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JOHN HOWARD

AS

STATIST.

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OF THE STATISTICAL SOCIETY.

[Read before the Statistical Society, 21st January, 1873.]

I HAVE sought and obtained permission from the Council to address you at this, the first meeting of the year 1873, on a subject which is unquestionably well timed; and, if I am not greatly mistaken, will not prove wanting in interest, or in practical utility. I say that my subject is well timed, because just a century ago (in the year 1773) John Howard, of Cardington near Bedford, was appointed High Sheriff of his county; and so obtained an opportunity of which he made such good use that not only did he build up for himself that which he cared less than nothing about, an imperishable reputation, but, what was far more to the purpose with him, he purged the English nation of a foul reproach, and freed its civil and military populations alike from an ever present, ever recurring peril. Nay, I may add with truth and without exaggeration, that he became unconsciously the founder of a new epoch both in statistics and in humanity. This I think will clearly appear before I have brought this communication to a close.

The thesis I wish to maintain this evening is, that the John Howard, whom most men know only as the first of philanthropists, was also one of the foremost statisticians of his time; and I wish also to show incidentally that he who was always ready to depreciate himself, led others to take a low and eminently unjust view of the intellectual side of his character, and to see in one of the most intelligent, adroit, and original minded of men, a "dull and even dreary" man, as it pleased Thomas Carlyle to call him. In selecting these epithets as applicable to one whom he also styled "the modest, noble Howard," Mr. Carlyle was perhaps led into error by looking only at the patient and toilsome way in which Howard collected facts, but overlooking alike the then novelty and originality

of his method of procedure, and the quick and precious results that followed on its use. This error is exactly such as a man would fall into who should fix his attention solely on the laborious method which we of this Society are compelled to adopt if we would discover or establish any great social truth, overlooking both the scientific insight that prompts our most successful inquiries, and the fruitful issues to which they lead: alive to the dull monotony of the road, but blind to the bright light that shines upon both ends of it.

In order to give to my thesis all the interest that can be made to attach to it, I will place before you so much of the biography of Howard as may serve to illustrate the intellectual side of him, omitting as not suited to my purpose, or to my audience, all discussion as to the consistency of his character, and the harmony of his private life with his public career. Suffice it only to observe that no stain ever rested on his character, no suspicion ever attached to his motives; so that if we are to treat him as a man of science at all, we must see in him such an one in social science as Faraday was in the domain of physics, just as if we view him as a man of action, it is with such men as Wellington that we must group him.

Before I present you with those incidents in the life of Howard which throw light on the intellectual side of his character, I will suggest to you some broad general considerations which seem to justify me in claiming for him a high rank among statist.

The statist (or, if you prefer the term, statistician) I take to be one who devotes himself to inquiries practically important to the State, as the legislative and administrative centre of the nation, presumably interested in securing for all its subjects the greatest possible amount of liberty, security, and enjoyment consistent with submission to law and respect for the rights of others. I look upon the statist, too, as one who shares with all men of science a love of truth for its own sake, coupled with a supreme indifference, so it be truth, to the form it assumes, whether that form realise or disappoint his expectations, whether it prove attractive or repulsive. I regard him again, as one who spares neither time nor labour in the prosecution of the particular inquiry in which he is engaged—who plans it with care and forethought, pursues it with patient industry, and takes note with minute accuracy and particularity of all the facts that bear upon it. If his search be directed towards some scientific truth rather than towards some group of facts, he will bring to bear upon his inquiry all the well ascertained rules and principles of that numerical method which we acknowledge here as our instrument of research.

Let it, however, be well understood that we do not expect all men whom we honour with the name of statist to deal largely and logically with numerical and tabular statements. We habitually

receive with gratitude and respect the recorded labours of those who leave their facts in the rough, as materials for others to make use of. What we require of them is that their facts should not be so few as to be exceptional; that they should be either all the facts relating to the subject of inquiry, or a large sample of them. We want not a handful, but a whole sheaf of wheat.

If a man may be a statist, and yet not bristle all over with figures and tables, then most assuredly was Howard a statist. For no man ever yet set down facts with more minute and scrupulous accuracy; no man ever yet cast them into a mould which gave greater scope for summaries and analyses. Take as instances these two aggregate facts. I thought it a point of interest to know in how many of the prisons visited by Howard, in the few years following his appointment as sheriff, the gaol fever prevailed; and I found, without an undue expenditure of labour, that of 105 prisons he witnessed the disease in 6, and heard of it in 21. So that, putting the two figures together, it was reasonable to infer that the fever haunted at least one-fourth of our prisons. Again, I deemed it interesting to ascertain in how many—in what proportion—of the prisons of England the provisions of the Acts of Parliament passed in 1774 had been carried into effect; and Howard's clear statements of what he saw in his journeys, made in 1776 and 1779, enabled me without difficulty to state the cases of strict obedience to the Acts when compared with those in which they had been but imperfectly carried into effect, as 15 to 130.

But Howard did not always leave his facts in the rough to speak for themselves. He not only made brief and judicious comments upon them, but he resorted to the statistical method of tabulation and tabular analysis where he thought that any good purpose was to be answered. Thus at p. 22 of the second edition of his "*State of Prisons*," he tells us that, in the spring of 1776, he summed up carefully the total number of prisoners in the sundry prisons, so as to present a list of 4,084; and this list has its distinct headings and divisions, with needful explanations attached. To this table, too, he attaches an estimate, founded on his own facts, of the number of dependents (namely, wives and children) that might be assigned to each man in prison. By adding the number of *dependents* to the number of prisoners, he arrives at the number of persons *distressed*, as the result of imprisonment. It is 12,252. And he seems pleased to substitute this census for the guesses of others, though it weakens the force of his appeal. The number of prisoners and their dependents, he says, had been "greatly magnified by conjectural computations." In another table, Howard so groups his facts as to distinguish years of peace from years of war, and to show that crimes were in excess when the nation was at peace.

