

## **Lodging-House Committee : report of the Medical Officer of Health.**

### **Contributors**

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LODGING-HOUSE COMMITTEE.

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# R E P O R T

OF THE



# MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH.

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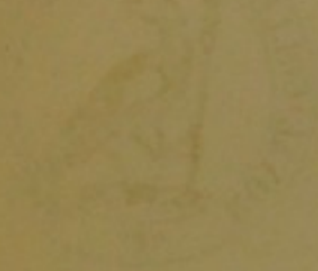
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1864.

THE KING'S HOUSE

REPORT



OF THE

RESEARCH OF THE

LIBRARY

OF THE UNIVERSITY OF

1891



## REPORT.

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THE Medical Officer of Health, as a Member of the Deputation appointed to inspect the Common and Model Lodging-Houses, and Model Dwellings for the Working Classes of the Metropolis, begs to report, that—through the kindness of Sir Richard Mayne, the Chief Commissioner of Police, of Mr. Payne, the Secretary of the Labourers' Friend Society, and of the Superintendents of the various Establishments—the Deputation obtained every assistance that was required in making their investigations.

They found, that though the practice pursued in registering and inspecting Common Lodging-Houses was necessarily very similar to that existing in Liverpool, yet it differed in some not unimportant particulars :—

- 1stly.* In Liverpool the cubic dimensions of each room are made the basis of calculation in allotting lodgers ; in London the measurement is simply of the superficial area.
- 2ndly.* In Liverpool the cubic space for each lodger is fixed at or near to 300 feet ; in London at 50 feet of superficies when the height of the room is below 7 feet, varying to 30 feet, according to the increased altitude of the ceiling.
- 3rdly.* In Liverpool there is no interference as to the size of the beds, but large beds used by and capable of accommodating two persons are permitted ; provided the number of inhabitants of the room is not thereby exceeded. In London, as a rule, single beds are required in all registered apartments.
- 4thly.* In London the number of houses which, having been at any time registered, are kept on the books, amounts to 3187 ; of which 1200 are at present actually used for the reception of lodgers, and are supervised by twenty officers, including District and Sergeant Inspectors, who have also to perform the duty of surveying and reporting



on the condition of dangerous buildings. In Liverpool, 5649 different houses have been registered, but all tenements which cease to be used for lodgers are struck off the list ; leaving at present 1185 under the supervision of one Chief and four District Inspectors.

*5thly.* In London the Inspectors visit the houses during the day between the hours of 11 and 4 o'clock. Night visits are never made without the written order of a Commissioner, and then by two Inspectors. In Liverpool the houses are visited by the single District Inspector during the day, and during three nights of the week.

The Medical Officer of Health considers that an alteration may be beneficially made in the Liverpool arrangements, and begs to propose :—

*1stly.* That no visit shall be paid by an Inspector to any Lodging-House after the hour of six p.m., or during any period of the night, without the written order of the Medical Officer of Health.

*2ndly.* That before unregistered houses, supposed to contain lodgers, be visited at night, a caution against the offence thus committed be given personally, or by letter, to the tenant of the dwelling.

*3rdly.* That all night inspections of registered or unregistered Lodging-Houses be made by two Inspectors.

*4thly.* That all Lodging-House Keepers applying for six or more lodgers for any single room, have in such room single beds for each lodger, before registration be granted.

The Medical Officer ventures to support these alterations, *firstly*, by the experience of the Lodging-House Inspectors of London ; and, *secondly*, by the fact, that during the last year the night visits paid to the Lodging-Houses in Liverpool were 12,486, and the offences discovered of overcrowding only 46 ; shewing how vast an amount of annoyance and discomfort had been sustained by the innocent in the discovery of the guilty. It was this result, disclosed in the working of the system, that induced the Medical Officer to desire the mitigation of a law which, pressing for good purposes on the liberty of the subject, should be exercised with extreme caution.

