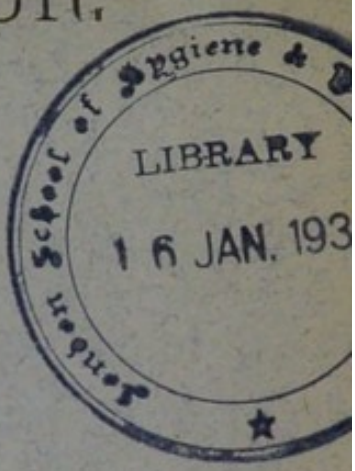
The housing of the poor : a lecture / by Peter Fyfe.

THE HOUSING OF THE POOR.



A LECTURE

BY

PETER FYFE,

CHIEF SANITARY INSPECTOR OF GLASGOW.

DELIVERED UNDER THE AUSPICES OF THE CORPORATION,
8TH DECEMBER, 1900.

LORD PROVOST CHISHOLM IN THE CHAIR.

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THE HOUSING OF THE POOR.

"THE HOUSING OF THE POOR" I selected as the subject of my first Corporation Lecture, because it lies nearest my heart of all the problems of sanitation, and I know it also was a subject in which Councillor Erskine, who invited me to lecture, had the deepest interest. It is due to its selection that I have the great honour to see in the chair our civic chief, than whom no man has done more earnest work (to use his own words) "to fully develop the moral and social advantage of every section of the community." It is the grandest, and yet the saddest, problem upon which the brain and the heart of any man could labour. The problem is not to be solved by recourse to any one particular agency or energy. The present houses of the poor are the product of many evil forces, both positive and negative—forces which have grown and gained force through generations, and which it will take generations to uproot and destroy.

The moral degradation of slum-land must, to a large extent, be met by spiritual influences working through the personal contact of kindly and sympathetic citizens—ministers of the gospel and missionary workers. This influence is what "General" Booth calls "aiming at the heart." The physical side of the problem is that which immediately concerns the municipality; or how are light, fresh air, good drainage, abundant water, sanitary conveniences, houses sound in the walls, roofs, and floors, to be found for every man, woman, and child in our great city, and, when found, how are these things to be maintained inviolate and intact?

It is with a terribly serious and responsible feeling that one goes officially from door to door among the poor of a city

like this. Your head and your heart seem to come into violent collision. We are told by Bailey, the poet, that "We should count time by heart-throbs." According to this chronology I admit to being an old man. The sights I have seen during the past fifteen years, the words I have heard, and the things I have handled, make the heart sore. It is down in the lanes and back lands of a large city one comes into immediate personal contact with "the fretful stir unprofitable, and the fever of the world," and the intellectual part of a man seeks, like Mrs. Greville, to utter a "prayer for indifference." The heart rises in rebellion as scene after scene of poverty and wretchedness follow upon the opening of door after door; it seeks, with indignation and sorrow, for some immediate salvation—for the sudden intervention of some deliverer, almighty to save; but the head points out how impracticable it is to dream of any rapid solution of the awful problem. The heart is torn by the realisation of the sad effects of ignorance, vice, and poverty, and the brain calmly seeks for the causes which produce them, and, in the cool light of reason, reflects upon the remedies to be taken. The heart impels you to become a modern Peter the Hermit, and call with a loud voice for a great general rising of Christian Crusaders to sweep from the city every condition which debases and destroys, no matter what interest may suffer during the battle. The head says, "No! we must work at our statistics, deliver lectures, write sanitary reports, think out schemes of gradual amelioration, issue notices and summonses, and condemn only those insanitary dwellings which are of such an aggravated character as to be quite intolerable." The head recognises the hard, unbending facts which surround the financial aspect, while the heart deplores the necessity for giving heed to the pounds, shillings, and pence of the subject.

It does not take long for any one moving out and in among the poor to note that gross ignorance on their part plays an all-important part in the causation of disease and death among them. This lies on the very surface, patent to

the most inexperienced district visitor. It takes a more experienced mind to apprehend why poverty becomes, in so many instances, the instrument of destruction to health and life.

