

**Conference on the housing of the people. Report of the first meeting. /
Papers by Louis Parkes, B.F. Costelloe, and Mr. Fred Scott.**

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CONFERENCE

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ON THE

HOUSING OF THE PEOPLE.

REPORT OF FIRST MEETING.

PAPERS BY

~~et al~~

DR. LOUIS PARKES, MR. B. F. COSTELLOE, L.C.C.

AND

MR. FRED SCOTT.



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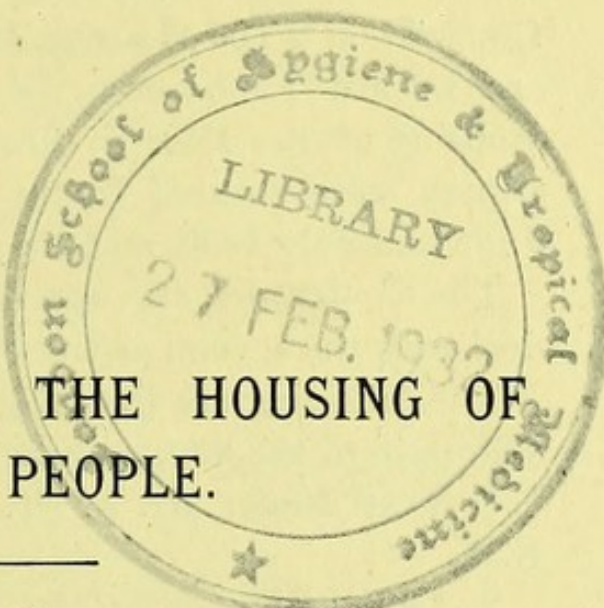
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CONFERENCE ON THE HOUSING OF THE PEOPLE.

THE first meeting of the Conference was held at the National Liberal Club on April 30, 1890. Mr. JAMES STUART, M.P., was elected Chairman, Mr. D. H. MACFARLANE and Mr. T. CHATFEILD CLARKE Vice-Chairmen, and Mr. J. THEODORE DODD (20, Old Buildings, Lincoln's Inn) Hon. Sec.

The Conference included delegates from the following political and non-political associations, viz.:—

The Allotments and Small Holdings Association, the London Liberal and Radical Union, the Mansion House Council on the Dwellings of the Poor, the Metropolitan Radical Federation, the National Reform Union, the Women's Liberal Federation, the Working Men's Club and Institute Union, the Financial Reform Association, and the Political Committee of the National Liberal Club, the Leaseholds Enfranchisement Association, and the English Land Restoration League.

At the above meeting papers were read by Dr. LOUIS PARKES (of the Mansion House Council) on "Sanitation," by Mr. B. F. C. COSTELLOE (a member

of the Housing Committee of the London County Council) on "The Housing of the People in London," and by Mr. FRED SCOTT (of Manchester) on "The Housing of the Poor in Provincial Towns." These papers were printed in the SANITARY RECORD for June and July 1890, and are here reprinted.

The Conference also appointed five committees to deal with the several aspects of the question.

The following are the subjects, with the names and addresses of the hon. secretaries.

1. SANITATION : Mr. A. Draper, 99, Boundary Road, N.W.

2. LONDON HOUSING : Mr. B. Costelloe, 33, Chancery Lane, W.C.

3. PROVINCIAL MUNICIPALITIES : Mr. F. Scott, 44, John Dalton Street, Manchester.

4. RURAL DISTRICTS : Mr. Cyril Dodd, Q.C., 2, Harcourt Buildings, Temple, E.C.

5. FINANCIAL : Mr. Sydney Webb, 4, Park Village East, N.W.

The Conference was then adjourned.



THE HOUSING OF THE PEOPLE.

AN important conference was held at the National Liberal Club on April 30, to "promote a better understanding of the problem of the housing of the people, and to arrange for united action, parliamentary and otherwise, on the part of the organizations represented." The organizations in question were the National Reform Union, Allotments and Small Holdings Association, Financial Reform Association, London Liberal and Radical Union, Metropolitan Radical Federation, Mansion House Council on the Dwellings of the Poor, Working Men's Club and Institute Union, Leaseholders' Enfranchisement Association, Women's Liberal Federation, and the Political Committee of the N.L.C. Among those present were Miss Cons, Professor Stuart, Messrs. D. H. Macfarlane, S. Webb, S. Halifax, Chatfeild Clarke, Percy Bunting, J. Theodore Dodd, and Stewart Headlam. Professor Stuart was chosen chairman, Mr. Macfarlane vice-chairman, and Mr. Dodd hon. secretary.

The CHAIRMAN indicated points for discussion. First, he said, there was the question of sanitation. We suffered in this respect from inefficient machinery. The Government, it is true, proposed to consolidate the law; but that was not sufficient. Then there were the questions of the destruction of insanitary places, cheaper means for transferring land, compensation for destruction of premises, the re-housing of the displaced population, rebuilding on insanitary areas, housing the naturally increased population and those over whose heads all previous efforts had gone, the raising of funds the provision of open spaces, wash-houses, &c., and the encouragement which should be offered to the poor to live

in suburbs. The municipalities might give free passes for trains and trams to poor persons as a return for the concessions given to the companies.

Mr. B. F. C. COSTELLOE, L.C.C., delivered the introductory address on

"THE HOUSING OF THE PEOPLE IN LONDON," at the conference of delegates from various societies interested in that subject, which has been convened by the political committee of the National Liberal Club.

Mr. COSTELLOE began by saying that it was the object of the political committee (of which he is vice-chairman) that the conference should be rather a business meeting than a political demonstration. Sub-committees were to be appointed on each branch of the subject, and the purpose of what he had to say would be to lay a basis for some part of the work of one of those committees, by giving them some account of the experience which the London County Council has gained in its very earnest endeavours to deal with this vital problem.

It is singular, he said, how strongly such experience forces upon us the conviction that not even the outlines of the subject are yet apprehended by the public mind. The law is a labyrinth. The statistics and the economics of the subject are even to cultured persons an undiscovered country. The existing chaos, the bitter cry, the standing danger to health, to morals, and to social order, are patent to us all. But neither the reasons nor the remedies are so obvious.

Without theorizing, one general principle must be remembered. The pressure of an array of struggling people upon a very limited amount of accommodation is our chronic condition in London. So long as there is a demand by large masses of people anxious to live at the cheapest possible rent, without regard to the decencies of life, or the brutally inadequate character of the lodging supplied, so long it will be hard to keep up the standard of house accommodation. Probably the true problem is the ultimate one—to curb the bitter pressure of unlimited competition for sweated labour. But short of this there is a thing which we can put before ourselves as an ideal, namely, to set a legislative limit to the minimum requirements of the poorest people. As the true remedy for population problems is to lift the minimum standard of comfort, so the best help for the slums is to lift the standard of decency.