He believes that the seventh proposal will not be found to press unduly on the keepers of Lodging-Houses, as it need not have a retrospective effect. Of the 3350 rooms at present registered, only 255 are allowed to contain six or more lodgers, and of these 59 are already furnished with single beds. The benefits of this arrangement, on sanitary grounds, are self-evident ; but it will also serve as a partial guarantee against overcrowding. This is practically found to be the case in rooms so furnished.



The Deputation paid particular attention to the second point of their enquiry—the economical arrangement of Model Lodging-Houses. Here, at the very outset, they recognized the enlightened practical philanthropy of many ladies and gentlemen, who have condescended to employ their time and money in regulating establishments which, though erected in accordance with the requirements of sanitary science, are so managed as in no respect to injure the interests of those who properly pursue this branch of industry as an honest means of livelihood.

The Model Lodging-Houses of London may be divided into—

1st. New dwellings, specially built for the purpose.

2nd. Renovated buildings, formerly used as private residences.

Of the former, the Deputation visited the Model in George-street, Bloomsbury, belonging to the Labourers' Friend Society, and fitted up with 104 sleeping compartments; also the Metropolitan Chambers, Albert-street, Mile-end, New Town, belonging to the Metropolitan Association, and fitted up with 234 sleeping compartments. The charge in both establishments is 2s. 6d. a-week, for which, besides his bed, each lodger is supplied with all conveniences he can reasonably require, including gas, the use of well-selected books, an airy hall or sitting-room, the use of the common kitchen and washing-rooms, with a constant supply of hot and cold water. These splendid Institutions, however, seem unfortunately to have been erected without much regard to future financial results—unfortunately, since that benevolence which, in its action, is akin to eleemosynary aid, can only be practised by the rich, and therefore can have only a restricted influence for good. The Model in George-street cost in primary outlay £6426 14s. 2d., and yields only  $3\frac{7}{10}$  per cent.; while that in Albert-street cost £13,772 7s. 3d., and yields only  $1\frac{1}{8}$  per cent. This result is no doubt due partly to the feeling which sacrifices profit to charity; partly to the default of architects and the value of land. But there is another feature to which the attention of the Deputation was called by the Superintendent of the Model in Albert-street, and which has a great influence on success or failure, viz., the situation, whether near or distant from the marts of labour. The workman, tired by the day's toil, will not travel far for his night's quarters.

Of the second class, or Renovated Dwellings, the Deputation visited several; but it will be sufficient to illustrate their general economy by referring to one example of each kind of house:—

1st. As an example of a renovated Lodging-House under the auspices of a Public Company, and charging 2s. per week, or 4d. per night, may be instanced that of Charles-street, Drury-lane, belonging to the Labourers' Friend Society.



This is situated in a very low and crowded district of London. The three houses of which it was formed were originally dens of infamy. The cost of their purchase and conversion was £1163 14s. 2d., and they are capable of accommodating 82 single men. The gross receipts for the year 1863 were £403 9s. 0d.; the total charges £256 16s. 4½d., leaving a nett profit of £146 12s. 7½d., or 12¾ per cent.

In the renovation of the houses division walls were removed, so as to make large airy rooms, well ventilated by windows and shafts. The kitchen and other conveniences for lodgers are well and judiciously arranged, and the whole place is, considering the neighbourhood, wonderfully airy, clean, and comfortable.

*2nd.* As a renovated Model Lodging-House, belonging to a private person, yet conducted upon purely philanthropic principles, and charging only 1s. 6d. per week, or 3d. per night, may be instanced Lord Kinnaird's Model in Peter-street, Westminster, formed of three small houses, and capable of accommodating 105 lodgers. The books in the possession of the Superintendent did not shew the primary cost; but estimating it at £1162, the same as for Charles-street, we found that the gross receipts being £358 17s. 3d., and the total charges £280 19s. 5d., it left a nett profit of £77 17s. 10d., or 6¾ per cent. This, like the other Model, was exceedingly well kept, the smallness of the charge for bed being the peculiar and gratifying feature of the establishment.