I desire to-night to deal with both of those aspects, and will seek to ascertain, first, how best ignorance on the part of the poor is to be combated? and, second, why poverty causes destruction? and how the present conditions caused by poverty may in time be abolished?

As a rule, the people we are thinking of to-night walk in complete deafness as well as in gross darkness. Even the glowing periods of great statesmen, whose eyes, from their high elevation, are now penetrating the gloom of slum-land, do not reach their ears. They are, for the most part, all unconscious of the powerful voices resounding throughout the land on the grand necessity for changing the character of their abodes, not only in their own interests, but in the wider interests of the British Empire.

The voice of the personal visitor is what they *do* appreciate. Their knowledge must be got at first-hand, their thoughts must be instilled by the living contact of flesh and blood. I am deeply convinced, after years of thought and experience, that no power that can be brought to bear on the health of the common people is to be compared with the power of the loving, *personal* interest of a man or woman who knows their weaknesses and their legitimate wants.

The main essentials of healthy living, viz., a fresh and free atmosphere around and within the dwelling, unstinted measure of light streaming in at the windows, abundance of pure water conveniently at hand, and sanitary conveniences so situated and kept as to create no offensiveness—are, we often find, least in the minds of the lower-class tenants.

The environment in which they have been born and bred has blinded the majority to the manifest necessity of attempting to secure these essentials. Like the fish in the mammoth-cave pools, they have no sight, they have dwelt so long in insanitary darkness. Filth in some form or other has been in constant evidence so long; semi-darkness has

surrounded them for such a number of years; and stagnant, fœtid air has been the breath of their lives for such a lengthened period, that the women-folk of the poor seem to accept the terrible conditions of their lives as a matter of course. The labouring man's wife does not complain much of the want of these things when you visit her. She and her neighbours, and their families, steeped in ignorance of hygienic principles, constantly remind you of those whom Cowper wrote in his "Bill of Mortality," "Who, much diseased, yet nothing feel; much menaced, nothing dread."

What menaces her convenience and comfort is what your Sanitary Inspectors hear most about. Stinks from the sink, plasterless walls, rotten floors, broken ceilings, and the nightly rambles of the rats; these, and such like, form the burden of her complaint—these appeal to every woman, even the most degraded. She tells you in indignant tones of the unfulfilled promises of the factor's rent-collector to see at once to the necessary repairs. She does not tell you that she uses her sink as a water-closet, or that her floors on many occasions have been saturated with dirty water and used to break firewood upon, or that the huge break in her plastered wall is the result of a domestic brawl. The causes have to be guessed at by the wary and experienced inspector, and she and the owner dealt with accordingly. A glance at her and at her house is often sufficient to fix her type—struggling, careful, clean, or lazy, careless, dirty. If the former, matters can be mended and our work made easy; if the latter, our missionary work lies before us, in the prosecution of which every art of persuasion, cajolery, and veiled threat of compulsion are needful to be employed with the nicest discretion. Attack the careless, slatternly woman by threat of instant proceedings, and she at once breaks from sullenness into vituperation —wants to know why you permit her broken walls and flooring to remain; why her ceiling is cracked and bagging; why her window is broken and unhung; and what you intend to do to remove the insects which crawl from myriad hiding-places to their nightly orgies upon her and her wretched children.

This is the kind of case—alas! too common—the inspector finds it difficult to deal with. The house is bad, but so is the tenant. Such a tenant would make any house intolerable to live in within a few months. We may, of course, notify the owner at once to remove the vermin, to repair the plaster, and to refloor the house and rehang the windows; but hitherto we have been unable to find any practical means of dealing with the dirty, degraded tenant, short of expulsion from civilised life.

Here two plans have been tried to combat the joint effects of poverty, laziness, and sluttishness—the Deino, Pephredo, and Enyo of our modern city life. It was recognised early by the Health Committee that among the teeming masses of slum-land the voice of soft persuasion went deeper and wrought surer than the thunder of intimidation—that love was stronger than the law. Six female inspectors were appointed and sent down into the sadness, and wretchedness, and offensiveness of the 30,000 whose dwellings were branded for night inspection for fear of the typhus plague—the Nemesis of filth. These municipal angels daily visit the crowded tenements of our struggling population. Book in hand, they note the condition of the houses of the poor, listen to the complaints and tales of sorrow with patience, and advise in cases of difficulty or distress.

