the consequence, not only to the inhabitants of our metropolis, but to Englishmen generally, is abundantly obvious.

Most fervently do I hope, that you may be able to devise and carry into execution some measure for preventing such an untoward result. Your willingness I well

know. Your power I shall be glad to find equal to your willingness. And if unfortunately it be not—if it be not sufficient — there will not be wanting those, who will loudly and speedily call upon the Legislature to supply whatever may be deficient.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your obedient humble servant,

CHAS. PURTON COOPER.

12, *New Square, Lincoln's Inn,*  
November 11th, 1850.



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## P A P E R S, E T C.

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### I.

456, *Oxford Street*,  
*August 13, 1850.*

SIR,

ON comparing the account of the state of Church Lane and Carrier Street, which appeared in the *Times* in July, 1849, with the present condition of these streets and their courts, I have no hesitation in saying that it is as substantially true of them now as it was then; and, from an intimate acquaintance with the locality, I believe it is quite impossible for any description, however full, to give to any one an adequate idea of its filth and misery, and the moral degradation of its inhabitants.

It must however be stated that the cellars mentioned in the *Times* are now closed, which is the only improvement observable. In the Report of Carrier Street there is also an error, there being only in it nine houses instead of twenty, as stated; but of these the account is by no means overdrawn; in fact, it is much understated with respect to two of them especially.

As regards the south side of Church Lane the Report is much too favourable, as there are on that side many houses as bad, if not worse, than any on the north side. In a room, about thirteen feet square and seven feet high, on the ground floor of one of these houses, and opening into the yard, I have seen at midnight thirty human beings sleeping on straw and shavings on the ground, many of them without a rag to cover them, a woman



with a new-born infant in one corner, the infant born in this room with all its inhabitants present, and a dead child at the further end: in this room have I twice seen such a scene (and from my experience I can say that it is no uncommon occurrence in these places). The yard of this house contains a privy, and is in so disgusting a state that I will not attempt to describe it. At the back of Church Lane, on St. Giles's side, is a row of houses known as Kennedy's Court, which must, I imagine, have been overlooked by the *Times* reporter, it being ten times more vile and disgusting than Carrier Street, and, as might have been expected, not a single house in it escaped the cholera, each one of them having lost some of its inhabitants.

I took the following account of No. 8, Church Lane, very recently, therefore I can vouch for its correctness, and it may be taken as a very fair sample of these houses generally.

In the yard, which is merely a narrow passage about 4 feet wide, are four rooms. The two lower ones are about 10 ft. square, 6 ft. 4 in. high, and are so dark that you can scarcely see daylight in them. The two upper rooms are smaller. The four contain twenty-three regular inhabitants. The rent of the lower ones is 2s. 6d. per week each, of the upper, 2s. 3d. each.

The first floor, 13 ft. by 11 ft. 4 in. and 7 ft. 6 in. high; rent 3s. per week; contains eighteen men, women, and children.

Second floor same size as first; rent 3s. per week; fifteen men, women, &c.

Third floor 13 ft. by 11 ft. 4 in., 6 ft. high; rent 3s. per week; twenty-four men, women, &c.

The parlour 10 ft. square; rent 3s. per week; twelve men and women.

Thus making a total of ninety-two inhabitants, and producing a rental of £55 18s. per annum.

The house is destitute of furniture, and has no water or convenience of any kind.



The above were stated to be its regular inhabitants, and were they counted at night there can be no doubt that their number would be found much greater.

It should be observed, that besides the numerous inhabitants of these houses there is at all times to be seen in the rooms large quantities of vegetables, fruit, or shell fish, according to the season of the year, thus still further vitiating the air, and affording a ready means of disseminating the infectious disorders so frequent in these places.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your obedient servant,

JOSEPH BANKS DURHAM.

