

**A history of English philanthropy : from the dissolution of the monasteries to the taking of the first census / by B. Kirkman Gray.**

**Contributors**

Gray, B. Kirkman 1862-1907.

**Publication/Creation**

London : P.S. King & son, 1905.

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# *A HISTORY OF ENGLISH PHILANTHROPY*



*B. Kirkman Gray*



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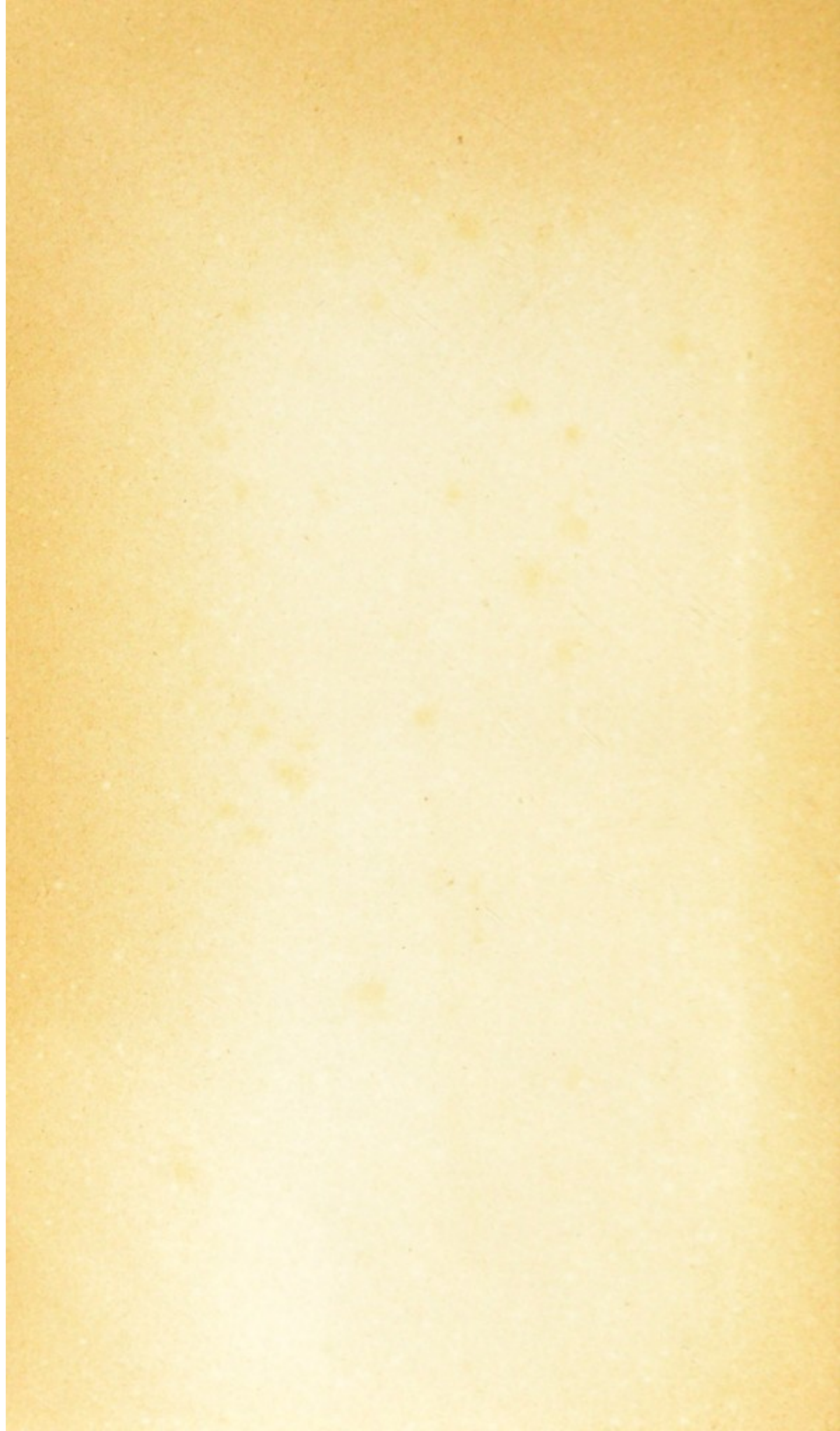




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A HISTORY OF ENGLISH  
PHILANTHROPY









# A HISTORY OF ENGLISH PHILANTHROPY

FROM THE DISSOLUTION OF  
THE MONASTERIES TO THE  
TAKING OF THE FIRST CENSUS

BY

B. KIRKMAN GRAY

LONDON:  
P. S. KING & SON  
ORCHARD HOUSE  
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1905

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## PREFACE.

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PHILANTHROPY plays a considerable part in our social economy, and a still larger one in the popular imagination. It is urged as a religious duty by the churches; it is proposed as an honourable occupation to those who wish to do something for their poorer or less healthy neighbours. The impulse, of course, is not a new one, but side by side with it we can trace a growing conviction of the need for careful scrutiny of the thing, whatever it is, which it is proposed to do. This critical reflection itself is not altogether new—springs from a large experience of the extreme difficulty of achieving what is likely to be permanently beneficial, and the facility with which mischief may be done. But this experience gives rise to a not infrequently expressed doubt whether philanthropy have indeed any useful function to fulfil. There is a tendency to pass beyond the criticism of particular benevolent projects to an examination of the nature of philanthropy itself. What fresh insight, men are asking, does philanthropy yield into the secret of the problems of distress? How far is it conducive to social well being? Is it in any way inimical to this? In what relation does it stand to other ameliorative activities of an evolving society? Such an enquiry seems to deserve serious consideration and to be of sufficient importance to justify a comprehensive investigation of the character of philanthropic action in general. The one question, in effect, into which all the others resolve themselves is this:—"What is the meaning and worth of philanthropy?"