The first thing they did was to gain the confidence of the poor by words of sympathy and small acts of assistance, which need not be described. The main object was, of course, to secure the cleanliness of every humble home; to leave no permanent *nidus* within the four walls for the growth and development of those minute vegetable substances called microbes, which, like other better-known vegetables, thrive best in moisture and rottenness.

Thousands of houses, in the early days of inspection, were seen to be little else than forcing-beds for germs of all kinds, and those tenements, once infected by the specific germ of typhus, smallpox, or other dangerous disease, became not only fever fires within themselves, but, like the flaming fire

in the crowded area, were a constant source of danger to the whole neighbourhood, if not, indeed, to the whole city.

As time proceeded, poverty was seen in numerous cases to be the cause of black walls and soot-laden dirty ceilings, and these, in turn, begot the apathy, the heartlessness, of the lowly housewife. The inspectors were then authorised to pass "orders" to poor persons which secured to them *gratis* as much whiting and colouring powder as were needful, and the loan of a brush wherewith to cover up the dinginess of the apartment. No reasonable excuse was thus left for a continuance of dirt, and, by the exercise of this power of assistance, the ladies are able to influence the better nature of thousands, and secure an obedience and ready co-operation on their part which no threats of punishment seemed able to command. It is not so easy now as formerly to find in Glasgow a really filthy house—a house that can be certified as being a menace to the public health.

At this point might I throw out a practical suggestion, viz., that we might strive to get that word "filthy" in this connection abolished from our Acts of Parliament. It has the great disadvantage of being too strong a term. Under its protecting *ægis*, a great number of houses might, in certain circumstances, escape the corrective influence of the Corporation which should not escape, and their tenants continue under the protection of law to dwell more or less in uncleanness for long periods, living in that extensive border-land which lies between clean and filthy. All houses which are dirty, and therefore unclean, should be cleaned, or the municipality and its officers should know the reason why.

A conciliatory policy has now been established—friendly in its practical application and educative in its aim. In respect of the filthy house internally, poverty in Glasgow occasions less "alarm" than it did in the past. The kindly visit of our ladies has so far abolished Deino, and their lessons and advice to the poor have greatly relieved the city of her sister Gorgons—"dread" and "horror."

No influence on public health and the death-rate is so

malevolent as dirt in the home, on the entrances to the home, and in the immediate surroundings of the home. Once raise the public conscience to this greatest of all sanitary truths, and a brighter future lies in store for every crowded city. Force here seems to be no remedy. Neither Parliament, nor municipality, nor individual judge loves the application of force within the four walls of even the poorest citizen. Only when persuasion, advice, educative influences, and promise of help have failed—only when ignorance has no reason for remaining obdurate—should our police courts be requested to condemn and punish those who, through poverty, weakness, disease, or even ingrained laziness or stupidity, have continued to dwell in dirt and defilement. It is easy to condemn the poor and issue a summons; but it is more noble to get them a water supply, and to educate them, and cause the issue of two pounds of whiting and a whitening brush where want of such is one of the causes of complaint. But the persuasive, educative method absorbs much time and patience. House-to-house visitation and revisitation simply swallow time, and men or women are needed for this work in every city much in excess of the present numbers for any real effect to be noticeable on the public health.

Were it practicable for every small house in the crowded localities of this City of Glasgow to be visited regularly once a week by a trained, tactful, and intelligent inspector, male or female, what a change could be effected in the homes and in the immediate environment of the people! What a reduction could eventually be made in the disease and death-rates! As matters stand a visit once in two or three months is all that can be accomplished, so large are the fields and so few are the labourers. "Like angels' visits, few and far between," are the calls of the inspectors in the houses where their presence is most required.