*To Charles Purton Cooper, Esq.*

## II.

*The General Board of Health,  
Gwydyr House, Whitehall,  
July 3, 1849.*

SIR,

I AM directed by the General Board of Health to acknowledge the receipt of your Letter, complaining of the nuisance existing in your neighbourhood; and to state that your communication has been referred to the Metropolitan Commission of Sewers, within whose jurisdiction the matter seems properly to come.

I am, Sir,

Your obedient servant,

ALEX. BAIN,

*Assist. Secretary.*

*Mr. Joseph B. Durham,  
456, New Oxford Street.*



## III.

*Sewers Office, Greek Street, Soho,  
July 12, 1849.*

SIR,

YOUR communication of the 23rd ultimo has been duly received, and shall be laid before the Commissioners on the first opportunity.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your obedient servant,

LEWIS C. HERTSLET,  
*Order Clerk.*

*Mr. J. B. Durham,  
456, New Oxford Street.*

## IV.

*Sewers Office, Greek Street, Soho,  
August 1, 1849.*

SIR,

YOUR communication of the 31st ultimo has been duly received, and shall be laid before the Commissioners on the first opportunity.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your obedient servant,

E. H. WOOLRYCH,  
*Order Clerk.*

*J. B. Durham, Esq.,  
456, Oxford Street.*

## V.

*The General Board of Health,  
Gwydyr House, Whitehall,  
August 8, 1849.*

SIR,

I AM directed by the General Board of Health to acknowledge the receipt of your Letter of the 31st ultimo, again calling attention to the state of Church Lane and Carrier Street, Saint Giles's, and to the way in which the Cesspools there are being emptied; and to inform you, in reply, that measures are in preparation by the Metropolitan Sewers Commission, for the improvement of the locality in question. The Board have no power to interfere with the method which has been adopted by Landlords of emptying Cesspools.

I am, Sir,

Your obedient servant,

ALEX. BAIN.

*Assist. Secretary.*

*Mr. J. B. Durham,  
456, Oxford Street.*

## VI.

*The General Board of Health,  
Gwydyr House, Whitehall,  
August 31, 1849.*

SIR,

I AM directed by the General Board of Health to acknowledge the receipt of your Letter of the 29th instant, in which you call the attention of the Board to the condition of Church Lane, Oxford Street, which is at present affected with Cholera, and I am to state in reply that the Guardians of the Union are required, under the present circumstances, to take steps for cleansing the neighbourhood, and arresting the spread of Cholera, and



ought to be called upon to perform this duty. At the same time the Board are aware that, from the absence of a Common Sewer, and the state of the houses generally, nothing less than a very extraordinary amount of labour can maintain the place in a wholesome condition.

I am, Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

ALEX. BAIN,

*Assist. Secretary.*

*Mr. J. B. Durham,*

*456, New Oxford Street.*

## VII.

*The General Board of Health,*

*Gwydyr House, Whitehall,*

*February 4, 1850.*

SIR,

I AM directed by the General Board of Health to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 1st instant, in which you bring under the notice of the Board the dangerous condition of Church Lane and Carrier Street, St. Giles's, on which you had previously made representations during the prevalence of Cholera; and I am to state in reply, that the Board, although painfully sensible of the reality of the evils that you describe, have of themselves no power to deal with them so as to provide a remedy. Some of the deficiencies in the sanitary condition of the locality may be supplied by the local authorities; but the main evil which you insist on — the over-crowding — cannot at present be reached by any existing legal provision.

I am, Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

ALEX. BAIN,

*Assist. Secretary.*

*Mr. Jos. Banks Durham,*

*456, Oxford Street.*



## VIII.

*The General Board of Health,  
Gwydyr House, Whitehall,  
February 21, 1850.*

SIR,

I AM directed by the General Board of Health to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 13th instant, in which, with reference to a previous communication of the Board on the subject of the sanitary condition of Church Lane, St. Giles's, you request to be informed as to what any existing local authorities may be called to do for the improvement of that locality; and I am to state, in reply, that the Board understand that a plan has been for some time before the Metropolitan Commission of Sewers for effecting a perfect system of drainage and water supply in the houses in question.