Legislation has a double province. It may and it should prohibit the use and letting of inhuman lodging

places, as it prohibits the sale of unhealthy meat; or, indeed, as it already forbids cellar-dwellings and houses without drains. This is the sanitary branch of the subject; and the Consolidation Bill of the present Session is a useful step towards clearing it up. I only here suggest that it is high time the law bodily defined the minimum requisites of a human dwelling. This is partly done already by provisions as to nuisances and overcrowding. But the law should codify the necessary points of decent requirement, and should, with a view to the greatest lifting of the standard, enable the London County Council to legislate for this by bye-law from time to time. A beginning is already made in the vestry powers for regulation of tenement houses (which are found by the Council's recent returns to be largely a dead letter) and by the model regulations for artisans' dwellings lately approved by the London County Council. Make these, with due latitude compulsory, and you will stop the leak. That is, if you can induce the local authority to enforce the law, which can only be done by bringing home to the electorate their primary local duty.

But the province of the law nowadays is not merely preventive and punitive, but constructive also. The neglect—the very culpable and horrible neglect—of the whole community has given us the slums; and on the community there lies a corresponding duty to set them right. For this you require (1) power to close and to demolish the bad properties, in areas large or small; (2) ways and means to replace them with decent buildings suited to the needs of the most hardly pressed section of the people, with due remembrance of such further points as open spaces, baths and laundries, and other kinds of common provision for a decent life.

The existing Acts form three groups:—

- a. Shaftesbury.
- b. Torrens.
- c. Cross.

Broadly speaking, "Torrens" has meant small areas worked by means of the vestry. "Cross" has meant large areas worked by the Metropolitan Board of Works; and "Shaftesbury" has meant nothing, for it has lain unused.

By the Shaftesbury scheme the local authority (and within the last few weeks the London County Council also) has powers, apparently extensive, to buy or hire land or buildings for housing the labouring classes. But they cannot do this by compulsion at all, unless it be by way

of Provisional Order, and then they can only get it by going under the Lands Clauses Consolidation Acts, and compensating owners on that basis. This, it may be said at once, is hopeless.

It is supposed, though it is still a moot point, that if the London County Council has any cleared area on hand under any powers which do not limit its use, it can apply it to the purposes of the Shaftesbury Acts; but this is an unlikely contingency.

Here, then, the needed reform is obvious. We must have compulsory power to take such land by a cheap and rapid process, at a fair market price.

One thing they can do already, and possibly may do—that is, to hire land or dwellings, and use them for accommodation. They might lease houses now in the ordinary market, and convert them into lodgings. They could either work on such lines as those by which Miss Octavia Hill and Miss Cons have done so much for many slums, or they could create decent common lodging-houses under respectable and responsible control. To do such things in any way that meets the need, compulsory taking is obviously inevitable; and this ought to be also made subject to compensation clauses of what I hope will be bye-and-bye the normal kind—namely, a fair market value, with no weight of legal costs, and with deduction for existing misuse of the property.

The chaos comes in when we pass to the Torrens' and Cross's Acts. Cross's Act is—

1. Only applicable to large areas—say, over 100 houses.
2. Only applicable where a high rate of disease can be shown.
3. Most expensive in the ultimate nett loss.
4. Hampered by the rigid rules as to the subsequent use of the land.

Most of the areas in London to which these conditions apply have been dealt with, at a loss to the ratepaying occupiers of the metropolis measured by millions; and with the absurd result that though the "re-housing" provisions have entailed great difficulty and vast expense to the rates, yet the result has generally been that the very poor were driven farther afield, and a different class of people housed in their place.

Torrens' Acts are—

1. Only enforceable by the local body, and on the motion of the local medical officer.
2. Open to be nipped in the bud by a delusive scheme of repairs.

3. Subject to an impossible appeal.

4. Applicable only when, house by house, the thing is so uninhabitable that you can demolish it.

There are a host of such areas now in hand, but it is intensely hard to deal with them satisfactorily, because of the less bad houses which are scattered up and down in every group.

Under these Acts it is true that a class of "obstructive houses" can be cleared, but that covers only those which render some other house actually uninhabitable.

The most obvious remedies for Torrens' are—

1. Give the County Council medical officer and the County Council itself alternative power of representation and initiative, if the local body fails to move.
2. Keep the further carriage of the scheme, and the question of repairability out of the hands of the vestry (probably small house-owners), and out of the control of their surveyor: *e.g.* let the District Surveyor report on it to London County Council direct.
3. Give appeal to an arbitrator appointed by the London County Council or to some other such common-sense tribunal.
4. Allow a whole area to be dealt with, and intervening houses demolished, if needful.
5. Widen the definition of the "obstructive" house (the last two points would be subject to fair compensation terms and Provisional Order facilities).

The remedies for Cross's Act are—

1. To widen the terms of the preamble to be proved, so as to reach areas that are abominable, though not exactly murderous.
2. To import the same compensation provisions as in Torrens'.
3. To free the London County Council, being a popular and representative body, from too rigid compulsion to use that precise area for re-housing the same people, who could often be cheaper and better and more conveniently housed somewhere else.

In other words, the immediate policy in London would seem to be not to "consolidate" in a technical sense, but to unify and weld, in fact and practice, the different fragments of the existing scheme of law.

Let every area, great or small, be dealt with by a responsible central body—on the lines of Torrens' Acts as to compensation for bad property, and on the

lines of Cross's Act as to clearing the whole of the affected area where necessary.

Let the vestry be deprived of any power of obstruction, while utilizing their local knowledge and responsibility. Let the minimum of toleration be raised to a reasonable pitch, as befits us now that the old schemes have lived their time. And let the whole be combined with vigorous compulsory and compensatory clauses under Shaftesbury Acts, and with a radical reform of the corporate machinery for street improvements, which would constantly work in with the clearance of a bad area. Bell Lane, Whitechapel, which is one of the most difficult cases now before the Council, is an excellent example of this. It could best be dealt with by a "street improvement"; but so long as that involves a penal cost, and so long as we cannot recover any of the "betterment," there is no chance of such a scheme.

It will be seen that the general lines of these suggestions cover the enactments of Professor Stuart's Bill, with certain other matters more germane to a law of consolidation. But, of course, nothing serious can be done without a change in the incidence of the charge. For that a special owner's rate is required; or, rather, as I think, an added municipal percentage on the death duty on realty, and with it a full recognition of the principle of betterment, when adjoining property not taken is increased in value by any scheme of improvement.