Let me add that Howard's work on "Lazarettos," which contains a vast store of facts relating to prisons, hospitals, and schools, has also an appendix of thirteen carefully compiled tables, relating to prisoners, their crimes, and sentences, to one of which (the twelfth) he appends a note worth quoting. After excusing himself for repeating some tables contained in his earlier publication, he adds these characteristic words:—"And may I not indulge the hope that, many years after I shall be dead and forgotten, these tables, being of a public nature, will be occasionally reviewed, and may have inferences drawn from them which will, in their consequences, contribute to *alleviate the miseries* of mankind, and *add* something to the general stock of *happiness* among the human race?"

Of these tables suffice it to add that their arrangement, and the lucid statements by which the words they contain are defined and limited, would do no discredit to the writers of the papers that have given the members of this society the greatest pleasure and satisfaction.

Reverting now to the sketch I ventured to give of the character of the statist, I think that I have said all that is needed to prove that Howard is fully entitled to all the honour which that epithet confers. His inquiries were directed to objects most important to the State; he possessed in a degree never surpassed, perhaps never equalled, a love of truth; he spared neither time, labour, nor money in prosecuting his inquiries; he exhibited care and forethought in his plans, the most patient industry in carrying them into effect, the most minute accuracy in recording his facts; and, where that was required of him, no common skill in arranging and tabulating them.

I now invite your attention to that connected account of Howard and his labours which I promised you, as the means of rightly estimating the intellectual side of his character.

To one having this object in view, I know of no better starting point than Howard's election as a Fellow of the Royal Society. I begin by submitting a copy of his nomination paper. It runs thus:—

"John Howard, Esqre., of Old Broad Street, London, having for some years pursued mathematical studies, and being desirous of the honour of being admitted into the Royal Society, we on our personal knowledge of him recommend him as a true lover of natural philosophy.

"MACCLESFIELD.

"PARKER.

"JOHN CANTON.

"JOHN ELLICOTT."

"Balloted and elected May 13, 1756."

I here stop to observe that Benjamin Franklin, whose nomination paper was signed by the first three names on this list among others,

was elected on the 29th day of the previous month, in the same year.

The first remark that I have to make on this document is that Howard's election took place when he was only 30 years of age, for there is good reason to believe that he was born in 1726. Here, then, we have the son of a successful London tradesman, of quiet and retired habits of life, somehow or other so commending himself to the scientific men of his time that at the early age of 30 he is proposed and elected a Fellow of the Royal Society, and recommended to their notice not merely as a true lover of natural philosophy, but as one who had for some years pursued "mathematical studies." The next remark I have to offer in reference to this election of Howard is that there is nothing whatever in the circumstances attending it to impair its value as a recognition of merit. In the year 1756 just twenty names were added to the list of members. Of these nine were foreign, and eleven English. Three out of the eleven (Benjamin Franklin being one of them), had the signatures of George, Earl of Macclesfield (the then president of the Society), and of his son and successor to the title, Thomas, Lord Parker, at the head of their nomination papers. The papers themselves are not printed forms, but written documents setting forth distinctly and with discrimination the respective claims of the nominees; and in no instance are these claims other than real and respectable. And, lastly, it is well worthy of remark that no event, as far as I can ascertain, had yet occurred in the eventful life of Howard to give him such public prestige as might take the place of scientific merit; for, though his captivity in France, his sufferings, and his successful intercession with the Commissioners of Sick and Wounded Seamen, which first brought him under the favourable notice of the public, took place in the same year, 1756, in which he was chosen a Fellow of the Royal Society, they occurred subsequent to his election, and could not, therefore, have had any influence upon it.

For the reasons now assigned I am clearly of opinion that, when the nomination paper credits Howard with having "for some years pursued mathematical studies," and with being "a true lover of natural philosophy," it means what it says; and that Howard had done something or other to entitle himself to be spoken of in such terms by the then president of the society, and by such competent judges of merit as Canton and Ellicott. In saying this I am aware that I differ from his personal friend and biographer, Dr. Aikin, who thought that the honour of the fellowship was not conferred upon him "in consequence of any extraordinary proficiency in science which he had manifested, but rather in conformity to the laudable practice of that society of attaching gentlemen of fortune and

“leisure to the interests of knowledge.” It will be inferred from what I have just stated that there are no indications of this laudable practice to be found among the twenty elections of the year 1756. At the same time I should wish it to be understood that I do not claim for John Howard any “extraordinary proficiency in science:” enough for my purpose that he should be in a fair degree what his nomination paper represents him as being. Indeed, I find all the proof I require of this fact in a very curious and significant passage in this very biography of Dr. Aikin. After stating that “Mr. Howard was not unmindful of the obligation” his election had placed him under “to contribute something to the common stock “of information,” and adducing as proof his three brief communications to the Society, published in volumes liv, lvii, and lxi, of the “Transactions”—on the Cold at Cardington in 1763, on the Heat of the Bath Waters, and on the Heat of the Ground on Mount Vesuvius—he tells us that “meteorological observations were much “to his taste;” and that, “even in his later tours, when he was “occupied by very different objects, he never travelled without “some instrument for that purpose;” and winds up with this conclusive testimony to his being a “true lover of natural philosophy:”—“I have heard him likewise mention some experiments on the effects “of the union of the primary colours in different proportions, in “which he employed himself with some assiduity.” As no date is given for these experiments, I can only conjecture that they may have been made some time previous to his thirtieth year, when he was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society.