This question, which is in the nature of a challenge, had fashioned itself in my mind as one to which I should endeavour to supply an answer. I had become aware, in the course of several years' work among the unfortunate subjects of philanthropic activity, of what is, of course, a matter of common knowledge, viz., that philanthropy does not entirely fulfil its aim, since the evils which it seeks to allay still continue, and many of them in an increasing degree.

Now philanthropy is something more than a social ideal; it has become a national institution. It has acquired, as all institutions must do, a great weight of inertia, so that, while it is no doubt modifiable in response to changing ideas, it is not readily susceptible of any radical alteration, whether for better or for worse. It exists, and in very much its present form it is likely to exist for a considerable time to come. However that may be, it has had a long history in the past, and if we retrace this history we ought to be able to throw some light on its present meaning and problems. In the expectation that this would be the case, I turned back on the past with such questions as these:—"What at different times has philanthropy regarded as its proper task? By what means has it sought to pursue it? How far has it fulfilled its aim? What proportion did the work accomplished, or the aim proposed, bear to the work that needed to be done?" I could find no modern book which gave me the information I desired, and accordingly it became necessary to interrogate for myself the actors in the philanthropic world. The knowledge thus gained seemed to be full of interest, illustrating as it does, the manners and social life alike of the thriving and the distressed classes. At the same time the importance of its bearing on the evolution of philanthropic thought and practice proved to be even greater than I had anticipated. Before entering on a critical examination of the present-day



problems, it seemed necessary to write the history of modern English philanthropy. And the present volume is the result.

The choice of the period of the dissolution of the monasteries as a starting-point is convenient for two reasons. It was then that modern problems began to formulate themselves with great precision. And charity was then ceasing to be under the immediate direction and tutelage of the Church. Catholic charity is closely connected with the doctrine of *pœnitentia*. The effect of almsgiving on the soul of the donor was theoretically more important than its effect on the body of the recipient. This motive for charity did not cease with the Reformation: men have continued to give of their substance to the poor in recompense or contrition for the sin of their souls. It would hardly be possible to write about pre-Reformation philanthropy without considering this subject of motive. It is quite easy to do so for the post-Reformation period when, although this motive was still operative, it was ceasing to be explicit. I do not enter here into the deeply interesting study of the hidden springs of charitable impulse, but confine myself to the more objective study of social effects, to describing the achievement of the executive will, not probing the greater or less worth of soul which may accompany it. I cannot, indeed, avoid the thoughts and feelings of philanthropists, but when I dwell on them, it is for their bearing on the nature of the work done and its greater or less social efficacy.

The reason for bringing the history to an end with the close of the eighteenth century may not be so obvious, but is really of the same kind as suggests its starting-point. To have begun earlier would have involved us in questions of theological interest, to have continued into the nineteenth century would have involved matters of present-day controversy, and led us from a description of what was to a discussion of what ought to be. The period I have chosen is remote



enough from our own for the reader to be more interested in the history than in the fact of his agreement or disagreement with the opinions of the writer. And in the present volume it is a description of the past in which I wish him to be interested. I do not, indeed, refrain entirely from indicating my own judgment. The reflections of an author may serve sometimes to relieve the narrative. But such reflections are by the way ; the main purpose of the book is to describe things as they have been. At the same time it should yield information of events and discover laws of development which will be of service when we turn to modern controversies. In other words, the knowledge of things as they are is a stage in the progress towards a true perception of their worth.

It has not always been easy to decide what to include or to leave out, because philanthropy, in common with other terms in general use, is difficult, or more probably incapable, of strict definition. We may perhaps say safely that it proceeds from the free will of the agent, and not in response to any claim of legal right on the part of the recipient. Such a description will include the English poor law, for although under this law the state assumes the duty of relief, there is no accompanying right in the pauper to enforce it. The distinction is rather a fine one for practical purposes ; but it is worth remembering that the poor law was in its inception, and has been since regarded as a charity. It might be called a quasi-philanthropy. At some parts of our period the relations between private philanthropy and this state philanthropy have been close and important, and when this is the case, I have trenched to some extent on the history of the poor law because it illustrates our more immediate subject. For the most part, however, I have followed pretty closely the popular usage of the word. Action for which the state has definitely made itself responsible is not generally



regarded as philanthropic. It may conceivably be better, but that is beside the question. In the main, we shall be concerned with the actions of private persons, and with corporate policy only when the interactions of the two are numerous.

The greater part of philanthropy may be said to consist in contributions of money, service, or thought, such as the recipient has no strict claim to demand, and the doer is not compelled to render. Strict claim, for there is a larger consideration, whether the fact of a common humanity does not itself constitute a claim of right. Such a claim, however, in the absence of any power of enforcing it, must remain exceedingly vague. In some dim sub-conscious recognition of such a vaguely outlined right as this, all philanthropic action has its roots. And it may well be that philanthropy has failed of perfect success, just because it has allowed the conception of humanity to remain an indeterminate and feebly operative one.