I am, Sir,

Your obedient servant,

ALEX. BAIN,  
*Assistant Secretary.*

*J. B. Durham, Esq.,  
456, Oxford Street.*

## IX.

*Whitehall, May 3, 1850.*

SIR,

I AM directed by the Secretary, Sir George Grey, to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 1st instant, calling attention to the state of a district in the parish of St. Giles, called the "Rookery," and to



inform you that your letter has been forwarded to the General Board of Health.

I am, Sir,

Your obedient servant,

H. WADDINGTON.

*Mr. Jos. B. Durham,*  
456, Oxford Street.

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X.

*The General Board of Health,*  
*Gwydyr House, Whitehall,*  
June 25, 1850.

SIR,

I AM directed by the General Board of Health to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 20th instant, with reference to the nuisances existing in Church Lane and Carrier Street, St. Giles, and the evils arising from the over-crowding of the Irish trampers in the ill-ventilated lodging-houses which abound there; and in reply I am to state, that the Board have no power to interfere, but that they fully feel the seriousness of the evils described in your letter, and will be glad if the opportunity occur of using their interest in endeavouring to have them remedied.

I am, Sir,

Your obedient servant,

T. TAYLOR,  
*Assistant Secretary.*

*Mr. Jos. Banks Durham,*  
456, Oxford Street.

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## XI.

*Article which appeared in "The Times" Newspaper, 9th July, 1849, headed "Our Sanitary Remonstrants."*

It is but seldom that the public attention is called to the misery and disease that exist in the metropolis, except through the medium of police reports, inquests, the returns of sanitary commissioners and medical officers; and these even convey but a slight idea of the horrors that really prevail. The subjoined description may convey some notion of the incredible misery, destitution, and filth, that often prevail near the proudest localities in this great city:—

On Thursday last a rather curious letter or remonstrance, addressed to the Editor of *The Times*, was laid before the public, complaining of the miserable state of two streets called Church Street and Carrier Street, which are situate on the extreme verge of St. Giles's, and within twenty yards of the handsome buildings recently erected in New Oxford Street. It would be neither desirable nor safe to prosecute any inquiries in this locality alone and unaided, the inhabitants being of the very lowest order—perhaps a degree more respectable on one side of the street than on the other—and our reporter, having secured the assistance of a police sergeant well acquainted with the street, and with many of the unfortunate residents, went from room to room, and from house to house,—not to witness an endless repetition of filth and degradation, but in each house to see some additional wretchedness, or at least an aggravation of former scenes.

The street itself is about fifteen feet wide, very ill-paved, and containing ruinous houses, having generally five rooms, but sometimes more. These houses are let by the owners to men and women, who again let out the



rooms singly and by twos, and these rooms are again sub-let by the occupants to those outcasts and trampers who are in want of a night's shelter. These are charged *1d.*, and sometimes *2d.* per night, and many are admitted for "anything they can give," or for nothing, according to their state of poverty and destitution. No limit is placed to the number of persons so admitted, except the capacity of the room; and men, women, and children, more or less naked, repose nightly in these places, occasionally on old beds stuffed with straw, sometimes on straw and shavings, without covering, but by far the larger part sleep on the bare boards, and in the back rooms, which are destitute of boards, on the bare earth.

In the house No. 3, Church Street, there are five rooms, which are let and sub-let as before mentioned. The number of its inhabitants varies each night. The landlord or occupier of the ground floor stated the average in summer to be thirty, but much more in winter. There are no drains, and there is no privy, the door leading to the space dignified with the name of a yard having been locked to make room for the "improvements." The inmates of this and the two adjoining houses go to a privy at a shop at the corner of the street, at which shop they sometimes leave the rent. The stairs are so incrustated with dirt that weeds might grow upon them, and are also so dilapidated as to make it a matter of risk to ascend them. The rooms vary from six to seven feet in height. It is scarcely possible for them to be dirtier, and the atmosphere is unendurable. The filth and offal are thrown into the street or court, from which it is swept by a man who is engaged for the purpose. All the inmates joined in condemning the atmosphere as "enough to poison anybody," and in a hearty wish that something might be done to alleviate their sufferings from this cause. Any inquiry as to the existence of fever was met by the reply, "Oh, they are all taken to the hospital!" but the mephitic air was often too sudden in



its action to allow of these cases being taken in time, as will hereafter be seen.