Into the great question of constructive action, whether and how far the municipality is to build, I do not now enter. But I feel that, for all the philanthropy and all the business enterprise, there is immense need of better housing at a possible rent. Especially do I think the common lodging-houses should be swept out and replaced as soon as may be. It is of great importance that the next census should give us the number of rooms now existing. When we have that figure, and its ratio to the local population, I think the question will then come to be not whether we should build, but how soon and how rapidly we can do it.

Dr. LOUIS C. PARKES, M.D., D.P.H., of the Mansion House Committee, spoke to the following effect:—It is universally acknowledged that "the sanitary question" is one of, if not the most, important question of all those which come within the province of a debate on the improved housing of the working-classes. Weekly tenants are powerless themselves to exert any improvement in the sanitary surroundings of their homes, so that the

legislature long ago wisely determined to place very full sanitary powers in the hands of local authorities, trusting that the various sanitary Acts of Parliament would be so enforced by these bodies as to procure and maintain healthy homes for all those members of the industrial classes who are unable to help themselves in these matters.

The powers given to local authorities in the various sanitary enactments are not merely concerned with matters of drainage and water supply, and the suppression of nuisances injurious to health. Important as these powers are in their bearing upon the health of the population, they are supplemented by others which are more immediately concerned with the evils which arise from the aggregation of large numbers of poor people in the crowded centres of industry. The power to deal with over-crowding, to enforce a certain amount of cubic space for every person, to prohibit the occupation of cellar-dwellings, except under certain prescribed conditions, and to take proceedings before the magistracy for the closure of houses which, by reason of dilapidation or structural defects, are unfit for human habitation—these are the measures which, if thoroughly enforced, would go far to render impossible the description of those scenes of misery, neglect, and destitution, which so painfully attracted the attention of the entire community some five years ago. In addition to these large and arbitrary powers, there are those conferred by the Artisans' and Labourers' Dwellings Act, commonly known as Torrens' Act, which enables local authorities to secure the demolition of premises which are in such a state as to be injurious to health, and unfit for human habitation, and the Act of 1875, with a similar title, known as Cross's Act, which provides for the clearing of unhealthy areas, and the erection of improved dwellings by the co-operation of the vestries or district boards with the central authority, formerly the Metropolitan Board of Works, and now the County Council for London. The necessity for such powers as these and for their proper exercise, is sufficiently apparent when we consider that the greater portion of modern London was built at a time when the sanitary questions involved in providing sufficient external space for houses, in securing sufficient size of rooms and other details of architectural works, were not understood in the least degree, and when consequently houses were crowded together back-to-back in narrow courts and alleys, and built of

such designs and such materials as would be considered scandalous in the present day.

Such being the facts with regard to the amplitude of the powers entrusted by Parliament to local sanitary authorities for the enforcement of wholesome conditions of lodgement for the working-classes, we are constrained to ask how is it that so little has been done in this direction, and who is responsible for the failure? The general verdict, no doubt, would be that the failure is due to the ignorance, neglect, and supineness of the local authorities in not putting in force the ample powers for remedying insanitary conditions with which they are provided. With this verdict the Mansion House Council on the Dwellings of the Poor of London is fully disposed to agree. Its opportunities for arriving at a precise knowledge on this subject are so many and various that its opinion is entitled to all possible respect. At the same time it must be admitted that if the vestries are to blame, the ratepayers are responsible in the first place for permitting the election of men to the vestries and district boards, whose object in securing these seats is to further their own interests as tradesmen or petty contractors, or take care, when they happen to be owners of small tenement houses, that the Sanitary Acts are a dead letter so far as their own property is concerned.

The Sanitary Acts cannot be enforced without a certain expenditure in salaries of inspectors and clerks, and in payment of costs where police proceedings are taken, and in other ways. Now the districts where sanitary interference is mostly greatly needed are usually the most poverty-stricken, and where the rates also are highest in proportion to ratable value, and there is a very great disinclination on the part of a body, whose members are often pledged to economy and reduction of rates, to place a further burden on the ratepayers for the enforcement of measures whose importance they do not understand, and whose capacity to make an ample return in improved health, greater wage-earning power, and lessened sickness supportable by the parish, is not appreciated.

Before any general improvement can be effected in the constitution of the sanitary authorities, or in amending the laws they administer, it is imperative that a healthy public feeling should be created as regards this great question, that public interest should be aroused, and that efforts should be made to educate the industrial classes in the importance to themselves of their homes being healthy and commodious. All this the Mansion

House Council has endeavoured to carry out since its creation some seven years ago. Lectures have been given in many parts of the metropolis, and addresses to ratepayers have been widely circulated before the vestry elections, advocating the election of proper and fit men for vestrymen, and urging the throwing off of that apathy in municipal matters which makes municipal reform in London so much more difficult a matter than in provincial towns, where a far healthier public feeling prevails.

The following alterations in the methods of election of vestrymen would also conduce greatly to securing more efficient and purer bodies:—The qualification for candidates should be reduced from a £40 rating to £10. The vestry elections should be modelled on the same basis as the election of guardians (except as to proxy voting, which should be abolished), *i.e.* each year the whole number should be re-elected, instead of, as at the present time, one-third only retiring each year. The hour of meeting also of a vestry, which is now optional, should in most cases be fixed for the evening, to enable business men to give local affairs more adequate and constant attention. If these alterations were made, more attention and publicity would be obtained, the present farcical hole-and-corner elections would be rendered impossible, and freshly-elected men, zealous to perform their duties conscientiously, would not be thwarted and outnumbered.

A re-arrangement of metropolitan districts for sanitary purposes, with the object of enlarging the sanitary areas, would also greatly tend to remove sanitary administration from the influence of those petty local interests that are now too often exerted to restrain and harass it.

With the election of competent and willing vestries, the great obstacle in the way of securing those improved conditions of living for the working-classes, which all unite in desiring, would be removed. But certain alterations in the law to remove anomalies and secure more efficient working are also greatly needed. These have been summarised by the Mansion House Council as follows:—

1. Consolidation and simplification of the law; the very numerous existing metropolitan Sanitary Acts and their amendments being scattered through the statute books in a manner that renders their comprehension most difficult even to an expert.