It is not always possible to discover any clear end and purpose in philanthropic action, but so far as it possesses an aim more comprehensive than the relief of a transitory emotion, it may perhaps be described as a process of modifying the existing distribution of wealth in the interests of the more unfortunate classes, and of doing this with a view to improvement in the quality of life.

These remarks are no more than roughly descriptive ; but they serve to indicate the principle of selection adopted in the following pages. The period which I am about to describe may be divided into three sections of very unequal length. The first of these comprises almost exactly a hundred years, and closes with the outbreak of the strife between Charles I. and his Parliament. During this time it was necessary to build up anew the whole structure of charitable relief, and to adapt it to changed circumstances. The interest centres on the early perplexity and failure to do this ; in the recognition of unemploy-



ment as the central element in the problem, in the attempts to cope with this difficulty. The second period nearly coincides with the ascendancy of the Puritans. It is marked by the abandonment of what had been gained in the earlier years, and did not call forth any new philanthropic principle. This is no more than might be anticipated from a time of civil war. The third period lasted for about a century and a quarter. The insight obtained and then lost was not regained. The cause of poverty and distress was ignored. But this period is signalised by the discovery of a new philanthropic instrument of first-class importance. The eighteenth century is the century above all of the voluntary subscriber and the private philanthropic institution. This new method led to great and very various extensions of philanthropic enterprise, and the stream of charity which had formerly flowed in a few channels was then diffused in very many.

I have already used a considerable part of the subject-matter of this history in a course of five lectures on "The Philanthropy of the Eighteenth Century: its importance in relation to modern problems," delivered at the London School of Economics and Political Science. But the treatment in this volume is fuller than was possible in the lectures, and does not adopt the lecture form.

I take this opportunity of recognising the kindness of Mr. Sidney Webb, who found time to read the MS., and of thanking both him and Mrs. Webb for their valuable suggestions. I am indebted also to Mr. Will Reason for assistance in reading the proofs, and would recall to his memory the help I have derived from many conversations with him while the book was yet merely a plan of a thing that was to be.

It is unnecessary to say much here as to my authorities, since they are fully indicated in the notes. For the earlier chapters I have gained most from the reports of the endowed charities. The reports reflect



the mind of countless obscure people, and contain in many instances the actual wills of the donors. The thirty or forty volumes are a great source of knowledge as to the ways and thoughts of our ancestors, especially of that middling class which appears so little in history. Then I have drawn freely, and especially for the later period, on the reports and accounts of many charitable societies and institutions. The library of the British Museum contains a large collection of these documents, which are usually anonymous publications, and are catalogued under the town and the institution to which they refer. They are for the most part quite artless productions of no literary pretensions, but they enable us almost to hear the board-table talk of their authors. The pamphlet literature of the period has also yielded much pertinent illustration. Among modern works I may mention two—Miss E. M. Leonard's "Early History of English Poor Relief," which at certain points has been of the very greatest service; and Professor Cunningham's "Growth of English Industry and Commerce," which is one of my constant companions. It is perhaps superfluous to express a debt which every writer feels to the "Dictionary of National Biography." I have ventured to refer to it by the initials D. N. B. One other abbreviation may need explanation. The letters R. S. B. P. stand for the "Society for Bettering the Conditions and Increasing the Comforts of the Poor."

B. KIRKMAN GRAY.

HAMPSTEAD, 1905.





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# A HISTORY OF ENGLISH PHILANTHROPY.

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## CHAPTER I.

### CHARITY AND THE ELIZABETHAN POOR LAW.

IN the early part of the sixteenth century the devout people of London, as well men as women, were accustomed, especially on Fridays, to walk out of the city and along the pleasant road by the Houndsditch, where there was then a row of small two-storied houses with gardens in the rear. The inmates made preparation for these periodic visits, "every poor man or woman lying in their bed within their window, which was towards the street, open so low that every man might see them, a clean linen cloth lying in their window, and a pair of beads, to show that there lay a bed-ridden body, unable but to pray only." Towards the middle of the century, a gun foundry was established in this road. Brokers, sellers of old clothes, and others, set up business there; the homely cottages were in part displaced, and "the poor bed-ridden people were worn out."<sup>1</sup> In all probability these bedesmen of Houndsditch are among the people of whom Brinklow was thinking in 1545. He had grown indignant at the contrast between the wealth of London, that "flower of the world," and the number and misery of its poor. Many, he tells us, begged from door to door, and others were not able to do this, but could only "lye in their

<sup>1</sup> Stow's "Survey," p. 49 (ed. Thoms, 1842).



houses in most grievous paynes and dye for lack of ayde of the riche."<sup>1</sup> In any case this description suits the later condition of Stow's bedesmen. At the one period the road had been such that kindly disposed men and women were pleased to walk along it. Their enjoyment was no doubt increased by giving an alms to those who were in distress. Then the promenade ceased to be an attractive one, fewer visitors came, the inmates no longer looked forward with hope to the approach of Friday; perhaps the clean white cloth was no longer laid in the window, while neglected and forlorn they expected no longer any relief but death. This story of the bed-ridden poor is in many respects an epitome of the history of charity. The actual need of the poor was a secondary circumstance. The ebb and flow of philanthropic impulse resulted from adventitious causes.