The house No. 6 also contains five rooms, in a similar state of filth to those of No. 3. Two of these rooms project over the back yard, where there is or was a very good privy, but this place also is locked up, the inhabitants going to the corner shop. The smell in these premises is very offensive, caused partly by the utter absence of drainage, and by the number of persons living under the same roof. The rent of these rooms varies from 2s. to 3s. per week. The back rooms on the ground floor had not a vestige of boarding, the furniture being composed of some old tubs for seats, and one or two bottomless chairs. It is absolutely impossible to detect whether the walls or ceilings were ever painted or whitewashed; the filthy state of the occupants of the rooms and the loaded atmosphere having reduced everything to a dull earthy tint. In the front room of the ground floor there was some appearance of cleanliness, that is, comparatively speaking. It was inhabited by a man with his wife and family; they had lived there for some time. The man was in the last stage of pulmonary consumption, and complained much of the poisonous atmosphere generated by the want of drainage, and by the number of persons sleeping in the house. He declined attempting to estimate the number, but it was ascertained from some of the other inmates that in a room not nine feet square from eighteen to twenty-three slept nightly. The window of this room scarcely admitted daylight, and could only be opened about eight inches.

In No. 7 the back yard was not locked up; it was an imperfectly flagged space, eight yards long by three feet six inches in width, and on each side of it were the entrances to the back rooms. In these rooms from eighteen to twenty-three people slept on the average; sometimes the number was greater. The privy had been taken away, and the cesspool just covered with boards and earth.



The soil underneath oozed up through the boards, saturating the earth with fetid matter. In one of the back rooms several Irish families lived. One girl supported herself by selling watercresses, which she purchased in Fleet Market, and afterwards retailed. A little girl was sitting on a basket making up small bundles of these watercresses from a heap which lay beside her on the floor. The Catholic clergyman sometimes came to visit the sick there, and, as the woman said, "there were plenty of them." The room opposite was occupied by only three families in the day, but as many as could be got into it at night. The price varied from "anything they could give," to 1*d.* and 2*d.* per night. This room fetched 2*s.* per week. Two cases of fever had been taken away from it. The window slid back about eight inches—that was the only means of ventilation. Although this room was not more than nine feet square, daylight did not reach the back of it. It was scarcely high enough for an ordinary man to stand upright in. The person who took the rents came to the door for them every Monday morning.

These three houses are a fair sample of all on one side of Church Street. The houses on the St. Giles's side are, strange as it may appear, much cleaner,—nearly all have privies, which they do not permit the other inhabitants to use, and there is in some a supply of water, of which the opposite houses are entirely destitute.

Carrier Street contains about twenty houses, and is perhaps the most disgustingly filthy spot that exists anywhere in London. A few facts only will serve to show the nature of the place, and these facts, incredible as they may seem, are by no means so frightful as many that commonly occurred in this locality. At the corner of the street, or rather a few yards from it, there is a narrow bricked alley,—not wider than a doorway. On going down it, as soon as the eye is enabled to perceive anything in the dim light, an opening is seen on either side, each being the entrance to a staircase so filthy, so offensive, so