Quite recently I have suggested the permanent employment on the sanitary staff of half-a-dozen inspectors as a "flying squadron," whose duty it would be to invade, in turn,

all our most insanitary areas; take street after street, land after land, house after house from bottom to top, and compel owner and tenant alike to abolish, within the area of inspection, everything in the form of dirt and nuisance. There are certain districts which may be clean to-day and dirty to-morrow; and although the absolutely filthy house is now difficult to find, although the standard of cleanliness has been raised all round during the past twenty years, still we have a great deal of that general carelessness and untidiness, that want of free ventilation, which makes the visitor to the poor often exclaim, with Coleridge, "I have counted two-and-twenty stenches, all well defined, and several stinks."

I have hopes that before long we may see such a valuable permanent addition to our department.

When we consider who are the principal sufferers from this state of matters; when we think of the dreadful infantile mortality which blackens the statistical pages of every important municipality; when we know that in the poorer quarters of a city a fifth of those born never see another birthday, our feelings of pity become stirred to their depths, and we ask ourselves, Can nothing be done more than is done to save the helpless? It is here that ignorance commits the greatest havoc. Milk, the most susceptible of fluids, in the heavy, fœtid atmosphere of the dirty, unventilated house, becomes "turned" in a few hours; and what is under cool and clean conditions the sustaining power of infants, becomes to them, if kept amid filth, a veritable poison.

Again, most of our poor burn oil lamps in the squalid rooms, because it is cheaper than gas; but they do not know that by doing so they are largely increasing the amount of organic matter in the air they breathe, beyond what would occur were gas the illuminant.

I have spoken of the want of free ventilation in these houses, and it needs to be spoken about again and again. The destructive power of used-up, vitiated air is incalculable. It decimated our soldiers until the Barrack Improvement Commission issued their famous report in 1861, which

resulted in each man getting 600 cubic feet of space, and a minimum height of ceiling of 10 feet. Since that time the great mortality among our troops has steadily diminished; and the great mortality among our poorer civil populations from disease of the respiratory organs will not—nay, cannot—be sensibly reduced until some drastic measures are taken to secure for them a greater measure of fresh air and ventilation than they have at present. Unfortunately, we dare not take drastic measures. We cannot give our labouring man sufficient air-space. He cannot afford it and live, if he be a married man with a family. But we ought to be able to compel him to let in air to his dwelling, which, in thousands of cases, he declines to do. His windows are completely under his own control, and too often both sashes are kept carefully closed. The result is, the atmosphere is close and oppressive, and in certain cases is so laden with organic matter that even the open lobbies leading to the houses are sensibly affected. When spoken to, he or his better half invariably state they have "ower much cauld air in the hoose already," and it would be quite useless to endeavour to convince them that to be "cosy and clarty" (to be warm and stuffy) is of the deadliest import to them and their children. Constant and free ventilation from the window should be enforced in the public interest; but the problem of enforcement is a difficult one, and the present legal standard of cubic air-space to a great extent renders it, in numerous cases, insoluble.

This leads me naturally into the second part of the subject, viz., Why poverty is to such a great extent the instrument of destruction to health and life. Several reasons at once occur to us. There is insufficient and improper food, a too great indulgence in strong drink, a want in numerous instances of warm clothing, a scarcity in winter of fuel—all of which deeply affect the vital forces of those in very humble circumstances. But, above and beyond all these terrible drawbacks to the rearing of a strong and healthy labouring population, there stands out prominently this factor—for the

existence of which the governing authorities are mainly responsible—that, structurally, the cheap houses in which thousands of our poor are forced to dwell, and their surroundings, are not in a truly sanitary condition.

The questions may be asked by some ingenious person—How should this be? What does the existence of Local Authorities, Medical Officers, and Sanitary Inspectors mean, if not to prevent any house, however humble, being a curse to its occupant, entailing upon him and his family, as time proceeds—

> "The young disease, that must subdue at length,
> Grows with their growth, and strengthens with their strength?"