That I may throw all the light possible on Howard’s intellectual character and attainments, I ask you to allow me to detain you for a short time while I add from this same source (the biography of his personal friend, Dr. Aikin), what he gleaned from Howard himself of his early education. Dr. Aikin tells us that he was first sent to a school kept by a master who seems to have had more learning than power of imparting knowledge; so that Howard, speaking with unwonted indignation, used to allege that he left this school at the end of seven years “not fully taught any one thing:” and, though he went from this school to the academy of Mr. Eames, a most learned and accomplished man and able mathematician, Howard does not seem to have remained under his roof long enough to repair the consequences of his father’s first mistake. But it is worthy of note that this short residence with Mr. Eames was the means of bringing him into contact with Dr. Price, and of laying the foundation of a life-long friendship, cemented by constant assistance on Price’s part, which Howard was wont to acknowledge with expressions of the most fervent gratitude.

In consequence, as it is reasonable to infer, of defects in his early

training, Dr. Aikin, in answer to some who had attributed to Howard "considerable proficiency in letters," says:—"I feel myself obliged, "from my own knowledge, to assert that he was never able to "speak or write his native language with grammatical correctness, "and that his acquaintance with other languages (the French "perhaps excepted) was slight and superficial." Upon this statement Dr. Aikin remarks that this very difficulty in expressing himself strengthens our estimate of "the powers of his mind."

After speaking of the "spirit of order and knowledge of common "affairs" which Howard imbibed during his apprenticeship to a wholesale grocer in the City, and of his early travels in France and Italy, Dr. Aikin tells us that, on his return from abroad, "he mixed "in the world, and lived in the style of young men of leisure and "fortune," that he had a "taste for the arts," and "was not without an attachment to reading and the study of nature." All his biographers, I may add, take note of his study of medicine as it was then taught and understood; and we have abundant evidence in his own writings that his views on such matters as cleanliness and ventilation were clear and precise, and that he was in the habit of prescribing for sick persons whom he encountered in his foreign travels, having great faith in the efficacy of James's powder.

As it is but reasonable to expect that some definite information bearing on Howard's intellectual character and attainments may be gleaned from his own letters, I turn to the collection of them made by the Rev. J. Field. They are thirty-six in number, of which the greater part (twenty-seven) are addressed to his relative, Samuel Whitbread, M.P.; three to Lady Mary Whitbread, giving an account of what he did, saw, and thought during his travels on the Continent; and six to Mr. Whatley, and others, on public business.

A careful reader of these letters will find in them confirmation of the statements made by Dr. Aikin. Howard does not write like a scholar; and here and there we meet with ungrammatical and ill-expressed sentences. As a rule, however, he expresses himself clearly and to the purpose. But in one of his letters, written from Warrington, to Mr. Whatley, under date 27th December, 1779, he alludes very pointedly to the difficulty he found in expressing his ideas clearly, and to "the pain, fatigue, and labour" he underwent "in writing for the press." I have no doubt that this was in part due to his inherent modesty and extreme desire to be accurate; for Dr. Aikin, in describing his course of procedure at Warrington when preparing his great work for the press, tells us that his *diffidence* was such that it was "difficult to make him acquiesce in his own "language when, as frequently happened, it was unexceptionable." This modest appreciation of himself is displayed in a most interesting letter to Mr. Whitbread, dated Cardington, 21st June, 1785,

from which I shall give an extract presently. Then, as to his pursuits and occupations. The first letter of the series, addressed from Cardington to Mr. Whitbread, speaks of his having his "books and instruments" comfortably about him, which he hopes to have more time to enjoy. He has seen the works of the church clock, and thinks that, if properly regulated, it will go well. He is digging and planting, and seeing to the repairs of the church. The second letter, addressed to Lady Mary Whitbread, 13th June, 1770, from Rome, shows not only how fully he appreciates and delights in great works of art, but contains a passage which I extract in full. "I ascended Mount Vesuvius, and when I was up "three parts of the hill, the earth was, by my thermometer, some- "what warmer than the atmosphere. I then took the temperature "every five minutes till I got to the top. The heat was continually "increasing. After I had stood the smoke a quarter of an hour, I "breathed freely; so with three men I descended as far as they "would go with me, where the earth or brimstone was so heated "that, in frequent experiments, it raised my thermometer to 240° , "which is near 30° hotter than boiling water, and in some places it "fired some paper I put in. As these experiments have never before "been made, I thought the account of them might afford your "ladyship some entertainment." Again, writing from Stutgard, 26th July, 1770, he speaks of the temperature by his own thermometer; and once again, in a letter from Moscow, written 2nd October, 1789, he says that he finds his thermometer indicating a daily fall of three or four degrees.