2. Amendment of procedure with regard to nuisances ; which would enable a vestry itself to do the work required to abate a nuisance and recover the costs from the owner, or to obtain a penalty from the owner on complaint before a magistrate when the vestry's order had been neglected.
3. Medical officers of health to be debarred from private practice, and their appointment, tenure of office, and control to be conjointly in the hands of the vestries and the County Council or Local Government Board.
4. Sanitary inspectors to hold a certificate of sanitary knowledge after examination from some public body, such as the Sanitary Institute, officially recognized by the Local Government Board. The medical officer of health as head of the staff to have the entire control of the inspectors. And the numbers of inspectors for each district to be compulsorily determined by the Local Government Board.
5. Vestries to be compelled to make and enforce regulations for the control of tenement houses (*i.e.* houses occupied by more than one family).
6. Registration of ownership, whether in chief or as lessee or sub-lessee, to be made compulsory in all cases ; and local authorities to be empowered to compel the freeholder to insist upon the leaseholder maintaining the property at all times in a habitable condition.
7. Any vestryman or member of a district board, who is proved guilty before the Local Government Board of infraction of the Acts which such vestry or board has to enforce, to be *ipso facto* incapable of continuing a member of such vestry or board.
8. The restriction in the Nuisances Removal Act limiting the power of complaint before a magistrate to "an inhabitant" to be removed, the right to be exercised by anyone in the same way as the cellar-dwelling section of the Metropolitan Local Management Act, 1855.
9. District surveyors not to be called upon to prosecute offenders against the Building Acts at their own risk and expense.
10. Public mortuaries to be provided in every district.
11. Vestries not to be permitted to contract for the

removal of dust, but to carry out this work by their own officers.

12. Water companies to be debarred from cutting off the supply of water from inhabited houses under any circumstances.

The Mansion House Council are also of opinion that for the efficient working of the Sanitary Acts the powers of the London County Council should be much enlarged, so as to empower it to set all sanitary statutes in operation where vestries are proved to have neglected their duties.

The County Council should also have the power of setting Torrens' Act in operation, independently of the local authority, in whose area the houses are situated.

Mr. FRED SCOTT explained the housing of the provincial poor, speaking from personal experience in Manchester and Salford (see next page).

The papers led to some interesting and instructive discussion; and then sub-committees were appointed to deal with the various phases of the question, and report to a future meeting of the Conference. During the latter part of the meeting Mr. Chatfeild Clarke took Professor Stuart's place.

THE HOUSING OF THE POOR IN PROVINCIAL TOWNS.

By FRED SCOTT.

THE title of this paper has been chosen for me, otherwise, for sake of precision, I would have selected "The Improvement of Artisans' and Labourers' Dwellings," or "The Better Housing of the Working Classes." These, I need scarcely remind you, are the terms used in the several Acts of Parliament relating to the subject, and I do not know of any Act in which the term "housing of the poor" is used. The reason for this I take to be that the word "poor" is too indefinite, and its use would seem to imply an obligation to classify the poor, and the fixing of an arbitrary standard of eligibility for the occupation of dwellings provided under the Acts. This would involve proceedings of such an inquisitorial character that they would inevitably defeat the objects aimed at. If the term is used as applying to the whole wage-earning class whether the individual or family can live comfortably and even save money or cannot do so, it is objectionable as not being strictly applicable to an important section of those for whom provision is necessary, viz. well - paid artisans and labourers—the more independent of the working-classes who, as a rule, are very sensitive. It is not understood literally and as a comparative term by

them, but rather as carrying with it in some degree the stigma associated with pauperism.

In objecting to any attempt at classification of the poor I must make one qualification. The poor may be divided into two classes—the deserving and the undeserving. The latter, who were once described by a late eminent statesman as the “residuum,” may easily be “ticketed,” so to speak, by those who have to deal with working-class dwellings, and nothing short of a system of sanitary police espionage such as that exercised in the case of registered lodging-houses will, in my opinion, prevent this irreclaimable class from being a constant source of loss to property-owners, and of danger to their neighbours and the community. It is for the statesman to plan how this class may be isolated for the purpose of such supervision. If feasible, the adoption of such a policy would, I am convinced, have a far-reaching influence for good.

I propose to deal with my subject mainly as affecting Manchester and Salford, the towns with which I am most familiar, and assuming that the condition of cottage-dwellings in those places is not much if at all worse than in other large towns of corresponding age and character of population, I take it that what applies to them applies approximately to Liverpool, Glasgow, Birmingham, Leeds, Sheffield, &c.

I shall deal with my subject under three heads, viz :—

1. The need of healthy dwellings in provincial towns.
2. The difficulties in the way of effecting structural alterations on a large scale.
3. Methods of dealing with the difficulty.

THE NEED.

As long ago as 1877 I undertook, in conjunction with a colleague, an inquiry into the condition of cottage dwellings in Manchester and Salford with a view to providing data for special memorials from the local sanitary association to the respective corporations in

favour of the adoption of the Artisans' and Labourers' Dwellings Acts. We visited the slums very extensively, and made notes of what we saw on the spot. If I reproduced those notes it is not unlikely that you would think my picture much too highly coloured. I shall therefore quote instead what has been written by the responsible officials of the two corporations. In a report dated 1884, the late medical officer of health for Manchester (Mr. Leigh), in speaking of No. 1 District—Ancoats—the old workshop portion of the city, said, "Nearly the whole of the houses were built before 1830. There are a great number of back-to-back houses in all parts of the district. The width of the streets varies from 30 feet to 4 feet, the greater number of them being 16 feet or 17 feet wide. The passages vary in width, and are only 2 feet 6 inches wide in some instances. In many cases the backs of the houses are too near to each other. The streets are for the most part paved and sewered. The houses, as a rule, are without cellars, and have no ventilating spaces under the floor. They rise directly from the ground. The outside walls are 9 inches thick, and the inside walls are $4\frac{1}{2}$ inches or 3 inches thick. They smell fusty. The ceilings of some are only 6 feet from the floor. The timber in many cases is in a state of decay. Houses in such a condition, and so erected, cannot be otherwise than damp. The absence of any provision to prevent the moisture of the ground rising into the walls, and the thinness of the latter affording so little defence against rain, the interior can seldom or never be as dry as a house should be. From the want of subjacent ventilation, any emanation from the soil must find immediate vent into the houses."

Of District No. 2 he said, "The houses are old and back to back, and were built before 1830. The remaining portion were erected between 1830 and 1850. There are several courts in the district. The width of the streets ranges from 36 feet to 8 feet, the average width being 18 feet. The passages between the backs of the houses are small, and the passages between the backs of the houses that have yards are insufficient. The houses without yards are old and

dilapidated for the most part, and not suitable places for human habitation. The rooms are small and damp, and the air is confined by the narrowness of the courts. The streets are for the most part paved and sewered, and are in fair condition, but the flags in the courts are in many cases in bad repair."