The questions are cogent, the answers not easy. One thing is certain, and that is, that the living past is burying the present dead. The sins of the fathers are being visited upon the children unto the third and fourth generations. The growth of villages into towns, and towns into cities, has proceeded until quite recent times upon lines of expediency and ignorant selfishness. The science of sanitation had no place in the feuing and building of a hundred years ago. Untold misery is now the result. Those responsible for the narrow streets, lanes, and courts formed by our present rookeries—those who planted a rookery on the natural breathing space belonging to the tenement in front of it—are long since dead. In many cases their heirs have sold the "abominations" to ignorant unfortunates, tempted by the heavy rent roll, or have managed to secure full bonds over the subjects from persons unskilled in property, and less skilled in reading the signs of the times. So involved, so inextricable have the financial relations become in connection with the possession of slum property, and so clear is it that many of the present owners have no possible family connection with the original holders of it, but are often women, and even children, eking out a subsistence upon the rental, that Government, Sheriffs, and Local Authorities deal tenderly with the whole subject of its demolition, and even the closure of a large part of it from human habitation. Medical Officers and Sanitary Inspectors

may pounce here and there upon a house under the Public Health Act or a Local Act, and have it closed up; but they feel, in a city at any rate, that such action is like unto the nibbling of a mouse at the strands of the gigantic cable net which has entrapped the lion. Such action severs a strand here and there; but a lifetime of such actions does little to set free the British Lion from the thraldom which the network of insanitary property has cast around him in every important town in the British Isles.

Now, what is the main cause of this state of matters? It has been called, "No room to live!" I call it, "No sanitary rooms to live in." Go down with me into some of the noisome slums which shortly I will show on the screen. Enter these dark hovels, whose tenants grovel in eternal twilight, varied in the winter season by the flame of the paraffin lamp. As you draw your hand along the damp wall, and feel the blistered and rotten plaster crackle and fall in pieces to the floor, you stand up ready to pass sentence of condemnation. You look at the tenant, and probably some of her progeny are squatted at your feet. A few questions reveal the deep pathos of the situation. "Oh! sir, I hope you're no gaun tae pit us oot, the hoose is no sae bad; my man's been oot o' work, and we're behin' wi' the rent; hooses are awfu' scarce, and we canna afford a better ane." The certifying officers appear to such an one as destroying angels. She knows nothing of the great necessity for summary condemnation in the public interest, she only knows her poverty and despair—she only knows there are no selection of houses for her and hers. It matters little what are the proximate causes which keep her in this place at 6s. or 7s. a month. It may be misfortune or loss of work, it may be prolonged illness, it may be drink; the great fact for her is, that there are no sanitary houses at that rent within half-a-mile of her. Nothing is more painful in the line of sanitary duty than putting one's signature to a certificate of eviction in such cases. It may not be any concern of ours where such wretchedness is to find a dwelling; we may still

our hearts by the apparent reasonableness of Cain's query, "Am I my brother's keeper?" and try to persuade ourselves that, after all, it will be a blessing to those poor children we see if they are removed from such evil surroundings, no matter whither; but the task is hard, and yearly becoming harder, in the absence of suitable abodes.

Private persons will not build to house poor people. Poor-houses do not meet the cases that are not quite destitute, though poor, and so such folk are worse off than the almost destitute in all respects but the possession of liberty. It must be stated that freedom of will to do as they like keeps thousands of our "submerged tenth" in the hovels they inhabit. This is an undoubted and proven fact of civic experience, and the realisation of it "puzzles the will" of even the most progressive of our reformers in industrial housing. That "eternal spirit of the chainless mind" instils within the bosom of savage and civilised alike the feeling to which Pope gave expression—

> "Give me again my hollow tree,
> A crust of bread and liberty."

Again and again I have experienced the truth that this spirit dwells within many of the rotten dwellings of Glasgow. Many of their inhabitants do not want anything that savours of regulation in their habitations or in their conduct. If the great majority of our slum dwellers showed a tendency to become amenable to certain more or less elastic rules as to occupancy, cleanliness, regularity, and general behaviour, half the difficulty of their housing would disappear. But they do not want to feel restraint of any kind; no prying caretaker, no inquisitive janitor, must be near to note the brawling house, or the midnight wanderer staggering to his door. So you can easily perceive that any very extensive scheme of building for these folks, carried out, say, in the outskirts of the city, even with free tramways to their doors, might end in financial disaster. Still, after most careful enquiry, I am with "General" Booth in his opinion that about 50 per cent. of them are respectable; and what I mean by "respectable"

is, that, with many egregious faults and weaknesses, at least half of our poorer classes wish to be in a position to live clean, wholesome, sanitary lives. How is this to be accomplished in a city such as ours, where unsavoury conditions in many directions abound?—a terrible legacy of the private selfishness which was allowed scope and development 40 or 50 years ago.