At this point I pause for a moment to remind you that, though I have just been quoting from letters written at much later periods of time, it is of the Howard made Fellow of the Royal Society in 1756 that I am speaking—of Howard when he was not yet known as the philanthropist, and had had no opportunity of showing himself as a statist. Dr. Aikin's statements, and the passages quoted from his own letters, concur in presenting him to us as a man complaining of a defective school training, having little command of language, but fond of reading and attached to the study of nature; getting his instruments and books about him at Cardington, and hoping to find time to make use of them, instituting at least one experimental inquiry in the science of optics, and making repeated meteorological observations with the aid of the thermometer. We do not know in what his alleged mathematical studies consisted, but he was justly designated as a true lover of natural philosophy.

All this might truly be affirmed of John Howard at the age of 30, in the year 1756.

But in this same year 1756, Howard, in consequence of a most painful yet most fortunate occurrence, his captivity in France, may

be said to have had his first opportunity of showing himself a statist, by minute and sustained inquiries into a matter of profound interest to the Government: I mean the treatment in France of our prisoners of war. In a note at p. 14 of his great work on "*The State of Prisons*," after describing his own sufferings and those of his fellow prisoners, he tells us how, being liberated on parole, he kept up a correspondence with his countrymen, and obtained evidence of the cruelty with which they were being treated, of many hundreds perishing, and of thirty-six being buried in a hole at Dinan on one day. Returning to England, still on parole, he tells us that he made known to the Commissioners of Sick and Wounded Seamen "the sundry particulars, which gained their attention and thanks. Remonstrance was made to the French Court; our sailors had redress; and those that were in the three prisons mentioned above (Brest, Morlaix, and Dinan), were brought home in the first cartel ships." These *sundry particulars*, relating to a most valuable section of the community, carefully collected and truthfully reported, carried straight home to the authorities with whom it lay to obtain redress, constituted Howard's first contribution to statistics, his earliest claim to the name of statist.*

This, I repeat, occurred in 1756, when Howard was 30 years old; and I now ask you to place yourselves at a new stand-point, the year 1773, midway between the date of the occurrences which I have been describing and the year 1790, the date of Howard's death. Prior to this year 1773 we have a period of seventeen years, after it another period of seventeen years. Howard was now 47 years of age. The events of the first seventeen years were—his settling at Cardington, his happy second marriage in 1758, the birth of his only child, and loss of his wife, in 1765, a visit to Bath in 1767, a tour through Italy, Germany, and Holland in 1769-70, his return to Cardington in 1770, and continued residence there till 1773. The degree of cold at Cardington in the "winter of 1763, when Bird's thermometer was as low as $10\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$," was the subject of his first paper to the Royal Society, and proves that he was then residing there. But the work that stamped the first period of seventeen years with a character of its own was that continuous and progressive improvement in his estate at Cardington, which consisted in the pulling down and rebuilding of all his cottages, and of all others that he could purchase, and their reconstruction, coupled with other local improvements which I have no time to particularise. Suffice it to say that this was probably the earliest, and certainly the most complete, work of physical, and incidentally of moral

* I have searched the minute book of the Commissioners for the year 1756, the end of 1755, and beginning of 1757; but have been disappointed. Howard's name does not occur in any of the entries. The minute book is at the Record Office.

regeneration, undertaken by any English landlord. To its thorough-going and truly practical character, and the transformation it effected in the health and habits of the people, all Howard's biographers bear testimony.

So that we have this first period of seventeen years ushered in by an inquiry, followed by practical results, which entitles Howard to take high rank among statist, and marked throughout by local improvements based upon so clear an apprehension of the true conditions of health and physical well-being as entitles him equally to a foremost place among sanitary reformers. Admit his fair claim to be deemed a true lover and successful cultivator of natural philosophy, and you have John Howard already before you as philosopher, statist, and sanitary reformer.

How the second period of seventeen years was spent most men know, at least in that general way in which we have cognisance of things that we do not care much about. I have only time to give you a brief statement of leading facts.

When Howard was appointed sheriff of the county of Bedford, he found that one of the duties of his office was to visit the prisons, and accordingly he set to work without loss of time to discharge this duty. He soon found that an English prison in those days was the scene of a great wrong—the exaction of illegal fees; and this seemed to him so cruel and unjust a thing, leading as it did to the detention of innocent persons, that he applied to the justices of the county for a salary to the gaolers in lieu of fees; but they thought they had no power to act without a precedent. Howard, therefore, rode into several neighbouring counties in search of one, but found the same injustice practised in them all. He then extended this his first journey till he had visited most of the county gaols of England. Finding that the most wretched inmates of some prisons had been brought there from the bridewells, he set out afresh, and examined both the houses of correction and the county and town gaols. And now it was that his attention was called to the gaol fever, which he found leagued with small-pox, doing its work of destruction everywhere.

This truly statistical inquiry was crowned next year with the success it so richly merited. The House of Commons heard his evidence, thanked him, and forthwith passed two Acts, one for the relief of prisoners from illegal extortion, the other for preserving their health and preventing the gaol distemper.

This took place in March, 1774. After stating this fact, Howard gives us the following simple account of his motives:—"I was called to the first part of my task by my office; and prompted to the pursuit of it by the sorrows of the sufferers, and love to my country. The work grew upon me insensibly. I could not enjoy

“ my ease and leisure in the neglect of an opportunity offered me
“ by Providence of attempting the relief of the miserable. The
“ attention of Parliament to the subject led me to conclude that
“ some additional labour would not be lost, and I extended my
“ plan.”