Sub-districts 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, and 12 are described in almost identical terms. In a report by Mr. Leigh, dated 1887, and published after his death, speaking of St. George's and Ancoats districts, said, "The houses are amongst the oldest in the city, the walls saturated with animal exhalation, and reeking with polluted atmosphere. . . . Most of the streets in which these cottages lie are narrow, little more than alleys, with few crossings, and utterly deficient in ventilation. . . . Let anyone accustomed to a better condition of life put his head into one of them, and he will be met with a mephitic atmosphere the like of which is not to be found in the domicile of any other animal. Stables and shippens, and even pigstyes, have their peculiar smells, but they are not poisonous, or repulsive, or offensive as these. No animal could live in them and flourish. To describe their nauseous character, I have sometimes said, in a bantering spirit, 'Put a pig into one of them, and feed him on the best for a twelvemonth, and he will come out a lean pig.' And yet industrious men and women and little children live in these, and their weak frames and pallid faces tell of the surroundings."

When the Sanitary Association presented its Memorial to the Salford Corporation in 1878, the then medical officer of health, Dr. Tatham, now medical officer of health for Manchester, reported upon it to the Health Committee as follows:—"The most cursory glance at the above report will confirm the statement of the reporters, that the unhealthy condition of things there depicted is mainly dependent upon structural defects, which are quite beyond the sphere of mere alterative efforts, and will point to entire and unconditional demolition of the property in large blocks at a time as the only remedy."

I may add that, with the exception of a slight clearance by the corporation in the case of an in-

famous cluster of immoral houses and a limited clearance for railway extension, the great mass of property referred to above remains untouched, and the only difference now is that after 12 years it is so much worse from the continuous decay and pollution going on during that period. In support of this statement I may quote part of a resolution passed in April 1889 at a conference of working-men in the borough:—

This conference, composed chiefly of working-men who live in Salford, having considered the question of the condition of the homes of the people, and having heard statements on the subject from members of the Salford Town Council, is of opinion—(1) that a number of families are so housed in Salford that for them morality is more difficult than for others, and common decency almost impossible; (2) that unless the dwellings are improved it will be impossible to lower the death-rate, which in some parts of the borough is appallingly high, and equally impossible to raise the morals of the community.

For property of this class rents are exacted for which dwellings built upon the most approved modern principles ought to show a fair return. In a paper read by me before the Manchester Statistical Society twelve months ago, on "The Condition and Occupations of the People of Manchester and Salford," I gave the results of an inquiry which embraced 4,402 families, representing 19,271 persons. The information, which was obtained from direct inquiry by the Sanitary Association's visitors, included as items, rent paid, and use made of sleeping apartments as showing the extent of over-crowding. The following results in respect of those particulars were shown.

Rent.—In Manchester answers as to rent were obtained in 1,512 cases; of these only 201 paid less than 3s. per week, whereas 1,311 paid from 3s. to 7s. 6d. In Salford out of 1,398 answers only 81 tenants paid under 3s., and 1,217 paid from 3s. to 7s.

Over-crowding.—The result of these rents in over-crowding was found to be as follows:—

MANCHESTER.

| No. of cases where more than 2 persons used 1 bed-room | Per cent. |
|--|-------------------------|
| | 841 out of 1,155 = 72·8 |

| No. of cases where more than 4 persons used 2 bed-rooms | | Per cent. |
|--|-----------|--------------|
| 523 out of 1,037 | = | 50.4 |
| Ditto where more than 6 persons used 3 bed-rooms | 54 ,, 122 | = 44.2 |
| Ditto where more than 8 persons used 4 bed-rooms | 3 ,, 11 | = 27.2 |

SALFORD.

| No. of cases where more than 2 persons used 1 bed-room | | Per cent. |
|---|--------------|--------------|
| 372 out of 571 | = | 65.1 |
| Ditto where more than 4 persons used 2 bed-rooms | 565 ,, 1,247 | = 45.3 |
| Ditto where more than 6 persons used 3 bed-rooms | 53 ,, 188 | = 28.1 |

By the provision of model lodging-houses the experience of Glasgow shows that over-crowding of the most objectionable kind—*i.e.* by male lodgers—might be greatly diminished.

THE DIFFICULTIES.

The chief of these are :—

- (a.) The great cost of effecting a radical cure by clearance and re-building.
- (b.) The force of interested opposition.
- (c.) The ignorance and apathy of the sufferers.

(a.) *The Cost.*—The Manchester Corporation has recently determined to make some clearances of insanitary property. The condemnation of these areas was one of the first acts of the new medical officer of health (Dr. Tatham), who has been in office about twelve months. The areas measure respectively—

| | | |
|---------|--------|------------|
| No. 1.— | 19,271 | sq. yards. |
| „ 2.— | 4,233 | „ |
| „ 3.— | 863 | „ |
| „ 4.— | 956 | „ |

Total—25,323 sq. yds. = 5 a. 0 r. 37 p.

The estimated cost of land, new buildings, &c., is £103,375, or, after deducting value of land, materials

sold, &c., a nett cost of £53,005 ; that is the amount sunk for the public good on which no return from a commercial point of view is expected. On the permanent value the experience of Liverpool shows that about 4 per cent. may be anticipated. The number of persons disturbed and re-housed by this scheme is 1,870. The annual cost to the ratepayers for the direct protection of that section of the community against the dangers of unhealthy dwellings and the contingent protection of the general community may be shown as follows:—

| | | |
|--------------------------------------|-----|--------|
| Loan of £103,375 at 3 per cent., say | ... | £3,100 |
| Less return on new buildings, value | | |
| £53,005 at 4 per cent. per annum | ... | 2,120 |
| | | <hr/> |
| | | £980 |

When it is remembered that, as stated by the late medical officer of health, Manchester as a residential city is mainly one of cottages, it will be clear that only a very small portion is dealt with by this scheme ; indeed I have it on high authority that probably £5,000,000 would be required to complete the rebuilding of the more or less unhealthy cottage dwellings in the city. It is obvious, therefore, that extension of the present effort must necessarily be slow. But much may be done by variation of method. The scheme now being prosecuted is undertaken under Cross's Acts, which require the following procedure : The officer of health condemns the property ; the Council adopts his report and prepares a scheme which is submitted to the Local Government Board ; that authority holds a local inquiry, and if the scheme be approved the corporation obtains compulsory powers of purchase. It does not follow, however, that they will obtain the property at a reasonable price ; arbitration, as now permitted, is always an expensive method of purchase, while in private negotiation influences are not unlikely to operate that will secure for the owners a very generous equivalent for what they sell. Thus, I am quite prepared to learn that the ultimate cost to the ratepayers of this first clearance will be considerably more than the nett amount estimated.