### 1. THE TRANSITION PERIOD.

The transition from an age of status to one of contract may be, as political theorists assume, a necessary movement in the progress of civilisation, but it certainly does not take place without a great deal of that friction which, in human affairs, is a euphemism for suffering. It is the distress that accompanied the transition that gives its character to the poverty of the sixteenth century. Old methods of industry and ways of life were giving place to new, and with startling rapidity. The change did not begin in the sixteenth century; it has a long and painful earlier history.<sup>2</sup> Into that history it is not now necessary to enter; it is sufficient to note that it was in the latter part of the reign of Henry VIII. that all those causes which had tended to the break-up of the old customary order were sharply accentuated, and other causes, some of them the result of the arbitrary mind of the King, began to operate. By the year 1539, the old doctrine of social hierarchy, carrying with it a doctrine of social responsibility, had given place to the rule of contract and

<sup>1</sup> Brinklow, "Lamentation of a Christian," p. 90 (E. E. T. S.).

<sup>2</sup> The details may be seen in, *e.g.*, Mrs. Green's "Town Life in the Fifteenth Century."



keen bargaining. The common people of the realm were unable to adapt themselves to these changes of the commercial mechanism. The sheep farmers and enclosers acted promptly, the habits of a people alter but slowly. The result was social friction throughout the country. An outline of the resultant poverty must precede any judgment on the value of the charitable and legislative efforts made to relieve it. For the difficulty of obtaining a livelihood, either by industry or through the regular channels of charity, became so great as to be almost intolerable. There was an alarming increase in the number of vagrants, and this "ragged rablement of rakehelles," as Harman calls them, was only a symptom of a much larger mass of less noisy poverty. The evil of vagabondage was obvious to the governing classes, which recognised at once the necessity of measures of police to suppress it; it was only with slow and timid steps that they discovered and sought to obviate the deeper mischief which underlay vagabondage.

## 2. VAGRANCY.

Vagrancy was no new offence in the sixteenth century, and had long before called forth legislative action.<sup>1</sup> But the frequency, the savagery, and the failure of the enactments of this period suggest that it had now become much more serious.<sup>2</sup> Thus the people calling themselves Egyptians are banished on pain of felony; vagabonds are to be successively whipped, burnt through the gristle of the ear, and executed as felons, while even impotent persons who begged without license were to be punished with lash or stocks.<sup>2</sup> The Act 1 Ed. VI. c. 3, reciting that idleness and vagabondage are the mother and root of all thefts and evil acts, and that former statutes have not been successful, partly through the foolish pity and mercy of the authorities, enacts that every runagate servant is to be adjudged a slave. This law also proved futile, whether from foolish pity and mercy or

<sup>1</sup> See *e.g.*, 23 Edw. III. c. 7; 7 Rich. II. c. 5; 11 Hen. VII. c. 2.

<sup>2</sup> 22 Hen. VIII. c. 10 and c. 12; *cf.* 27 Hen. VIII. c. 25.



some other reason, and was in its turn followed by others.<sup>1</sup>

The state of things suggested by this nervous precipitancy of legislation is confirmed by the writers of the period. There is great wretchedness and poverty, as witness the beggars who are more numerous than elsewhere in Christendom, or than in England in times past.<sup>2</sup> Harman, whose magisterial indignation is tempered with a humorous amusement, devotes several years to a study of this vagrant class, and publishes his results in 1566 or 1567. He confers "dayly with many of these wyly wanderars of both sortes, as well men and wemmen, as boyes and gyrles," from whom "with fayre flatteringe wordes, money, and good chere" he learns the trade secrets of "these rablement of rascals that raunges about al the costes."<sup>3</sup> At nights they lie in the farm buildings, and if the door is locked they break it open and are found sometimes to the number of forty "upright men with their Doxes together at one time."<sup>4</sup>

From time to time the funeral of some notable person, at which, for the good of his soul, a dole was distributed to all the poor who were present, attracted a vast concourse. Thus, upon the death of the Earl of Shrewsbury there were present on the 13th January, 1591, "by the report of such as served the dole unto them, the number of 8,000. And they thought that there were almost as many more that could not be served through their unruliness. Yea, the press was so great that divers were slain and many hurt."<sup>5</sup> On a similar occasion, "after the last Duke of Buckingham was beheaded," the crowd was feasted on "a great fat oxe sod out in Furmenty for them, with bread and drinke abundantly," and every one had in addition the dole of 2*d*.<sup>6</sup> These were rare and memorable junketings; but the same attraction was con-

<sup>1</sup> 1 & 2 P. & M. c. 4; 5 Eliz. c. 3; 14 Eliz. c. 5.

<sup>2</sup> Starkey, "Dialogue between Cardinal Pole and Thomas Lupset" (E. E. T. S.), p. 89.

<sup>3</sup> "A Caveat or Warening for Common Cursetors," pp. 20-21.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 78.

<sup>5</sup> I. C. Cox, "Three Centuries of Derbyshire Annals" (quoting from Cole, Brit. Mus., MSS. xii.) ; II., p. 136.