repulsive to every sense, as to render it impossible to give any idea of it. On going up one of these—a matter of risk and difficulty—five or six different doors are perceived leading to as many rooms, and each of these again let to as many families. In one room, not ten feet long, and less than five wide, lived four families, comprising in all sixteen persons—eight adults and eight children. One corner of the room was occupied by a heap of straw used as a bed, and near it, on some old rags, was lying a child suffering apparently from fever. The mother was crying near it, and pointing to a small mouldy biscuit from which a small portion had been taken, said that that was all she had had to give her child for many days. A man who was lying on the floor in a corner of the room corroborated this statement, and said that he would be very glad to work for anything instead of starving in that den. The appearance of the inmates was a guarantee for the truth of their assertions, want being to be seen in every countenance. A stout young Irishwoman, who seemed better off and more intelligent than the rest, complained bitterly of the smell which pervaded the house (it was so bad in this room as to render it difficult to breathe). There was no water in the place. Some medicine had been given to the mother of the child by a dispensing surgeon to whom she took it. The medicine when brought into the room in the evening was quite red; in the morning it had turned quite black. It was, no doubt, the air which had changed it, poisoned as it must be by the breathing of so many persons in one room. It appeared, at the first sight of this room, to be physically impossible that sixteen persons could sleep in it; and, indeed, there could not be room unless some of them rested in a sitting position in the angles of the wall with their children on their knees. The police sergeant, who heard the statement, on being appealed to as to its truth, said that there was nothing either impossible or improbable; he had seen many such



cases. In the room next or next but one to this, and of much the same size, three families resided. There were not so many to sleep in at night—the number stated was eight or ten persons. On a bed of shavings, and covered only with a sack and some cotton fragments sewn together, lay another child, also suffering from low fever and diarrhoea. It was a boy about seven years old. He was quite naked. The father could get no work, and they had nothing to give him. The poor child seemed to suffer much from the fever. In a room above these, and nearly as large as two of them put together, several Irish families resided. The room was not so bad as the lower ones as to cleanliness, and the window admitted both air and light. It was, however, a most deplorable scene of misery. In a corner, with only a few rags to support her head, in her day-dress, and with a sack thrown loosely over her, lay a woman, whose features indicated the rapid approach of death. She was unable to speak English, and on being questioned by the residents in the Irish language, she said that she was a stranger—a poor widow with one child. She had applied to the inhabitants of the room for shelter on the previous night. They said that she had “not long to live by the looks of her; but they could not refuse her.” No one had sent for the doctor. They had sent for the Roman Catholic clergyman of the district, and he was shortly expected. Her child, a girl of about fifteen, sat by her side crying as if her heart would break. The clergyman, on his arrival, glanced at the woman, and, as if assured that there was but little time to spare, he turned the people out of the room whilst he administered the last offices to the dying. This woman laboured under the symptoms of cholera. In another corner of the room was a long bag stuffed with straw, and on this a woman, her husband, and two children slept. One boy in the room was pointed out as having slept on the stairs for the last twelve nights. He was a “strange boy,” no one knew where he came from.



He had had nothing to eat for two days except a crust of bread given to him by a woman who pitied him, though she could ill spare the morsel she gave from her own children. This woman said that they seldom tasted meat—hardly ever. They did not expect it. They were glad to get bread, and they had not often enough of that. At the bottom of the staircase, and about two feet below the landing, from which it was entered by a door, was the bedroom of a tailor named John Crow. This room had a bed in it. It was about six feet square, with no window; and it was impossible to see anything in it without a candle, even on the most sunny day. This unfortunate man complained that the landing outside his room-door was used by the residents as a privy. The poor man spoke very angrily of the annoyance he was put to by the soil running into his room. It came in at night under the door; the smell was almost suffocating; and he was obliged often to rise and clean out his room—at least to clear away the soil—before he or his wife could sleep. The next house to this was, with the exception of the cases of fever, &c., a repetition of the last. There were four or five houses at the extreme end of the street, which were a degree better than those described. The man who was the landlord of them pointed in triumph to a clock and some crockery in one of the rooms—a miserable place enough in itself, but a paradise compared to many near it.