Let me give you some idea of what this additional labour and extension of plan meant. It was the most extraordinary series of travels, inquiries, and personal experiences on record. What highly wrought religious emotions have prompted the founders and apostles of new religions to undertake and perform, that and nothing less did this man do under the compulsion of a sense of duty, sobered down by the most minute and laborious attention to fact, but redeemed from all that is cold and harsh by the bright warm rays of humanity and patriotism which fell on all that he did, thought, or suffered.

To show you what Howard did in the last seventeen years of his life, I shall make use of Dr. Aikin's summary, with such additions as an analysis of the personal narrative contained in his works has enabled me to make:—

1773. High Sheriff of Bedfordshire. Visits many county and town gaols, in search of a precedent for substituting for illegal fees a fixed salary to gaolers.

1774. Completes his survey of English gaols, visiting the bridewells, and revisiting many town and county gaols to become better acquainted with the gaol fever and the small-pox. Gives evidence before a committee of the House of Commons. Stands candidate for Bedford.

1775. Travels in Scotland and Ireland, and in France, Holland, Flanders, and Germany, in search of information that might prove useful to England. Visits some English prisons.

1776. Again in the same foreign countries, and in Switzerland. A large number of English prisons again visited.

1777. Prints his “State of Prisons.”

1778. Travels through Holland, Flanders, Germany, Italy, Switzerland, and part of France. Some English prisons visited.

1779. Revisits all the counties of England and Wales, and travels into Scotland and Ireland. Inspects all the prisons in which French prisoners of war were confined, and the hulks. Acts as supervisor of penitentiaries.

1780. Prints his first appendix.

1781. Travels in Denmark, Sweden, Russia, Poland, Germany, and Holland.

1782. Again inspects all the English prisons, and travels in Scotland and Ireland.

1783. Inspects other English prisons. Travels in Scotland

and Ireland. Visits Portugal, Spain, France, Flanders, and Holland.

1784. Prints his second appendix, and a new edition of his works.

1785-87. From the close of the first of these years to the beginning of the last, journeys through Holland, France, Italy, Malta, Turkey, and Germany: then through Scotland and Ireland.

1788. During this and part of the preceding year travels over all England, and revisits Ireland, inspecting the charter schools, and reporting upon them to the House of Commons.

1789. Prints his work on "*Lazarettos*," containing valuable information on hospitals, poor houses, and schools, and a brief account of English prisons as he saw them for the last time in 1787-88. Travels through Holland, Germany, Prussia, and Livonia to Russia and Lesser Tartary.

1790. Dies at Cherson, 20th January.

But no summary can do justice to this history of seventeen years of laborious research. To understand Howard, his work and his motives, a man must study his writings. From them he will learn how reasonable were the motives that impelled him to action, how careful and systematic his mode of procedure, how calm, philosophical, and yet original and far-sighted, the views he formed, how searching and comprehensive his inquiries. The prison and the prisoner were the first objects of his solicitude; but the hospital and the lazaretto, the school and the workhouse came in for a share of his attention. Indeed he seems to have felt that, as the prison had revealed itself to him as the scene of abuses of all sorts, so it was but reasonable to expect that the hospital, the workhouse, and the school should bear marks of the same ignorance and neglect; and that as by his magic method of inspection and record, he had in one short year brought about the legal reform of English prisons, so by the same simple though laborious procedure he might succeed in reforming such abuses in other public institutions as he had earned the right to expect to find there.

And now I ask your attention to a single specimen of Howard's statistical work.

Howard's account of the gaols he inspected is to be found partly in his first work on the "*State of Prisons*," and partly in his second work on "*Lazarettos*." In the former work we find the results of his first visits in search of precedents, of his second visits prompted by what he saw of the peculiar wretchedness of certain prisoners transferred from the bridewells to the county and borough gaols, and of his third and fourth series of inspections to which he was moved by hearing that the provisions of the beneficent Acts of 1774 had been disregarded or negligently enforced. The

latter work contains shorter notices of his fifth and sixth tours of inspection, to which he seems to have been led by the motive last named, joined to his experience of the beneficial consequences of his previous visits.

In selecting a prison for the purpose of illustration, I reject extreme cases, and prefer, as giving a fair view of what was common in those days, the county gaol at Warwick. Howard's description of it consists, as usual, of three parts—a tabular systematic statement comprising the names and salaries of the gaoler, chaplain, and surgeon; the dates of his own visits, and the number of prisoners, classed as debtors and felons &c., at those dates; and sundry particulars respecting beer and garnish. This first part is so arranged as to admit of easy comparison with the like particulars relating to other prisons. The second part consists of a description of the prison and of the information he obtained by observation and inquiry. In the third part he prints copies of such tables of fees and orders of the justices as he finds in operation.

The following is an abbreviated account of what Howard found in Warwick Gaol at his six visits made 22nd November, 1773, 10th November, 1774, 6th January and 30th October, 1776, 26th March, 1779, and 15th February, 1788. The gaoler had no salary, but charged a fee of 14s. 6d. to debtors, and 13s. 4d. to felons; had 8l. a-head (less a guinea paid to the clerk of assize) for each transport, and brewed the beer which the turnkey had a licence to sell. The prisoners who were debtors had no allowance; but felons received a 3-lb. loaf every other day. Garnish is set down at 2s. 6d. The chaplain and surgeon were salaried officers. The number of prisoners at the several visits was:—1773, 23 debtors, 9 felons &c.; 1774, 13 and 13; 1776 (January), 24 and 33, (October), 22 and 7; 1779, 22 and 28; 1788, 31 and 51, and women convicts, 9.