The procedure to which I apprehend the Manchester Corporation will in future have to resort more freely is that provided by Torrens' Acts. It is as follows:—The medical officer of health condemns as under Cross's Acts; his report is referred to the engineer and surveyor who has to report also to the council. If both reports agree copies of them are sent to the owners, with notice to appear before the local authority to state grounds of objection if any. After this the local authority must make an order in writing, which is subject to appeal to the Court of Quarter Sessions. If the court approve of the order, the owner has to make structural alterations at his own cost to the satisfaction of the engineer, in cases where it is admitted that the houses are capable of being rendered healthy by alteration; or in cases where demolition is insisted upon, he must pull down but need not rebuild. Self-interest, however, usually settles this point. In both cases the owner may require the local authority to purchase; and if this be done the authority must pull down and may erect either labourers' dwellings or lodging-houses, dedicate the site to public health purposes, or sell or let without special restrictions. For either of the first two cases they may borrow public money, but no greater rate than 2d. in the £ for one year can be levied. The purchase money may be fixed by agreement or arbitration, and there is no appeal from the arbitrator's award. The terms of purchase by arbitration under these Acts are more favourable to the authority than under Cross's Acts, but the total withdrawal of the power given to the owner to compel the authority to purchase condemned property is an amendment of these Acts urgently needed.

(b.) *Interested Opposition.*—Owing to the high price of land in the centre of the city, where a large population must reside to be near their work, speculative building is discouraged, and consequently property owners are enabled, as already shown, to charge high rents. Any exercise of the corporate powers in the direction of interference with this class is keenly felt by them, and they have accordingly always taken care to be well represented in the council. As indicating

the influence wielded by them, I may instance the history of the building bye-laws of the city. Such an obvious necessity as an efficient code of building regulations in a place where the great majority of the dwellings are of the class whose tenants most need protection against the unscrupulous builder, has until the past year been ignored in Manchester. The code still in force is dated 1869—that is, the year after the health committee and first medical officer of health were appointed. It is very incomplete, and does not even embody all the powers relating to buildings possessed by the corporation, many of which are dispersed through various local Acts, so that nobody who desired to build could see at a glance what regulations he had to comply with.

It is just 23 years ago since the Manchester Society of Architects commenced agitating for improved building bye-laws; 15 years ago the City Council ordered the preparation of an epitome of the existing regulations. This instruction was never carried out. Eight years ago the Sanitary Association joined in the agitation, and it required incessant effort, culminating in a public meeting of several kindred societies, to get this most essential work undertaken. In the opposition to this reform the landowners, of whom there are many small holders in the city, came to the help of the property owners and jerry builders, because any increased interference by the authorities in the erection of dwellings and other premises tended to discourage the purchase of their land for building purposes. Fortunately our agitation proved successful, and now the improved code only awaits the final approval of the Local Government Board to be in operation.* It covers 55 pages of large 4to, as compared with 7 pages 8vo, the size of the old code. Even now several important recommendations of the Society of Architects are left out, the responsibility being placed by the local authorities on the Local Government Board.

(c.) *Ignorance and Apathy.*—There are no towns in the kingdom whose inhabitants have been so long and

* Since this paper was read the necessary ratification has been given.

so earnestly taught the importance of sanitary reform as Manchester and Salford. In 1852 the Sanitary Association was formed "to diffuse a knowledge and further the observance of the laws of health," that is, long before any such organization was, I believe, known even in the metropolis. Almost without interruption the activity of the Association has continued, and at no time has it been more vigorous than it is now. Notwithstanding all this effort and the strides made by general education during the past 20 years, it is only quite recently that it has been found practicable to rouse the people to action on their own account, and then only because of the alarming rate of mortality that had prevailed for some time which had attracted notice all over the country. Following the paper read by myself, to which I have already alluded, one was read by Dr. Thresh—then a resident in Manchester, now medical officer of health for Chelmsford—before the Sanitary Association and a number of kindred societies. The paper was based upon an exhaustive scientific inquiry into "the causes of the excessive mortality in No. 1 District, Ancoats." The information contained in this paper caused quite a sensation. The writer obtained from the hospitals particulars of the deaths there in 1888 of persons who had resided in the area covered by his inquiry, and he added them to those recorded in the ordinary official returns. The "true death-rate" thus arrived at was in only a few of the blocks into which Dr. Thresh divided the district less than 40 per 1,000, whereas in some blocks it was upwards of 50, 60, 70, 80, and in one case it reached the incredible figure of 91·6 per 1,000! The outcome of these papers was a series of public conferences, in which working-men were invited to take part. The formation of working-men's sanitary associations or healthy homes societies immediately followed in Salford, in Ancoats, and in Hulme, another densely-populated working-class district of Manchester. A deputation of 150 working-men from Ancoats waited upon the mayor with a memorial for the City Council demanding attention to the sanitation of their district. The present scheme followed soon after. In Salford the agitation for improved

dwellings has been well sustained, and the corporation are committed by resolutions recently passed by the council to make a considerable effort in re-housing the working-classes in the borough. Ignorance and apathy still prevail largely, however, and it will require all the vigilance of voluntary sanitary organizations in both towns to counteract the influence of interested opposition and keep the people alive to the fearful price they have to pay for their indifference.

METHODS OF DEALING WITH THE DIFFICULTY.

I have already dealt with the only methods as yet favoured by the authorities in Manchester and Salford, viz. the recent adoption of Cross's and Torrens' Acts. There is another plan open to the authorities, however, viz. the appropriation of a definite sum for the promotion of the public health by re-housing the working-classes in the same manner as at Birmingham, where an outlay of about $1\frac{1}{2}$ million has been incurred for the demolition of insanitary areas and the encouragement of private enterprise to undertake the rebuilding of ordinary cottage dwellings on an ample scale. The Corporation of Birmingham has thus avoided the necessity of becoming landlord itself to any extent. The interest on capital thus sunk by any corporation for the healthy housing of the people is surely as legitimate a charge upon the rates as the cost of public parks, free libraries, baths and wash-houses, art galleries, &c., however excellent and desirable these things may be. But in order to carry out a policy of this kind it is essential that men of broad views and the highest ability should be elected on the council—men against whom there cannot be entertained the slightest suspicion of using their position to serve selfish interests. In this connection party rivalry might be of great advantage. Hitherto, in my experience, partisanship has not been productive of emulation in respect of the status of men chosen as representatives of the people, and consequently those who in municipal affairs are, like myself, primarily concerned in securing the best possible administration, can only regard the influence now exerted by political feeling in the determination

of the character of our local parliaments as a great evil. When it is realised how vast are the resources controlled by such a body as the Manchester City Council, and how much more directly the well-being of his constituents is affected by a town councillor than by a member of Parliament, it would seem that ratepayers ought to be at least as careful in their selection of the former as of the latter. It goes without saying that, speaking generally, the difficulty of obtaining the highest class of candidate would diminish in proportion to the degree of fastidiousness exercised in this direction by the electorate. I am bound to admit that in Manchester the Conservatives have for some time past shown a much more praiseworthy spirit in this matter than the Liberals, and it is scarcely to be wondered at that in some cases moderate Liberals give their votes to Conservative candidates fitted to represent them even in Parliament, in preference to some from their own party who are not.