Much has been done during the past 20 years to ameliorate the state of our humbler classes. No one knows more of this grand work, nor has done more for the poor, than our Chairman. In one direction alone—that of providing proper sanitary conveniences—not less, I am sure, than £120,000 has been spent by proprietors in that time; and the supply of sinks and water in thousands of houses which formerly had none has also been proceeding quietly, much to the joy and comfort of those recipients who in previous years had to share with four or five others the abomination known as a "jawbox" on the stair landing, and a common privy in the court. Of course, rents have gone up accordingly, but I have invariably found that the extra sixpence or a shilling a month is not grudged for the great boon of a private sink, and the use of a convenient water-closet under lock and key. None but those who have spent days in the slums can adequately realise the difference it makes when an ashpit can no longer with truth be called a midden. To be in one of these midden-courts when the satellite of cleansing is busy at his operations can only compare with the experience of poor Falstaff in Mrs. Ford's buck-basket, "That *there* is the rankest compound of villainous smell that ever offended nostril." The midden, even in its undisturbed state, if the weather be mild, "smells to heaven" every hour of the day, and no housewife with any remnant of an olfactory nerve will open her window if it be 15 feet from it. Many courts in our city, I regret to say, are still disgustingly odorous and unhealthful. Where poverty dwells, human progress is slow. It seems to be one of our social necessities that, in the struggle for a sanitary existence, the poor must attain to

what is needful only through official action overthrowing the selfishness of individualism. Our present curse in this city is that, as a rule, the private owner of slum property won't move except under the first lash of the law. He wants an official notice. He does not seem to see that the voluntary spending of money upon such sanitary improvements as I have indicated would do much to save his property for years against a more drastic law which, in its present condition, is hourly hanging over it. I have no hesitation in addressing such, as Conrade addressed Dogberry, the City Officer of Messina—"Away! you are an ass!"

A slum without modern sanitary conveniences is a very different thing from a slum or closely packed area with water-closets, sinks, and water supply in each house, and well-paved courts. For the former, early condemnation is sure; for the latter, expectation of life is increased by tenfold.

As to the Corporation building labourers' dwellings in various parts of the city I have already, in a lecture last year, given my opinion. I then went as carefully as I could into the facts and finances surrounding the erection and control of large blocks of this class of property held in the City of Glasgow both by the Corporation and by private owners. From these figures it can be easily proved that a modern and comfortable house, containing 1,600 feet of free space, in a block or tenement, and the use of sufficient land for a court or back green, with washing-house, water-closet, &c., can be rented to a labourer without loss for 1s. 11¼d. per week.

It is rather a strange coincidence that this sum, or £5 per annum, is exactly the rent which is being paid on the average at the present time by the tenants of single apartments in the back lands of our city, but in their case this payment is for 1,250 cubic feet, instead of for 1,600.

We hear much in these days as to the solution of the problem—"How can the labourer, working-man, poor person, or any individual earning from 18s. to 25s. per week, obtain the tenancy of a sanitary house at a rent within his means,

or about ten per cent. of his weekly wage, without loss to the proprietor?"

The problem has been put differently by different persons. For instance, here how it is put by the Right Hon. A. B. Forwood, M.P., of Liverpool. He says—"The problem to be solved is, how best can we accommodate the industrial classes at *a rental of one shilling per week per room?*" After putting it thus, he proceeds—"This shilling rental is the all-important factor, for no man with a family ought to occupy less than three rooms, and 3s. is as much as the average Liverpool workman can afford to pay. 3s. per week returns £5 per house per annum to the owner, and no private person will build cottages costing £150 upon such a return."*