The description of the prison, taken, be it recollected from the second edition, published in 1780, runs thus:—

“ One court for debtors and men felons. Women felons have
“ quite separate court, day-room, and two night-rooms. They used
“ to be loaded with irons, now they have none. Men felons have
“ a day-room; their night-room is an octagonal dungeon, about
“ 21 feet diameter, down thirty-one steps, close, damp, and offensive.
“ Two cells in another dungeon for the condemned. Prisoners are
“ tried in the county clothing. I saw twelve suits for men, and six
“ for women. Debtors' common day-room is the best, which is also
“ used as a chapel. For master's side, ten or twelve rooms, some
“ of them *the Rooks Nest*, where also is the free ward.

“ No infirmary. The late gaoler, Mr. Roe (uncle to the present),
“ died in 1772, of the gaol distemper, and so did some of his

“ prisoners. No water then, but now plenty. The felons’ allowance
 “ of bread is judiciously fixed by weight, not variable with the
 “ price. Debtors have in common, from a legacy, 30s. a-year, and
 “ from another legacy eight three-penny loaves at the beginning,
 “ and as many at the end, of every month. No memorial of either
 “ legacy hung up in the gaol.

“ The prison might be improved on the adjacent ground belong-
 “ ing to the county.

“ The justices of this county have taken the gaol and bridewell
 “ under consideration, and propose that debtors and felons, and also
 “ men and women, in both shall be entirely separated. A chapel
 “ and infirmary also are designed. May it not be hoped that
 “ gentlemen so considerate will not continue the damp and offensive
 “ dungeon, which has only an aperture level with the court, 3 ft.
 “ 2 in. diameter.

“ There were hung up in the debtors’ hall, some rules against
 “ profaneness, rioting, and drunkenness, with penalties annexed;
 “ but I was sorry to find among them that ‘every debtor at his or
 “ ‘her first coming must pay for garnish 2s. 6d.’ ”

The foregoing is extracted, as I have stated, from the second edition of the “State of Prisons,” published in 1780. What follows is from Howard’s work on “Lazarettos,” printed in 1789. After this interval of nine years, Howard could still write as follows:—

“ The felons were sadly crowded. Only one small day-room for
 “ the men; and I saw thirty-two lie chained in a dungeon of
 “ 22 ft. diameter, down 31 steps, two of whom were ill of a slow
 “ fever. There were three others in a room, very ill and in irons.
 “ In two rooms ($7\frac{1}{2}$ ft. by $6\frac{1}{2}$ ft.) with apertures only in the doors,
 “ there lay fourteen women, almost *suffocated*. None of the women
 “ were *now* in irons. No infirmary; no bath. The Act for pre-
 “ serving the health of prisoners not hung up. No coals. Allow-
 “ ance, a 3-lb. loaf every other day: it was good bread and full
 “ weight. Convicts have not the half-crown a-week. Acquitted
 “ prisoners are kept in irons till the judge leaves the town.
 “ Executions are at the gaoler’s expense. The prisoners receive
 “ yearly from a legacy, 1*l.* 10s., the rent of a house in the town. Some
 “ of the felons complained of having been forced to pay 4s. 2*d.* for
 “ garnish, or be stripped of their clothes. This is one of the bad
 “ effects of the admission of beer. The debtors pay for garnish a
 “ much larger sum. Gaoler’s salary 60*l.* in lieu of the tap.”

To this account there are some interesting notes attached. Of the dungeon it is said that at one time it was “so crowded that
 “ some of the poor wretches were forced to stand up (and take a
 “ sort of miserable night watch), while the others slept;” and that

“from the aperture of this dungeon, which is 3 ft. 3 in. wide
 “(as from the door and the two funnels of the dungeon in the
 “gaol at Stafford), the steam of the prisoners’ breath comes out, in
 “winter, like the smoke of a chimney.” As a consequence of no
 coals being allowed, “the women here, as in other gaols, sell even
 “their bread to procure fuel.” As to the expense of executions
 falling on the gaoler (the practice at Monmouth, Worcester, Warwick,
 and most other county gaols), it is mentioned as “an imposition on
 “the gaolers, which encourages them to indemnify themselves by
 “impositions on their prisoners;” and as to the tap, it is remarked
 that if it “had been sooner abolished, it might have saved the life
 “of the late gaoler Roe, who died in the prime of life.”

This, then, with the exception of the copy of a table of debtors’
 fees, and of an order relating to the admission of visitors, is what
 Howard found occasion to put on record respecting the county gaol
 at Warwick. I have stated that in the first part of this report he
 gives the number of prisoners under two headings of *debtors* and
felons &c. He adopts the same method and order in the case of all
 other prisons; and accordingly it was easy for Howard to compile a
 tabular statement (for which I refer you to p. 243 of his work on
 “Lazarettos”), of the total number of the two classes confined in
 all the prisons of England in any of the years when he visited them.
 The table to which I refer gives the numbers for the year 1787 or 1788.
 They were as follows:—

Total number of debtors	2,011
„ felons, &c.	2,052
„ petty offenders	1,412
„ prisoners in the hulks	1,937
„ supposed omitted	70
Total number of prisoners	<u>7,482</u>

The figure 70 is explained in a note, thus:—“Though I have
 “visited all the county gaols in England, and almost all the other
 “prisons, yet, as there are some few of the corporation prisons
 “which I did not see, I have added *seventy* more prisoners to the
 “number; so that, probably, we have nearly the *average number* of
 “persons confined at *one time* in all the prisons of this kingdom.”