Since writing the foregoing paper, which was prepared at very short notice, I have been able to collate some information about Liverpool, Glasgow, Edinburgh, Dublin, Newcastle-on-Tyne, Birmingham, and Sheffield. I take these in the order named, except Glasgow, which has been fully dealt with in the SANITARY RECORD for May.

In a paper read by Mr. A. B. Forwood, M.P., at a Diocesan Conference in Liverpool, in 1883, "On the Dwellings of the Industrial Classes in the Liverpool Diocese of Liverpool and How to Improve Them," he estimated that there were then in Liverpool some 15,000 houses more or less unfitted for habitation by reason of their situation, containing a population of 60,000 people. In order to prevent undue competition with private effort he proposed that the corporation should only provide 12,000 houses, the cost of which he estimated as follows:—

| | |
|---|----------|
| "12,000 insanitary dwellings, to be removed or improved, costing, including sites, say | £750,000 |
|---|----------|

Cost of accommodation in part substitution of houses removed, say—

| | | |
|---|--------|----------|
| 2,750 three-roomed tenements on the flat system, at £150 each | | £412,500 |
| 2,750 cottages at £60 each | | 165,000 |
| 2,750 existing tenements re-modelled at £30 each | | 82,500 |
| | | <hr/> |
| | | £660,000 |

| | |
|---|---------|
| Rent of 8,250 tenements at 3s. per week | £64,362 |
| Less Interest at $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. | £23,100 |
| Sinking Fund | 3,300 |
| Rates, repairs, and loss of rent | 22,500 |
| | <hr/> |
| | 48,900 |

Surplus £15,462

| | |
|--|---------|
| The annual interest and sinking fund on the cost of sites, and for property demolished would be | £30,000 |
| From which deduct surplus rental... | 15,462 |
| | <hr/> |

Leaving an annual loss to the Corporation of £14,538
Or a little over 1d. in the pound on the rates.

Such a loss would, however, be more apparent than real, for the gain to the town in health means reduced poverty, diminished drunkenness, better labour in return for wages paid, and, above all, a feeling in the heart and soul of each of us that we have done something in our day and generation to ameliorate and to raise the condition, spiritual, social, and temporal, of those in poorer circumstances than ourselves."

The Corporation of Liverpool have for some years been engaged in the work of dealing with unhealthy dwellings. They have carried out the greater portion of the work under the local Acts of 1866 and 1868, the powers given by these measures enabling them to close from time to time about 2,600 dwellings, many being in detached blocks which could not be again built upon, and had to be demolished and left as air

spaces. This work is still going on. In nearly all cases the corporation have paid a small compensation for properties demolished, averaging from £25 to £35 per house for back-to-back houses, that is, for freehold without chief or ground-rent. When the corporation had proceeded to the extent above-named they were obliged to consider the question of re-housing, and as they had large areas of land on their hands they offered it at a very low price to encourage private enterprise in building houses for the working-classes. There was no disposition evinced by speculative builders or others to take advantage of this inducement, and they were compelled themselves to try an experiment. This is now known as the Victoria Square block in Scotland Ward. The site contains 9,195 square yards, of which 3,924 are occupied by dwellings, and 5,271 yards as approaches, and a quadrangular open space suitably laid out and concreted for the sole use of the tenants of the buildings. The number of people displaced by the carrying out of this scheme was 1,310, of whom 1,100 were of the working-class. The dwellings include 271 tenements, comprising 611 rooms. They are divided as follows:—

| | | | |
|--------------------|---------------------------------------|-----|--------|
| 86 | 3-room tenements at 5s. 6d. per week, | 258 | rooms. |
| 164 | 2-room tenements at 4s. 3d. per week, | 328 | „ |
| 21 | 1-room tenements at 2s. 6d. per week, | 21 | „ |
| | Superintendent's house | 4 | „ |
| Total rooms | | 611 | |

The cost of these dwellings, including the market value of the site, viz. 9,195 square yards, is £70,000. The corporation have in all cases adopted the principle of charging the market value of the land only, and not the actual price paid in the first instance.

Another block of buildings has since been erected off Juvenal Street near the above described, but consisting of tenements of one and two rooms only. It is of less expensive character, and the tenements let as follows: 2 rooms at 3s. 9d. per week, and 1 room 2s. 6d. These rents include gas for apartments and staircases.

This block pays 4 per cent., including, as in the Victoria Square block, a fair market value for the land, repairs, superintendence, &c. This result is considered so satisfactory that the corporation have prepared plans for further extension, and an inquiry has just been held with a view to obtaining legal sanction for the scheme which involves the demolition of 534 houses in the south and east districts. In the former the death-rate of the area to be dealt with was, in 1888, 43·3 per 1,000, and in 1889, 36·0. In the latter the rates were, in 1888, 43·3, and in 1889, 45·5. The average death-rate in the Victoria Square buildings is 17·6 per 1,000. A third block of buildings (4-room tenements), built by the Corporation about 20 years ago in Sylvester Street, are not so well appreciated as the new buildings, and indeed do not compare favourably with them in respect of light, ventilation, &c.

Within the past six years upwards of 1,300 houses have been condemned as unfit for human habitation, of which about one-half have been improved and the other half demolished. The corporation have erected one block of dwellings consisting of 33 separate houses, viz. :—

15 1-room houses with small scullery, 2s. 6d. per week.
18 2-room houses with small scullery, 3s. 6d. per week.

Throughout the whole of the old portion of the city the corporation are condemning large blocks of unhealthy dwellings which are either being improved or pulled down.

At Westport, Edinburgh, there is a block of dwellings which was erected by private enterprise about 20 years ago. It consists of 96 houses divided as follows :—

| | Per week. |
|--|-----------|
| 12 2-room houses at | 3s. 3d. |
| 54 2-room houses and small bed-room at | 3s. 6d. |
| 30 2-room houses at | 4s. 7d. |

The total cost of these dwellings was £12,500, and the rental is about £1,000. This property has throughout paid 5 per cent., and for the last three years 6 per cent., and in addition has accumulated a reserve fund of over £3,000, out of which the

capital has been reduced to £9,000, and out of £25,000 received in rents they had only £9 in bad debts. These are a much nearer approach to self-contained houses than those in either Liverpool or Glasgow.