<sup>6</sup> Harman, p. 22.



stantly presented on a smaller scale. In the volumes of sixteenth century wills printed by the Surtees Society there are frequent entries such as these—"Y<sup>e</sup> all ye poore people being at my buriall have everye one a farthyng bread;"<sup>1</sup> "To the poore people at my buryall and for the dyner x x marks."<sup>2</sup>

Many of these vagabonds who wandered through the country pilfering and obtaining gifts by threats, and who congregated to consume the funeral doles, deserve the vigorous epithets applied to them by Harman and others. At the same time, if we wish to understand the social significance of the vagrant class and the nature of the philanthropic problem of the period, we must remember that the poor were in greater penury than ever of old, and that they were forced to beg because, as a contemporary states, they could not bring up their children in honest labour.<sup>3</sup> The keen penetration of this judgment, which finds an economic cause for poverty and vagrancy, is more noteworthy when it is contrasted with the action of the legislators of the period. People were not for the most part beggars by choice; for, although it was a fairly lucrative trade, the discomforts and pains and penalties attached to it were not slight. Neither was this floating vagrant population a homogeneous class. There was a large professional element; there was also a great number of honest poor unwilling to beg but without any other resource than begging, and in the nature of things the former class must have been constantly recruited from the latter. It is worth noticing in this connection that the real ill of the destitute, but would-be industrious poor, were simulated for professional purposes by those who had no longer any intention to return to the ranks of respectable labour. The following are some of the names and characters assumed by different classes of vagabonds:—

Nichol Hartles, *i.e.*, he that faineth himself sicke.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "Richmondshire Wills," p. 37.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 206.

<sup>3</sup> "A Supplication of the Poore Commons" (E. E. T. S.), p. 79 (perhaps by Brinklow; so the Editor, J. M. Cooper).

<sup>4</sup> Awdeley, "The Fraternity of Vacabondes," p. 13.



## 6 A HISTORY OF ENGLISH PHILANTHROPY.

The Counterfeit Crankes, *i.e.*, those who deeply dissemble the falling sickness.<sup>1</sup>

The Abraham Man, *i.e.*, one who faynes himself to have been mad.<sup>2</sup>

These counterfeits were counterfeits of reality. There were sick people, epileptics, madmen, in large numbers, for whom no provision was made. As early as about 1535, so we learn from Robert Copland,

“ I have sene at sondry hospytalles  
That many have lyne dead without the walles,  
And for lack of socour have died wretchedly,  
Unto your foundacyon, I think, contrary,  
Much people resort here, and have lodging,  
But yet I marvel greatly of one thyng,  
That in the night so many lodge without.”<sup>3</sup>

But the beggarly imitations were not only of the diseased poor; we find also:—

The Whypiacke, *i.e.*, fayninge either shypwracke, or spoyled by pyrates.<sup>4</sup>

The Ruffler, *i.e.*, an ex-soldier or serving-man.<sup>5</sup>

Here again we find the prevalence of unrelieved sufferings and the lack of industrial employment for the honest man proving an opportunity for the rogue. Few would have been found to relieve the whipjack or the ruffler had there not been numerous shipwrecked and discharged mariners, ex-soldiers and serving men who could not find work. The people who gave alms knew that good men were destitute, but were unable to distinguish the true from the false appearance.

### 3. POVERTY.

Vagabondage was merely a symptom of the disorganisation into which English society had fallen by the middle of the sixteenth century. The cause of poverty and therein the

<sup>1</sup> Harman, p. 51.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 3; cf. Harrison, “Description of England,” Bk. II. c. 10. They poured corrosives on their flesh, and adopted other means to improve their dramatic get-up.

<sup>3</sup> Quoted by Furnival in notes to Stubbes “Anatomie.”

<sup>4</sup> Harman, p. 48.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 29.



nature of the philanthropic problem must be sought for in the rapidly increasing difficulty of gaining a livelihood by industry. The explanation of this fact is not usually apparent to the contemporary observers; yet all the witnesses agree as to the gravity of the situation. Rents were higher;<sup>1</sup> prices which were absolutely higher had also increased very seriously in proportion to wages, which advanced but slowly; in many parts of the country work had become more scarce through the numerous enclosures of common land and the amalgamation of farms consequent on the change from the growing of corn to the rearing of sheep, from ploughland to pasture land.<sup>2</sup> (a) Brinklow, a zealous Protestant, and, therefore, no friend of the monks, is forced to admit that they were better landlords than their successors, the "temporal tyrannys" who are not content to let lands at the old price, "so that the pore man that laboryth and toyleth upon it, and is hys slave, is not able to lyve."<sup>3</sup> A later writer divides society into the poor and the "poore-makers," and among these latter he includes the landlords. Stow gives an instance of what was not infrequently going on in the story of Griseld, the daughter of Stephen Kirkton, who had divers proper tenements in London, kept them in good repair, took no fines, and did not raise the rent, "but whether that favour did overlive her funeral, the tenants now can best declare the contrary."<sup>4</sup> A good but impossible suggestion is put into the mouth of Cardinal Pole, "that al such rentys as be inhannsyd by memory of man schold be rebatyed, and set to the old stynt."<sup>5</sup>

(b) Of course the capitalistic farmer recouped or more than recouped himself from the enhanced price of his produce. It was on the poor man who produced little or not

<sup>1</sup> See Thorold Rogers, that prices increased from 1:2½, wages only from 1:1½.