I may add that the number of county and borough gaols so
 visited is 133, and the number of bridewells 41, making a total of
 174; and that the number of visits (including visits to prisons
 which were empty, and are not comprised in the total of 174) is no
 less than 818.

In the sample and table I have just brought under your notice,
 you have good specimens of Howard’s method of procedure. He
 could marshal the staple facts relating to each prison in perfect

order, could describe its peculiar features in condensed and intelligible language; and could put his facts together into tabular shape in a thorough workman-like way. All his details are curiously minute. A window has such and such dimensions; a loaf of bread has a certain weight by his own steel-yard; a dungeon is down so many steps; so many persons are crowded into a room so many feet high, broad, and long. In his visits, too, to hospitals and schools, and to lazarettos, respecting one of which he took care to obtain personal experience, he exhibits the same sound method of procedure as in the case of prisons; and, when he left England on his tour of inquiry respecting the plague, he went armed with a set of queries by his friends, Drs. Aikin and Jebb, to be put to some of the most experienced physicians in the places he visited. The answers to those questions Howard brought back with him, and caused them to be methodised and abridged by Dr. Aikin. The results will repay study, and justify the method Howard adopted, which, I may remark, is one often sanctioned by the practice of the Council of this Society.

I think, then, I may assume my thesis, affirming John Howard to deserve the title of *statist*, to have been maintained; so that if we could suppose his facts and tabular summaries, his questions and answers respecting the plague, his rational inferences and statesman-like views on all the subjects he handled, to be brought before us now in this year 1873, the centenary of the felicitous appointment which gave him his opportunity and authority to inquire, we should, beyond all doubt, accord him a hearty and unanimous vote of thanks as one who had fulfilled all our requirements and earned a foremost place among the most esteemed of our Fellows.

To vindicate Howard's right to a place of the highest honour among those to whom we now give the name of *statist* or *statistician* has been the sole object of this paper; and I should overstep the limits I have assigned to myself, as well as run the risk of wearying you, if I yielded to the very natural temptation of trying to give to Howard all the praise he merits, or to defend him against all the censure he has incurred. But as I have deemed an inquiry into Howard's character as a man of intellect a reasonable offshoot from my main purpose, I must ask you to allow me briefly to refer to one cause which has very naturally led to misapprehension upon this point. I mean Howard's uniform and systematic depreciation of himself—the only point, I may safely affirm, in which he cannot be implicitly trusted as the propounder of truth, without favour, prejudice, or exaggeration.

This self-depreciation is so thoroughly a part of Howard's character that it forces itself to the surface, so to speak, on all possible occasions. Whether he is engaged in conversation, or deliberately

committing his thoughts to writing, he betrays the same sensitive shrinking alike from self-satisfaction and from praise. He forms the same mean estimate of his personal appearance as of his mental endowments. He takes as much pains and resorts to as many ludicrous expedients to baffle the artists who lie in wait for him to sketch what he calls "his insignificant form and ugly face," as he did when in France to escape from the persecutions of the French Police. He lowers his merit to the level of those who elect to find their pleasure in packs of hounds, studs of horses, or social entertainments. He speaks of his pursuits as a *whim*, his *hobby horse*. At the best he is "the *plodder*, who goes about to collect materials for "men of genius to make use of." In the "*conclusion*" to his great work on "Lazarettos," written in 1789, when he had surely earned the right to speak otherwise of himself, he says (alluding to prison abuses), "If I have been able to point out any of these, and to "suggest their *causes* and *remedies*, it has been by that *close*, "persevering attention to one object, which has in some measure "supplied the want of original abilities, and given me clearer "notions, and a more decided opinion on these matters." And this is the tenor of his private correspondence, no less than of the passages that are to meet the eye of the public; for in a letter written in 1785 to his friend, Samuel Whitbread, he speaks of his *very moderate parts*, and the necessity of *long and continued application* if he would master any subject.

Nevertheless, whenever he has reason to believe that his opinions are based on experience, he maintains them firmly, but courteously. Thus, in a foot note to the *conclusion*, from which I have just been quoting, he combats the opinion of "gentlemen of the faculty" that fermented liquors are necessary as antiseptics, and adds: "I am "sensible my ideas are contrary to the present *fashionable* mode of "prescription, which I am persuaded *confirms* the habit of drinking "strong liquors, both in town and country; but may I not hope "that the *opinions* of medical gentlemen will, in time, alter as *much* "upon this subject as I have seen in *their* treatment of the small "pox?"

Howard's opinions on matters belonging to the domain of hygiene are also very precise and decided. Thus, in a foot note appended to the account of the county gaol, Lancaster Castle, in his work on "Lazarettos," he says, in answer to the question what size he would wish prisoners' solitary night-rooms to be, "10 feet long, "10 feet high, and 8 feet wide; thus adopting a mean between the "two extremes allowed by the Act of Parliament for penitentiary "houses (19th Geo. III)."