The problem set in this way seems to me, however, to be too vague as to accommodation, and to imply rather much as to the necessities of the case. What is a room? must always be a question, and it is also a question whether the labourer needs a cottage with three rooms. If the labourer requires a cottage of three rooms, then his proper housing is, from an economic point of view, impossible, unless he is obtaining financial aid from some members of his household. I make bold to assert it cannot be done, even were he to get his ground for nothing. What, on the average, does the labourer require to dwell in? From a very recent enquiry into his actual necessities in Glasgow (which enquiry comprised 5,500 houses), I find that here each family occupying a one-apartment house number $3\frac{1}{2}$ on the average, and in the two-apartment houses there are $4\frac{1}{2}$; so that in the first case, at our present standard of occupancy, or 400 cubic feet for adults, and 200 for children under ten, the occupiers of our present one-apartment houses require 1,400 cubic feet of air-space. At the same ratio the tenant of the two-apartment house occupies, I find, 1,800 cubic feet; so in presenting the following facts before you, I have taken the mean between these two, or a house of 1,600 cubic feet. This allows for the father

* Paper on "The Housing of the Working Classes," by H. Percy Boulnois. *Journal of the Sanitary Institute*, Vol. XV., Part IV., page 620.

and mother, and four children under 10 years. Let us carefully enquire how such a family can be housed at the rent I have named, viz., 1s. 11¼d. per week, which may be taken to represent one-tenth of the worker's weekly wage.

In offering you some brief calculations on the subject, I shall not depart from actual experience, but will base all I am going to say on figures taken from four well-known properties in the city. These are—(1) the Corporation property at 45 St. James' Road; (2) their property at 130 Saltmarket (back land); (3) their property at 74 Kirk Street, Calton; and (4) the property of the Glasgow Workmen's Dwellings Company, Limited, at Cathedral Court, in Rottenrow.

On consulting the lecture I delivered last year on the Housing of the Labouring Classes, I find that the tenants of these four blocks of houses pay exactly 11s. 10d. each per annum per 1,000 cubic feet occupied, as ground rent, estimating the cost of the ground to have been 30s. per square yard, and the interest required on the price of the ground 3 per cent.

Similarly, the payment by the tenants yearly for interest, at 4½ per cent., on the cost of these four blocks, I find to be £1 10s. 10d. per 1,000 cubic feet occupied.

Now let us capitalise these two sums, viz., the ground rent, 11s. 10d., at 3 per cent., and the building rent, £1 10s. 10d., at 4½ per cent. I assume here, you will notice, that it would not be reasonable to charge the tenants with more than 3 per cent. on the price of the ground, as ground does not, as a substance, depreciate, and so does not require to be redeemed, therefore no sinking fund nor reserve fund is necessary to be provided. On the other hand, 4½ per cent. is charged against the cost of the buildings, made up by 3 per cent. to the capitalist and 1½ per cent. for sinking fund and reserve.

The first sum amounts to £19 14s. 5¼d., and the second sum to £34 3s. 4d., which sums may be safely expended for ground and for building for every 1,000 cubic feet of free air-space given to the labourer; or, taken together, a total sum of £53 17s. 9¼d. per 1,000 cubic feet.

I find that the experience gained at the four properties I have named shows that 4¾d. is required per 1,000 cubic feet

occupied per week to cover management, taxes, insurance, and repairs. What we find, therefore, is—(*a*) that a capital sum of £53 17s. 9¼d. per 1,000 cubic feet of living space *must not be exceeded for land and building;* and (*b*) that, for the same space, 4¾d. must be charged per week as above on each occupier. It is now a simple count in proportion to discover that the tenant of 1,600 cubic feet must pay 1s. 11¼d. per week for his accommodation, so as to leave the Corporation or other proprietor free from risk of loss so far as he is concerned.

These facts, drawn from our own experience here, show how illusory it is to put this problem on the idyllic platform of the three-roomed cottage for our labourer at his present wage. It is, like "the poet's dream," alas! too beautiful to be true—too high to be attainable in this interest-loving, money-grabbing world. I am, I admit, not one who believes the present-day labourer in our country can pay unaided 3s. per week for his lodging, or that private owners can house them healthily at or near one-tenth of their income. I agree with Mr. Boulnois where, in the lecture previously referred to, he says—"The dilapidated and dirty condition of the tenement blocks which are in the hands of individual owners, and the great losses which those owners undoubtedly suffer from low-class and unmanageable tenants, seem to point to the conclusion that such blocks should be owned and managed by powerful bodies, companies, and corporations, who could, and would, keep both the buildings and the tenants in fairly decent order. The cheapest of cheap dwellings are unquestionably wanted; they can only be supplied by the strongest of strong hands."