<sup>2</sup> For a vivid description of this evil condition as it existed at a rather earlier period cf. More's "Utopia."

<sup>3</sup> "Complaint," c. 2.

<sup>4</sup> "Survey," p. 57.

<sup>5</sup> Starkey, "Dialogue," p. 175.



at all for the market that the rise in cost of living came as an aggravation of his difficulty in the matter of rent. "Such a price of corne continueth" writes Harrison,<sup>1</sup> "that the artificer and poore laboring man is not able to reach unto it, but is driven to content himselfe with horse corne, I meane beanes, peason, otes, tares and lintels." The same phenomenon repeats itself in the case of luxuries. "In times past, we had sugar for fourepence the pound, that now at the writing of this treatise (1577) is well worth halfe a crowne, raisons or corints for a penie that now are holden at sixpence."<sup>2</sup>

(c) Serious and widespread distress is revealed in the enclosure of commons, the turning of ploughland into pasture land, for hard as was the lot of those who managed to maintain themselves in the ranks of labour, it was not so grievous as that of those who were forced out of those ranks. It is these outcasts of the industrial system who form the sorry crowd of men whose misfortunes proved the opportunity of the vagabond, and who by degrees were themselves compelled to recruit that army of poor parasites. The complaints are loud and many of the reckless manner in which men who became unemployed through a social revolution were left to perish. Deer are stocked, or wild and savage beasts are kept where men should have been maintained; but neither the game nor the game owners are moved by the cry that "the erth is the poor mannes as well as the rich."<sup>3</sup>

To come to particulars, we are told that in Oxfordshire there are forty ploughs less than in the time of Henry VIII., and that a plough supports six people. "Nowe, these

<sup>1</sup> "Description of England," Bk. ii., c. 6.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, Bk. ii., c. 5.

<sup>3</sup> Brinklow, "Complaint," c. 4; cf. Harrison, "Description," Bk. ii., c. 19.

The indignation against the mischief wrought by a class of wealthy parasites is nowhere more finely expressed than by Sir Thomas More:—"Riche men not only by private fraud but also by commen lawes do every day pluck and snatche awaye from the poore some parte of their daily living"; and to this enormity they have "geven the name of justice." "Utopia," p. 159.



twelfscore persons had nede to have a living." Where are they to go?<sup>1</sup> Not into the neighbouring shires, for there things are in the same state. Wherefore, "we do cal for remedy" to have as many ploughs as formerly. And again, "Wher hath byn many housys and churchys" now nothing but "schypcotys and stabullys . . . generally throughout thys reame."<sup>2</sup> The complaint finds proverbial expression in the demand for one farmer one farm, or, the more sheep the fewer eggs for a penny.<sup>3</sup> The explanation given of the latter is that on sheep farms fewer labourers are needed, and accordingly the cottages go down, and the cottagers who had kept poultry are obliged to shift.<sup>4</sup> Even when the poor do not become homeless they are subject to tiresome exactions, as when the purveyor takes the poor butter-woman's produce, which is worth three halfpence, "for i penny dyssh and all."<sup>5</sup>

#### 4. MONASTIC CHARITIES.

It is in this increasing cost and decreasing means of living that the causes of destitution and vagabondage are to be found. The evil was increased because just at this same period the old customary methods of poor relief were destroyed. It is perfectly true that many of the old monastic charities are open to the same criticism as must be passed on much post-reformation philanthropy, viz., that while they relieved individual poor people, they tended rather to aggravate than to diminish the state of poverty. We must not be misled by any Legend Beautiful as to the possible evil effects of giving weekly alms to eighty poor people at Carmarthen,<sup>6</sup> or of attracting a crowd of poor people every Wednesday and Friday "to the great gate of the Abbey" at Glaston.<sup>7</sup> And these promiscuous alms were always the

<sup>1</sup> "Decaye of England" (E. E. T. S.), p. 98 ff.

<sup>2</sup> Starkey, "Dialogue," p. 72.

<sup>3</sup> Brinklow, "Complaint," c. 20.

<sup>4</sup> "Decaye of England," 97.

<sup>5</sup> "Complaint," c. 6.

<sup>6</sup> Gasquet, "Hen. VIII. and the Dissolution of the Monasteries," ii., 31.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, ii., 330.



most frequent because the cheapest charity. At the same time it should be remembered that, even if the monks created, they did also relieve poverty; while much of the distress to which they ministered was a result of sickness, widowhood, or old age, which they clearly did not create and which in some way or other had to be alleviated. And when we have allowed for the incidental mischief of the system the fact remains that the poor were kept from wandering and vagrancy by this method of relief in the place where they were known. It is perhaps not unnecessary to add the truism that poverty may exist even though no efforts are made to relieve it.