Unlike all the other large towns, except London, Dublin is fortunate in having had considerable provision made by the public spirit of private firms and by the munificence of one wealthy citizen. The following summary of a table given in a paper read at the Sanitary Institute Congress held in Dublin in 1884 by Mr. Edward Spencer, M.A., Secretary to the Dublin Artisans Dwellings Company, Limited, shows the extent of provision made in Dublin up to that date.

| | | | | | Rents. | |
|--|-----|-----|--------|-------|--------|--------|
| | | | | | s. d. | s. d. |
| Artisans Dwellings Company :— | | | | | | |
| Tenements | ... | 110 | 3 | rooms | 3 0 | to 5 3 |
| " | ... | 58 | 2 | " | 2 0 | " 4 0 |
| " | ... | 4 | 1 | " | 2 6 | " 3 0 |
| Cottages | ... | 244 | 4 | " | 5 0 | " 8 0 |
| " | ... | 331 | 3 | " | 4 0 | " 6 6 |
| " | ... | 295 | 2 | " | 3 6 | " 4 0 |
| Great Southern and Western Railway Company :— | | | | | | |
| Cottages | ... | 141 | 6 | " | 3 6 | " 6 6 |
| Midland Great Western Railway :— | | | | | | |
| Tenements | ... | 7 | 3 & 4 | " | 1 6 | " 4 0 |
| " | ... | 17 | 2 | " | 1 0 | " 2 6 |
| " | ... | 6 | 1 | " | 0 6 | " 1 6 |
| Cottages | ... | 7 | 4 to 6 | " | 2 0 | " 5 0 |
| " | ... | 42 | 5 | " | 6 6 | " 7 0 |
| " | ... | 14 | 3 | " | 1 0 | " 4 0 |
| " | ... | 12 | 2 | " | 1 0 | " 2 6 |
| Industrial Tenements Co. :— | | | | | | |
| Tenements | ... | 44 | 1 to 3 | " | 2 0 | " 4 6 |
| Messrs. A. Guinness, Sons, & Co. :— | | | | | | |
| Tenements | ... | 15 | 4 | " | 4 6 | |
| " | ... | 52 | 2 | " | 3 0 | |
| Cottages and ditto. | | 450 | | under | | 5 0 |

| On ground of Messrs. Lombard and MacMahon :— | | | | | Rents. | |
|--|-----|-------|---------------|-------|--------|--------|
| | | | | | s. d. | s. d. |
| Cottages ... | ... | 125 | 4 rooms | | 6 0 | |
| „ ... | ... | 83 | 3 „ | | 6 0 | |
| „ ... | ... | 800 | more than 4 „ | | 10 0 | |
| Thomas Vance, Esq., J.P. :— | | | | | | |
| Cottages ... | ... | 38 | 2 „ | | 2 8 | |
| „ ... | ... | 158 | 1 to 2 „ | | 3 6 | to 3 9 |
| | | <hr/> | | 3,053 | | |
| Dublin Corporation | | | | | | |
| Tenements ... | ... | 140 | | | | |
| Ditto. Tenements just completed ... | ... | 86 | | | | |
| | | <hr/> | | | | |
| Total ... | ... | 3,279 | | | | |

The death-rate in the Artisans Dwellings Company's buildings is about 17 per 1,000 as compared with 26·0, the rate for the whole city.

During the past year Sir A. Guinness has made the princely gift of £250,000 for improved dwellings in London and Dublin, the share of the latter being £100,000. This fund is to be administered by the Dublin Artisans Dwellings Company with Government aid. It is now considered that, given the aid of the corporation in the demolition of unhealthy dwellings, private enterprise will do all that is required for the healthy housing of the working-classes in the Irish capital.

Thousands of working people have been disturbed by the Corporation of Newcastle in carrying out their street improvements, but nothing Newcastle-on-Tyne. has been done by that authority in the way of re-housing. Individual members of the corporation have, however, taken shares in the company formed for the purpose, viz. the Newcastle-on-Tyne Improved Industrial Dwellings Company, Limited. The first or experimental block of buildings was erected by this Company in 1870, and consists of 28 sets of two-room dwellings (front), including 2 shops and 12 single rooms (back). The

rents of the front rooms range from 3s. 9d. to 4s. 6d. per week, and those of single rooms from 2s. 6d. to 3s. 3d. : the lowest rent being on the fourth or top flat, and the rent includes gas, water, and wash-houses in yard. For nine years this block paid the shareholders 5 per cent. per annum. In 1879 the directors determined to extend the buildings by the erection of 64 more tenements of two rooms each, with four large shops and a spacious reading and recreation room. As the capital required for this extension was not readily subscribed the directors borrowed one half the cost of the buildings (about £8,000) from the Public Works Loan Commissioners, repayable in equal half yearly instalments, extending over forty years, interest payable at same time on the balance owing at $4\frac{1}{4}$ per cent. Of course this obligation has proved burdensome to the Company, and, although it has always managed to pay its way since the extension, and pay a small dividend to the shareholders, this return has necessarily been less than previously. The number of people now housed in the Company's dwellings is about 500. Mr. John Price, who is honourably known in connection with the movement for providing healthy dwellings for the working-classes in Newcastle, and to whom I am indebted for the information relating to that town, remarks on the general subject:—"Nearly twenty years residence amongst the labouring-classes has taught me that lowness of rent is a vital consideration with those of them who are dependent upon a small and precarious income, and they will put up with much inconvenience, and dispense with all embellishment for that most desirable object. At the same time it is necessary that dwellings of whatever class should be erected with a due regard to healthiness and all sanitary requirements, as we should never forget that disease ignores mere geographical boundaries, and if allowed to generate in the slums may soon find its way into the homes of the well-to-do, and destroy its victims there with impunity. On this lowest ground, therefore, none can afford to ignore the question."

The following extract from a letter received from

the medical officer of health, Birmingham, Dr. Alfred Hill, explains the position in that city.

Birmingham. "Owing to the abundant house accommodation in this city, and the activity of private builders, it has been unnecessary for the corporation to erect artisans' houses, and they have practically confined themselves to clearing away old and unhealthy property; a very large amount of such property has been bought and demolished at a cost of nearly one and a half million.

"No houses are built in the city on the 'flat' system, which does not find favour here. The town council some time ago considered the question of the advisability of erecting a block of model dwellings arranged on this plan, but the proposal was rejected. The council have since decided, however, to erect 22 model workmen's dwellings, more, however, in fulfilment of a promise than from any actual need for the houses. Financially, it is not expected that they will prove a success.

"No increase of labourers' dwellings in the town is necessary, and it seems probable that the authorities will not be called on to provide any."

In reply to my inquiry as to the housing of the working-classes in Sheffield, the medical officer of health (Dr. Theodore Thomson) writes as follows:—

"Nothing has as yet been done in Sheffield either by the corporation or by private enterprise in the direction of providing a more satisfactory housing of the poor beyond the carrying out of the general law for the sanitary improvement of existing property, and the insisting upon a proper class of buildings in the case of new property. The corporation are, however, at present considering the advisability of providing a block of model dwellings for the poor in one of the more crowded districts of the borough."