The cellars in this street are the next object of attention. A flap in the pavement being opened, it rather surprised the bystanders to find that the cavern below was inhabited. It was about 11 feet square, and when the flap or lid was down must have been quite dark. There were women and children in it, and the atmosphere was thick and moist with offensive effluvia and exhalations. The woman had seen or heard of the letter which had appeared in the *Times*. She was much enraged, and said that her cellar was the one referred to as having accommodated sixty people. It was certainly impossible that



sixty people could have slept in it; and, indeed, it was a matter of doubt and difficulty how any person could have lived in it at all, when the number of this woman's tenants—which she stated to be twelve—were there. There were two beds filled with shavings in the corners; and when the tenants came in, shavings were spread over the floor generally, and they lay down to sleep. There are ten or twelve of these cellars.

It would be too disgusting to enter into many *minutiæ* observed in this horrible place. In spite of the demoralizing influence which this locality must have, many of its poorest inhabitants seemed to desire cleanliness. In nearly every house some women were engaged in rinsing or washing the miserable rags which covered their children or their beds. Many of the better class of the residents live by hawking cabbages, onions, and other ordinary vegetables. These they keep in their rooms at night. All of them complained of the poisonous smells that often arose, and said it was hard that they should have no drains or water, and but little light and air.

The foregoing description falls rather short of the reality, as any venturesome person may at once see if disposed to enter this locality. The police at Clarke's Buildings station will afford every facility for those who have some better motive to lead them than mere curiosity and the desire of seeing the extent to which misery and dirt can grow there—unknown and almost uncared for, in this great city.

A list in the possession of the police sergeant returns the average of the inmates in this locality at from sixteen to eighteen per room. The same sergeant states that in fourteen small rooms he counted one night 150 people—men, women, and children, nearly all naked, and sleeping in promiscuous heaps. At many of the houses the sergeant (whose name is, we believe, Fowler) was obliged to assure the inmates that “no harm was meant” before those who went on this sorrowful expedition were admitted.



It is worthy of observation, that the Rev. Mr. Watts, a clergyman who resides in Endell Street, and officiated at the new church there, died about eight months since in consequence of visiting this locality.

## XII.

*Letter mentioned in the preceding article, which appeared in "The Times" Newspaper, 5th July, 1849, headed "A Sanitary Remonstrance."\**

### THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES PAPER.

SUR,—May we beg and beseach your proteckshion and power. We are Sur, as it may be, livin in a Wilder-niss, so far as the rest of London knows anything of us, or as the rich and great people care about. We live in muck and filth. We aint got no priviz, no dust bins, no drains, no water-splies, and no drain or suer in the hole place. The Suer Company, in Greek St., Soho Square, all great, rich and powerfool men, take no notice wat-somdever of our complaints. The Stenche of a Gully-hole is disgustin. We all of us suffer, and numbers are ill, and if the Colera comes Lord help us.

Some gentlemans comed yesterday, and we thought they was comishioners from the Suer Company, but they was complaining of the noosance and stenche our lanes and corts was to them in New Oxforde Street. They was much surprized to see the seller in No. 12, Carrier St., in our lane, where a child was dyin from fever, and would not believe that Sixty persons sleep in it every night. This here seller you couldnt swing a cat in, and the rent is five shillings a week ; but theare are greate many sich

\* It may be conjectured that this Letter was composed by way of introduction to the Article of the 9th July.



deare sellars. Sur, we hope you will let us have our cumplaints put into your hinfluenshall paper, and make these landlords of our houses and these comishioners (the freinds we spose of the landlords) make our houses decent for Christions to live in.

Preaye Sir com and see us, for we are livin like piggs, and it aint faire we shoulde be so ill treted.

We are your respeckfull servents in Church Lane, Carrier St., and the other corts.

*Teusday, Juley 3, 1849.*

### XIII.

A pamphlet consisting of the foregoing Papers was published in August last:—*Papers respecting the Sanitary State of Church Lane and Carrier Street, in the Parish of St. Giles-in-the-Fields, London. Edited by Charles Purton Cooper, Esq.* James Newman, Bookseller and Publisher, 235, High Holborn.