How averse Howard was to any public recognition of his services (excepting such honours as D.C.L. and the presentation of the

freedom of a city), is seen by the whole tenor of his correspondence on the subject of the proposed erection of a monument to him during his life-time. And yet, with all this shrinking from praise, there was in Howard none of the false shame, none of the *mauvaise honte*, which perhaps belongs naturally to men whose motives are dashed with selfishness and conceit. He is, every inch of him, a Christian gentleman of the true English type. With all his manly, sturdy independence, he has no churlish disrespect for conventional greatness. His letters to Lady Mary Whitbread are eminently courteous and respectful. If he can impart any useful information in the highest quarters, he will not decline to accept Royal courtesies and hospitalities. He will not, it is true, obey the summons of Catherine of Russia, but he will dine with the Emperor of Austria, and accept his Royal courtesies in a becoming spirit; and if the Pope will allow him to assert his rights of manhood, he will not refuse the proffered blessing of an old man.

This is not the place nor the occasion to discourse on the moral and religious character of Howard, or to vindicate him from the misconceptions of those who have written about him; but it is the place and the time to protest with all earnestness against any and every attempt to lower his intellectual character to the level of his own modest misconceptions, or of the mistakes of those who have thoughtlessly or ignorantly taken him at his word.

Those who would deny to Howard the possession of what has been termed *scientific insight*, or withhold from him the credit of original genius, have but to study his works, and compare the worst of the prisons of England, as prisons are now, with the best as they were a century ago; and they will be forced to acknowledge that in every leading principle of prison management and discipline, as they are now understood by the most advanced students of such matters, we who live in this year 1873 are but the disciples of the *modest, noble Howard*, who, to the honour of England, the good of the whole civilised world, and the credit of our common humanity, was appointed Sheriff of Bedford a century ago.



JOHN HOWARD AS STATIST.

(POSTSCRIPT.)

THE issue of my paper on "John Howard as Statist" in its present form has been delayed by causes over which I had no control. It ought to have been in the hands of my friends early in April. My object in writing it was to bring the great name of Howard (the greatest, all things considered, in modern history) into close relation with the Society to which I have been so long and so warmly attached. I wished to show that the work he did was such as we are trying to do; that his methods of procedure were our methods, his aim our aim; that he was to the legislature of his day what we are striving to be to the legislature of ours: in a word, that he was a Statist in the highest and best meaning of the word.

In claiming for Howard such honour as belongs to the epithet STATIST, I am far from wishing to dispossess him of any other title by which men prefer to know him, nor would I forget the very least of the services he has rendered to mankind. I do not object to his being called *Howard the Philanthropist*, provided only that I am allowed to disconnect the phrase from every element of weakness or folly. But for me he must always be the Howard who, in 1756, rescued our sailors from their cruel captivity in France; the Howard who, as landlord at Cardington, taught all owners of property that the true path to intellectual and moral improvement lay through physical regeneration; the Howard who, as Sheriff of Bedford, rid us of all our prison reproaches; the Howard who forms the central figure in the group of sanitary reformers* that shed lustre on the last half of the eighteenth century; the Howard to whose unique virtues and services no panegyric ever yet did more than justice; among humane men the gentlest, among wise men the wisest, among brave men the bravest, among good men the best: the man who stands foremost among the noble slaves to duty who have made our England what she is; our Wellington of civil life, as he was the Howard of the battle field.

In a small pamphlet written for a temporary purpose towards the end of last year, some idea was given of Howard as Sanitary Reformer, and a question was raised whether (not for his sake but

* Sir George Baker (1767), Howard (1773), Captain Cook (1774), Edward Jenner (1796); the dates of leading events connected with the abatement and final destruction of the Devonshire Colic, the Gaol Fever, the Scurvy, and the Small Pox.

for ours) some fitting notice should not be taken of the fact that this year 1873, in which we are living, is the centenary of the year 1773 when Howard received his felicitous appointment of Sheriff of Bedford. An esteemed Member of the Council of the Statistical Society has already suggested to me that a Howard Medal, to be awarded to the best essay on one of the many branches of that social science which Howard cultivated with such talent and success, might be a fitting memorial. I myself once dreamed of inscribing on the building which I had hoped to see erected for the Scientific Societies, the simple fact that the first stone was laid in the centenary of Howard's appointment as Sheriff of Bedford, and the building opened for use in the year following, when he achieved his great parliamentary victory, and received the thanks of the House of Commons. As to a statue in the open, if we are to have one, it might either grace the Thames Embankment, as I suggested in the pamphlet just referred to, or find a place somewhere on Muswell Hill within sight of the Enfield where he was born,* and the Stoke Newington where he spent the days of his early manhood. If the pleasure-seekers of London can be brought together for a more serious purpose, why should we not see, crowding the slopes of the Alexandra Park, a grand gathering of our prison-reformers and prisoners' friends, our sanitary and social reformers, our statisticians, our advocates of temperance, our soldiers and sailors, bent on doing honour to the man who was made Sheriff of Bedford in 1773; and to whose official exertions we owe it that no fighting man or peaceful civilian need now to be perplexed or terrified by the hideous gaol distemper?

If any Fellow of the Statistical Society, or any friend into whose hands these pages may fall, desires to promote the work of honouring Howard by gifts of money, I will willingly undertake that sums devoted to this purpose shall be taken care of, and expended in such way as the Council of the Statistical Society may direct or approve.

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* In the inscription on Bacon's noble monument in St. Paul's Cathedral, it is stated that Howard was born at Hackney. The balance of evidence now inclines strongly in favour of Enfield. The following extract from Howard's will connects him very closely with the districts bordering on the Alexandra Park, and seems to mark it as the most suitable spot for an out-door monument:—"I give to the Rev. Mr. Townsend, of Stoke Newington, the Rev. Mr. Smith, of Bedford, and the Rev. Dr. Stennet, of Muswell Hill, twenty pounds each."