*3rd.* As examples of renovated Model Lodging-Houses, kept and managed by the owners themselves as a means of livelihood, may be instanced those belonging to Mr. H. Reading, situated in Great Smith-street and Great Peter-street, Westminster. One of these was registered for 172, the other for 56 persons, the charges in both being 4d. a night, or 2s. per week.

In these establishments the difference between the measurement by superficies and by cubic dimensions was tested; and it was found that in a room 27 feet long, 10 feet 7 inches broad, and 9 feet high, nine lodgers were allowed, being equal to the cubic space of 286 feet for each person—a close approximation to the Liverpool scale.

These houses, clean, airy, comfortable, and well-conducted, are generally filled, and the Deputation was justified in believing that they yielded a remunerative income, from the fact that the proprietor, after a seven years' tenure, had just renewed his lease, and was preparing to effect large alterations for the further convenience of his lodgers. It is impossible to obtain any positive data respecting the



financial results of private Models ; but the subjoined calculations,\* founded on evidence which appeared reliable, will shew that the original capital required for such undertakings is small, and their profits probably very much greater than in those organized for merely benevolent purposes, where matters of finance are treated laxly, and as a secondary consideration.

It will not be thought that undue importance has been attached to the financial success of the Model Lodging-Houses, when it is remembered that upon it must rest the hope of increasing the number of Institutions so valuable to the comfort and well-being of our labouring population.

In Liverpool there are of Models only eight which can be rightly classed under this category—viz., one in Holly-street for 125 lodgers, and one in St. Anne-street for 80 lodgers, belonging to the Rev. Cecil Wray ; one in Limekiln Lane for 40 lodgers, and three in Great Oxford-street for 119 lodgers, belonging to Mr. Andrew Peacock ; one in Bedford-street, Toxteth, for 48 lodgers, belonging to Mr. John Irving ; and one in Parliament-street (called Crompton's) for 40 lodgers, belonging to Mr. Edward Greenall. Of these, the only ones managed on purely philanthropic principles are those of the Rev. Cecil Wray, to which, as indeed to those of Mr. Peacock, must be given the high praise of being, in management and accommodation, in no respect inferior to the renovated Lodging-Houses of London. It can scarcely be imagined that any thing but a fear of pecuniary loss has prevented our philanthropists from conjoining this machinery of material good with the other agencies of charity which so honourably distinguish our Town.

The importance of and the necessity for well-arranged Lodging-Houses in Liverpool, will be better estimated by the following facts :—

\* THE SUPPOSED PRIMARY OUTLAY OF A LODGING-HOUSE IN LIVERPOOL FOR 100 PERSONS :—

To 100 beds at 30s each.....	£150 0 0
To other Furnishing, including Kitchen Utensils, Crockery, Tables and Forms for the Sitting-Room, &c., &c. ....	100 0 0
	<u>£250 0 0</u>

The above Estimate was formed on the evidence of James Archer, one of the oldest and most experienced Model Lodging-House Managers in London.

DR.	THE SUPPOSED ANNUAL ACCOUNT :—		CR.	
To Interest on primary cost, at 5 per cent.	£12	10 0	Per 100 Beds, at 4d. per night	608 6 8
„ Rent of House.....	100	0 0	Less an average of 10 Empty Beds	
„ Taxes and Water Rate .....	23	12 6	per night	60 16 2
„ Manager, at 20s. per week .....	52	0 0		<hr/>
„ Two Servants, at 10s. each .....	52	0 0		£547 10 6
„ Gas, Coal, Crockery, &c. ....	40	0 0	Deduct debits .....	280 2 6
	<hr/>	£280 2 6	Nett Income.....	<hr/> £267 8 0

In the above Statement the Wages of Manager and Servants are greater than what is actually paid in Model Lodging-Houses. At one in Westminster, containing 100 beds, the Manager has 16s. a-week and a small Sitting and Bed-room ; the Bedmaker 8s. a-week and his bed ; the Kitchen Assistant 3s. 6d. a-week, his bed, and permission to do odd jobs for the lodgers. The yearly bill for Gas was £7 7s., and for Coals £9 13s. The Rent of £100 is certainly greater than what need generally be paid in Liverpool for the necessary accommodation. Mr. Reading of Westminster, however, pays £150 Rent and £40 Taxes for the larger of his houses, yet finds it remunerative. The calculation, also, of 10 per cent. for empty beds, is much greater than what is practically found to be the case in existing Liverpool houses.