The monasteries, however, were the centres of a good deal of charity of a more permanent and more useful character. "They made," says an old writer, "such provision daily for the people that stood in need thereof, as sick, sore, lame, or otherwise impotent, that none or few lacked relief in one place or another. Yea, many of them, whose revenues were sufficient thereto, made hospitals and lodgings within their own houses, wherein they kept a number of impotent persons with all necessaries for them, with persons to attend upon them."<sup>1</sup> The "few or none" in this quotation needs to be taken with caution, and unfortunately there is no reason to suppose that the provision for the impotent was generally adequate before the Dissolution. Nevertheless, Gasquet gives sufficient instances to show that it was far from uncommon. Thus at the small nunnery at Polesworth in Warwickshire, there was living as pensioner "one very old and impotent creature sometime cook of the house."<sup>2</sup> The house of the Grey Friars at Beverley served as a convalescent home. One Christopher Stapleton, "a very weak, crazed and impotent" creature was staying there at the time of the second Northern rising for change of air, as he had also "been the summer before from May till after midsummer."<sup>3</sup> The hospital at Bishopsgate was only one

<sup>1</sup> Quoted by Gasquet, ii., 500.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, ii., 17.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, ii., 137.



of many that were suppressed by the King. There were here at the time of dissolution thirty-four sick and poor, together with six canons and two sisters to attend to them.<sup>1</sup> The monasteries also served the place of hotels for travellers both rich and poor, as Aske states in his narrative to the King, "Never was in these parts (*i.e.* the Northern counties) denied either horse meat or man's meat, so that the people were greatly refreshed by the said abbeyes, where now they have no such succour."<sup>2</sup> It is true that those who received grants of the confiscated monastic property were required by the Act to provide the accustomed hospitality and service for the poor; but in most cases this duty was evaded wholly or in part.<sup>3</sup>

The flood of social distress was largely increased by the number of those who, from age or bodily infirmity, had been recipients of care and relief, and were thrown on the world resourceless. It was more seriously augmented by the vast crowd of disbanded religious, both men and women, the majority of whom were poor, who were in most cases expelled without receiving any pension. It has been estimated that the numbers thus affected were 1800 friars, over 4,700 monks and canons, and 1,560 nuns.<sup>4</sup> But this is only the smaller part of the difficulty, for those who were employed in and about the monasteries were much more numerous than the religious themselves. At Polesworth, *e.g.*, where there were fourteen nuns with an abbess and an ancess, there were eight yeomen, seventeen hinds, and nine women servants. We know, of course, that in the long run many of these would find other situations, and that some may no doubt have continued in their old positions. When we reflect, however, that in many districts employment was at this time becoming more scarce, that the conditions of work were changing, and that the prices of food were rising rapidly, we cannot avoid the reflection that the run must

<sup>1</sup> Quoted by Gasquet, ii., 511 n.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, ii., 96.

<sup>3</sup> 27 Hen. VIII. c. 28, as stated in "Gasquet," i., 311 and 458.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, ii., 323.



often have been very long, and in some cases could have had no goal but the gallows, since many thus disinherited of their livelihood must perforce have turned to criminal courses.

The evil condition of the poor, so far as the relief of their penury and provision for their infirmities is concerned, is abundantly confirmed from the pages of contemporary authors, many of whom were certainly not prejudiced on the side of the old religion, but who were compelled by what they observed to admit that, while under the old system the poor had been in some sort considered, they were under the new grievously oppressed. We are driven, therefore, to a conclusion, on which all the lines of evidence converge, that in the period following on the dissolution of the monasteries there was a very grave increase of poverty, matched by a corresponding decrease in the available means of relief.

## 5. THE PROBLEM AFTER 1539.

We have now to show how the philanthropic spirit of the latter part of the century addressed itself to its difficult task, which was nothing less than that of building anew the structure of charitable relief. The methods adopted for this purpose were various and of unequal value. There was firstly the old and ever popular form of bequest. As formerly in Catholic England, so in the later reformed population, many were found willing to dispose on their death bed for the benefit of the poor, and usually under trusts which might testify to their own benevolence, wealth they were no longer able to retain in their own possession. In addition to these were the more serious gifts for purposes of public utility which the living at once bestowed and administered "making their hands their executors." Under the influence of custom or goodwill men were never backward in giving alms to the poor at their doors, or to the chance beggar by the roadside. Then, we find in the churches centres for those special collections under briefs or letters patent which served the purpose of a rudimentary and gratuitous fire insurance. To the churches also were attached those poor's boxes which



assume greater importance than is due to their own weight, in that they proved to be the germ from which, a little later, our legal poor relief was evolved.

Side by side with these and similar forms of voluntary charity we shall trace the corporate action of the towns in administering relief, at first only quasi voluntary and afterwards as a matter of civic obligation enforced on due occasion by the pains of law. It will appear that none of these efforts were adequate, for while the system of voluntary charity carried in itself inherent defects that quite explain its failure to meet a large, continuous and general need, experience was to discover that the solution of the sixteenth century problem of poverty did not fall within the scope of any system of relief which was not also supplemented by measures for the prevention of poverty. Destitution was found to be largely the result of unemployment. The efforts of charity and the policy of the towns, so far as they brought this fact into prominence, prepared the way for the important series of legislative enactments which signalise the close of the reign of Elizabeth.