The truth of the above assertion has quite recently been proved in Glasgow by the erection of ten tenements, consisting of 68 single and 85 two-roomed houses, in Carntyne Road, Haghill. The Corporation entrusted the designing of this important block to Messrs. Frank Burnet & Boston, architects in the city, who inform me that the whole has been completed, with water-closets, washing-houses, &c., at the low rate of 4·1 pence

per cubic foot overall measurement. The cubic measurement is 829,514 feet, and the total cost £14,425, of which £243 was spent in underbuilding, which, from the peculiar character of the site, was found to be necessary.

The two-apartment houses vary in size from 3,426 to 3,548 cubic feet, and the single apartment I measured came out at 1,735. The monthly rents of the two former dwellings are respectively 15s. 8d. and 16s. 8d., including water rate and stair gas, or at the very low rate to the labourer of 1s. and 1s. 1¼d. per 1,000 cubic feet per week. These are the lowest rates for good sanitary houses in this city, if not in the kingdom.

The monthly rent of the single-apartment house above referred to, including water and stair gas, is 9s. 10d. per month, or 1s. 3¾d. per 1,000 cubic feet per week, which is only beaten by the Corporation single-roomed houses at 45 St. James' Road, where the rate is 14·4 pence (this property is on the balcony system).

Houses of a similar class in the immediate vicinity owned by private proprietors come out at 1s. 3¾d. per 1,000 feet per week for the two-apartment houses, and 1s. 7¾d. for single apartments; or, say, 3d. per 1,000 per week more in the one case and 4d. more in the other, or differences of £2 5s. and £1 9s. 5d. per annum respectively.

As these dwellings have quite recently been occupied, it is not possible to present a complete financial statement, but I have no doubt there will be a balance on the right side.

Lord Provost Chisholm, in his lecture before the Philosophical Society at the close of 1895, touched upon the vital question of who among us benefited or would benefit by schemes of improvement and the sanitary housing of our labouring classes, if these are to be carried out by the Corporation in the future. The question seems to be answered by another question—Who all are at present suffering, both in pocket and in amenity, from the sad state of our present slums? Who pay the £42,824 expended annually in Glasgow for our sick poor and destitute in

hospitals and poorhouses, and our degraded ones who regularly do their dreary days in jail? Every inhabitant suffers, be he landlord or tenant, and he most who is unfortunate enough to be both. Consequently, it seems to me, in this broader sense, every upright citizen, apart from Christian impulse or hygienic considerations, should rejoice to bear his share of the work of radical improvement, if this work would tend to reduce the yearly drain on our resources to which I have just alluded.

I do not think there can be divided opinions as to the final result of a sweet and wholesome city. The ill-regulated lives—whose actions eventuate in destructiveness, disorder, and filth—would disappear when their present habitations were no more. No landlord, no company, no corporate management, would take them in, nor have anything to do with them. The sanitary city would be no city for them, and in it, I believe, the dread we at present experience in the face of epidemics would be for ever banished.

But that appears as yet only as a prospect in the distant future. The Glasgow Corporation has done great deeds, and even now is in the midst of uprooting slums, and rebuilding homes of comfort and health for the people. We all rejoice in this, and I am sure the majority of us are prepared to believe that, by the constant steady pursuit of a sanitary building policy for labouring people, the Corporation and its democracy will become more and more united in the furtherance of the vast municipal enterprises which are foreshadowed. The Corporation as the careful, judicious landlord, and the labourer as the thrifty, law-abiding tenant, would bring about a "consummation devoutly to be wished," and establish an economic transformation, which would tend not only to bind their interests together, but also to inspire both with a zeal to see our great city one of the most progressive and among the healthiest in the empire.

8th December, 1900.