- 1st. The accommodation for skilled and unskilled artisans is insufficient.
- 2nd. Many lodgers are, in spite of the watchfulness of the Sanitary Officers, received in the families of the tenants of single rooms.
- 3rd. A great portion of the Lodging-House keepers are obliged seriously to inconvenience their own families in order to accommodate lodgers, being too poor, and in too small dwellings for the purpose of their calling; thus, of 1185 houses on the registry, 213 are at a rent of £10, and under; 611 at £20, and under; 348 at £50, and under; and 13 above £50.

In intimate connection with Lodging-Houses for single men and women, is the provision of suitable and cheap dwellings for families. The Deputation visited many of these, but the extent of this Report will only permit a slight reference to the most successful of such establishments—viz., those constructed in renovated buildings. They found that the dwellings in Wild-court, Drury-lane, containing 13 houses, 106 rooms, and an average population of 336 souls, yield  $5\frac{1}{2}$  on investment; and Tyndall's-buildings, Gray's Inn-lane, with an average population of 301, yields  $3\frac{1}{2}$  per cent.; and Clarke's-buildings, Broad-street, St. Giles', with 11 houses, 80 tenements, and 220 inhabitants,  $10\frac{1}{2}$  per cent.; and Charles-street, Lisson-grove, with 5 houses, 25 tenements,  $6\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. Nothing in the whole range of their enquiries interested the Deputation more than the condition of Wild-court; for it illustrated the mode in which sanitary defects, so common in Liverpool, might be remedied, to the manifest advantage of the poor, on the true commercial principle of doing good to others without loss to the capitalist.

The following description of Wild-court in 1855 is from the "Morning Advertiser":—"The court contained 14 houses, which were purchased by the 'Labourers' Friend Society. In the last week in December the Society began "to pull down those portions of the houses they had determined on removing, "and here they encountered a difficulty which, could it have been anticipated, "would have been sufficient to deter the most eager philanthropist. It was not "that they had an overwhelming amount of rubbish to cart away, for that "would only have been a question of labour and expense. They had 16 cess-pools to clear out, and from 140 to 150 loads of night-soil to remove. "Worse even than this, the basement of each house was literally crammed "with the accumulated filth of many a year; the refuse of animal and vegetable matter, which lay there rotten and rotting, fermenting into poisonous "gases, which makes one wonder how those who ate, and drank, and slept, "and worked over such sources of infection could exist.

"Of these foetid accumulations, 350 loads were carried out of the basement "and carted away. Nor, bad as this was, was it all. When the Society sent "their workmen into these dens of filth to see what could be done to cleanse "and renew them, the men struck, and were with difficulty persuaded to return



“to their task ; for, in some places where rotten floorings had to be removed, “the vermin lay beneath swarming in living masses, in layers from two to three inches thick ; and Lord Shaftesbury stated—and we need not say his statement “was not made rashly—that the bugs ejected from the houses amounted at “least to a ton's weight.”

After nine years of renovated occupancy, the Deputation saw this place now a well-flagged court, inhabited by an orderly and a clean colony of costermongers and labourers, chiefly Irish ; each staircase and room swept and washed ; each house with suitable water-closet accommodation, and proper dustbins, and every requisite of decent furniture for the promotion of health and comfort. Of Tyndall's-buildings, where the same beneficial changes have been introduced, it is interesting for us in Liverpool to know, that the removal of a house at the end of a court has opened it to effectual ventilation.