There was prefixed to such pamphlet the following notice:—

It appears to the Editor that the task which he has undertaken will be best performed by a short statement of the circumstances under which the first of the ensuing [foregoing] Papers—Mr. Durham's Letter of yesterday—[13th August, 1850—Paper No. I.] came to be addressed to him. Writing in the middle of the nineteenth century, and in the capital of the United Kingdom, he cannot think it necessary to introduce the Papers to the notice of the reader by any remarks upon their contents.

On the 9th July, 1849, there appeared in the *Times* newspaper an article headed "Our Sanitary Remonstrants" (Paper No. XI. above). The letter mentioned in this article had appeared on the 5th July, and was headed "A Sanitary Remonstrance" (Paper No. XII. above). The impression produced upon the Editor's



nerves by the perusal of these documents led him immediately to write a Letter to the Bishop of London and the Rector and Overseers of St. Giles's Parish. This letter it was his intention to publish, making the *Times* article and the *Times* letter Appendixes. The latter—the appendixes—were put into type : \* but the letter to the Bishop, Rector, and Overseers remained in manuscript. The reason of the Editor not proceeding further in execution of his intention was an assurance, then thought by him sufficiently satisfactory, that the abominations and the horrors to which he proposed to draw the attention of the Bishop, Rector, and Overseers would be speedily and effectually removed.

Soon after he received this assurance the Long Vacation arrived, and he left for France, where he remained until November. In the twelve weeks that had elapsed the scourge of the cholera sorely smote the city, and admonished its inhabitants to put order (both literally and metaphorically) in their abodes—a term not improperly employed by some moral writers as comprehending not merely our own particular habitations, but those also of persons whose condition, bodily and mental, it is our duty to endeavour to improve. It could not be presumed—it could not, without difficulty, be imagined—that so solemn a warning had been disregarded by individuals, whoever those individuals may be, whom it seemed so nearly to concern. At all events, at his return, the Editor heard nothing of Church Lane and Carrier Street : nothing transpired to create in his mind a suspicion that he had been deceived in relying upon the above-mentioned assurance, until the following purely accidental occurrence.

A few days ago, in making a small purchase as a chance customer in the shop of Mr. Durham, already named,

\* The proofs have at the foot the date 13th July, 1849.



who is a cutler in New Oxford Street, the Editor recollected that the spot on which he then stood was not far distant from Church Lane and Carrier Street, and some observation fell from him with respect to the state of the houses there situate in the summer of last year. Mr. Durham was silent; but opening a drawer he placed in the Editor's hands a small packet of letters received by him from the General Board of Health, the Sewers Office, and the Home Office. They are printed post, pages \* \* \* [ante, pages 11-16, Papers Nos. II.—X.] and require no explanation here. On getting home, the Editor lost no time in searching for the proofs of the *Times* Article and the *Times* Letter of July, 1849, and on the following day gave them to Mr. Durham, with a request which produced his letter of yesterday [13 August, 1850.—Paper No. I.]

It is apprehended that more need not be said in this place.

#### XIV.

*The General Board of Health,*

*Gwydyr House, Whitehall,*

12 September, 1850.

SIR,

I AM directed by the General Board of Health to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 9th instant, with reference to the state of Church Lane and Carrier Street, St. Giles; and in reply I am to state, that the Board have no powers whatever, as you may assure yourself by reference to the Nuisances Removal and Diseases Prevention Act, and the Act amending it. The Commissioners of Sewers are the only body who have any power to interfere for the improvement of the drainage and sewerage of Church Lane and Carrier Street; while its surface cleansing is under the control of the parochial



authorities, or if not, of some Board appointed locally for the purpose.

I am, Sir,

Your obedient servant,

T. TAYLOR,

*Assistant Secretary.*

*Mr. Joseph Banks Durham,  
456, Oxford Street.*

## XV.

*Metropolitan Police Office,*

*4, Whitehall Place,*

*October 30, 1850.*

SIR,

The Commissioners of Police of the Metropolis have to acknowledge the receipt of a Memorial dated the 28th instant, signed by yourself and Mr. James Jones, "complaining of certain nuisances at several houses in your neighbourhood," and to acquaint you in reply, that the Commissioners have not legal authority to interfere in the matter.

I am, Sir,

Your obedient servant,

RICHARD MAYNE.

*Mr. Joseph B. Durham.*

## XVI.

ST. GILES AND BLOOMSBURY.

*21, Hart Street,*

*Bloomsbury Square,*

*November 7, 1850.*

SIR,

I BEG to inform you that your letter of this day's date was this morning laid before the Paving Com-



mittee of the above Parishes, who were pleased to direct me, in reply thereto, to express their regret at the state in which Carrier Street has been placed by reason of the want of proper drainage, and their satisfaction at finding that the Commissioners of Sewers are now remedying this defect. I am also directed to inform you, that the parochial authorities have been requested by the Board to put in force the powers vested in them, for the removal of such nuisances in Church Lane and Carrier Street as are wilfully and needlessly offensive.

I am, Sir,

Your obedient servant,

ROBERT FINNIS,

*Clerk.*

*Mr. Durham.*

## XVII.

473, *New Oxford Street,*

*November 9, 1850.*

MY DEAR SIR,

I, IN common with the friends of common decency, feel myself infinitely indebted to you for your perseverance in improving the Rookery; it is perfectly impossible to describe the immorality, filth, and wretchedness existing in this locality. From my own observation I can fully corroborate all that has appeared in print in reference to this place. I cannot but feel great sorrow that so little has been done by the parochial authorities to improve this horrible place. The Clergy also seem to think that it is quite beyond the possibility of any improvement. You may at all times command my services to assist in getting this dreadful place removed.

I am, dear Sir,

Yours faithfully,

FREDERICK SANDERS.

*Mr. Durham.*



## XVIII.

456, *Oxford Street*,  
*November 9, 1850.*

SIR,

I CANNOT report to you any improvement in the condition of Church Lane since my last letter [August 13th, 1850]; the Commissioners of Sewers have, however, commenced making a small sewer in the neighbourhood. I have taken many gentlemen through the place who have read your pamphlet, and heard much of it from me, all of whom concur in saying that bad as they believed it to be from the descriptions they had been given of it, yet the reality is far worse than they had at all imagined.

Mr. Macdonald, a gentleman from Glasgow, perfectly acquainted with all its localities, informs me that bad as it was and is in many parts, it never, at any time, contained any place at all to be compared with this.

I have caused summonses, under the "Nuisances Removal and Disease Prevention Act, 1848," to be taken out at Bow Street against many of these houses, but should they be successful it will merely prove a palliative for a time. The only remedy would, I think, be the licensing such lodging houses, and placing them under the control of the police, or somebody appointed for the purpose.

In the medical certificate on which Mr. Hall granted the summonses it is stated that typhus fever is very generally found in these houses; and in a conversation which I had yesterday with Mr. Bennett, the principal medical officer of these parishes, he told me that typhus fever is now very prevalent in Church Lane, and that they have many very severe cases of it in the parish infirmary, all of which have been taken out of the street.

I am, Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

JOSEPH BANKS DURHAM.

*To C. Purton Cooper, Esq.*



*Lately published,*

PAPERS RESPECTING the SANITARY STATE of  
CHURCH LANE and CARRIER STREET, in the PARISH of ST.  
GILES in the FIELDS, London. Edited by CHARLES PURTON COOPER,  
Esq.

Second Edition. London: James Newman, Bookseller and Publisher,  
235, High Holborn. 1859.

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A LETTER to the LORD CHANCELLOR on a DEFECT  
in the LAW REGULATING the CUSTODY of LUNATICS. By  
CHARLES PURTON COOPER, Esq., one of Her Majesty's Counsel.

Fifth Edition. London: Stevens and Norton, Law Booksellers, 26, Bell  
Yard, Lincoln's Inn. 1849.

Stevens and Co., Printers, Bell Yard, Temple Bar.