The important question of providing accommodation for the families of our artisans and workmen, is one which merits the most anxious attention of the Council and the community. There is now placed on the table of the Committee a Gage's Map, with the localities coloured where the houses and cottages of the poor in the parish, or centre district of the Borough of Liverpool, have been demolished for the erection of warehouses, offices, railway stations, and public improvements.

This shows how vast a population, independently of those removed from cellars, has been within the last few years displaced from the neighbourhood of the marts of labour—the Docks and Exchange. It is true that these tenements were generally ill-built, crowded, unventilated, dirty, and in situations prejudicial to health, and that their removal has been more than counterbalanced by an increase of cottages in the out-townships of Toxteth, Everton, and West Derby. So far the change has been improvement ; but it must not be forgotten, that when a man's labour is his sole capital, it is a strong temptation, if not a necessity for him, to select a residence sufficiently near his work-yard to prevent loss of time or unnecessary fatigue. Hence it is practically found, that the labourers employed in the vicinity of the river or in the parish, have, as a rule, rather preferred to crowd into the restricted area of contiguous streets, than, at the expense of a morning and evening walk, seek better air in the outskirts of the town.

Then, near these homes of the labourers will invariably be found the numerous indigent who sponge on the employed operatives, and clog the efforts of their industry. And when overcrowding once begins, there are also attracted to the spot the congenial vultures of society—the thieves, vagabonds, roughs, and prostitutes. Hence it is that there are found, herding and congregating together in many streets, the three sections of the lower orders of society—the labourer, the mendicant, the rogue ; and hence it is that the improvement and opening out of some districts have really brought these sections into closer



relationship, to the manifest physical injury of all, and to the demoralization of the labourer. By closer relationship is meant the fact, that all these sections of our community live in single rooms in the same overcrowded houses, and in intimate inter-communication. It is to combat this gigantic evil in London, that Miss Burdett Coutts, the Peabody Trustees, the Metropolitan Association, the Labourers' Friend Society, and numerous Philanthropists, have erected noble Institutions. In aid of their exertions many of the large landed proprietors have not been backward or niggard, but have given space on easy terms for the building of such dwellings. In Liverpool, the Council, as trustees for the public benefit of the greater portion of the land of the borough, are able freely to entertain the claims of the operatives in this matter, without appealing to the generosity of individual proprietors.

An example, one of very many, will best show, in a sanitary point of view, the working of the present system, of displacing masses of the people without providing for them some equivalent accommodation near their work-yards. There have been erected in New Bird-street five warehouses, which displaced 18 front and 53 court houses, accommodating on an average 500 persons. The advantage of this change was a slight widening of a street ; but the per-contra injury an increase of crowding in contiguous streets, and an obstruction, by lofty walls, of the sea breeze. To the east and west of New Bird-street is placed Brick-street, so celebrated for its bad courts, its overcrowded population, and the consequent sickness and mortality of its wretched inhabitants. This street, which had its overcrowding and its sanitary evils intensified by the removal of the cottages of New Bird-street, is now condemned to destruction—properly condemned, for it has proved the focus of contagious disorders ;—but it is evident that to eject the inhabitants, and sell the land to the highest bidder, for the purposes of trade or manufacture, will only serve to poison with the miasm of an overcrowded population other and neighbouring localities. If, at the sale of such land, easy terms of purchase were advisedly given to those who would covenant to erect and maintain proper dwellings for the poor, it would encourage philanthropists, and even speculators, to invest money in such undertakings. There is much of similar land in the borough which, though worth pounds per yard, it would be a wise economy partly to devote to the Model Cottages of the labourer. Such liberality might never conduce to the erection of a noble pile like Miss Burdett Coutts', Columbia-square, but it would produce many buildings on the plan of Laird's cottages, which, placed near the marts of labour, would yield a profitable per-centage. At least, we may be assured that the holy recompense of charity—a benefit to the giver and receiver—will be most manifest in the operations of such liberality ; for it is from overcrowded haunts of indigence that stalks forth the pestilence which spreads terror and sorrow, disease and death, in the houses of the wealthy.

W. TRENCH.