## 6. METHODS OF CHARITY.

(a) *The Aged and Impotent*.—The best charitable assistance for the aged was that provided for them in almshouses. The need for these was widely recognised in the sixteenth century, so much so, indeed, that, with the exception of the cheap dole charities, they form the most numerous class of bequests in this period. The almshouse, maison dieu, God's house, or hospital<sup>1</sup> as it is variously described, is to be found in all parts of the country and in most populous places. Some of them were from the first adequately endowed; other foundations either did not provide maintenance for the inmates, or gave an allowance so small as to need supplementing by later bequests. But

<sup>1</sup> A hospital was commonly a place of abode for old people, sometimes as in the case of Christ's Hospital, for children. It is only at a later time that it becomes restricted to a place for the sick.



there are several instances in which the founder's gift contemplated not only lodging, food and clothing, but attendance also. This was the case at Coventry. In connection with Bond's Hospital (1506) there, it is stipulated that one woman shall be elected on to the foundation, and have residence in order to dress the men's meat ; at Pisford's (1517) in the same city, one of the women (about 40 years old) was employed to keep the men "clean in their persons and houses."<sup>1</sup> Another interesting circumstance is connected with the houses at Okehampton (1588). The testator, Richard Brock, was evidently a man open to new ideas and possessed of some feeling for the value of sanitation, since he makes a special point of insisting that his almshouses should be built with chimneys.<sup>2</sup>

It might be tedious and would probably be misleading to relate all the instances of this class of charitable foundation. The list would be an imposing one, and such as to suggest that there was a general provision of these houses for the aged poor. This was hardly the case. They were popular and numerous, but not numerous enough. It is the more necessary to dwell upon this point, because it was the failure of this impulse of philanthropy that rendered one line of the development of the poor law imperative.

The district now known as the Administrative County of London supplies us with an example. It was, in the sixteenth century, a sparsely populated country, with numerous small towns and hamlets. An examination of volumes i.—iv. of the new series of Reports of the Charity Commissioners brings out the following proportions. There were ten parishes which possessed almshouses at this period;<sup>3</sup> on the other hand, there were no less than twenty-four parishes which

<sup>1</sup> The Charity Commissioners' Reports, pp. 133 and 163 of the Coventry volume.

<sup>2</sup> Rept. Char. Comm., xi., 94. The hearth tax returns prove that there were still many houses without chimneys; the literature reveals a strong conservative dislike to their introduction. It is worth considering what influence the almshouse chimneys may have had on the progress of domestic architecture.

<sup>3</sup> St. Botolph; "Stepney," i., p. 600; "Bermondsey," ii., p. 37; "Greenwich," ii., 347; "St. Saviour," ii., 793; "Woolwich," ii., p. 851, &c.; "Clerkenwell," iii., 28; "Shoreditch" iii., 444; "Chelsea," iv., 218; "Lambeth," iv., 531.



lacked this convenience. Of these twenty-four, eleven possess other sixteenth century charities,<sup>1</sup> while thirteen had no charities at all until the early part of the following century.<sup>2</sup>

This instance may suffice to enforce the moral of Stubbes' complaint that although there were hospitals, spittles, lazar houses, and almshouses in some cities, towns and other places, wherein many poor were relieved, yet they were "not the hundred part of those that want. For the supplie whereof, would God there might be in everie parish an almeshouse erected, that the poore (such as are poore indeede) might be maintained, helped, and relieved. For until the true poore indeed be better provided for, let them never thinke to please God."<sup>3</sup>

Almshouses usually derived from the endowment of the dead, though some were founded and managed by the donors in their lifetime. There are indications of a similar but less ambitious method of housing the poor. As thus from the records of Staplegrove, in Somerset :—"Roger Smyth kepeth William Harvy, impot."<sup>4</sup> Smyth is credited with this as a fulfilment of the legal duty of supporting the poor which in 1599 had become compulsory. But this particular form of relief had no legal sanction, and there can be little doubt that it is a survival of an earlier custom of voluntary charity under which some well-to-do people did maintain their poorer neighbours in their own homes. If so, it is one of the most genuine, and humane kinds of benevolence. I fear it is impossible to decide how far this kindly usage may have been extended, but it was probably far from common.

Provision was also made by way of pension or some periodical gift of money. This class of bequest is not easily

<sup>1</sup> Whitechapel, Southwark St. George, and St. Olave and St. John, Eltham, Islington, Holborn, Marylebone, St. Pancras, St. Sepulchre Without, Kensington, Paddington.

<sup>2</sup> Hackney, Stoke Newington, Lewisham, Plumstead, Rotherhithe, Hampstead, St. Giles and Bloomsbury, Battersea, Camberwell, Clapham, Fulham, Newington, Deptford. In the last named there is an undated bequest for providing rushes and pea straw for the church, which I have little doubt is earlier than the seventeenth century

<sup>3</sup> "Anatomie," 2nd part, p. 43.

<sup>4</sup> Leonard, "Early History of English Poor Relief," p. 328.



disentangled from the doles and promiscuous gifts which were scattered profusely on saints' days, or on a donor's birth or death day. There are, however, some which may have possessed that element of permanence which entitles them to be mentioned here. At Ottery St. Mary for instance, we find a gift of £800 to buy lands for a weekly distribution to the most aged, impotent, and poor people.<sup>1</sup> Edward VI. granted to the town of Ludlow the property of Palmers' Guild, for the relief of the poor and impotent, and there are bequests at Luton and Exeter, which seem to have been for their continuous support.<sup>2</sup>

(b) *The Young*.—Charitable provision for the young was of various kinds, but of course the chief monuments of this philanthropic movement are to be sought in the endowed schools of the period. These were set up in all parts of the country and occur as objects of bequest almost as frequently as the almshouses for the aged.<sup>3</sup> It is not uncommon to find provision made under one bequest both for almshouse and school. Any attempt to give even a bare sketch of the history of popular education would carry us too far beyond our necessary limits, and I confine myself to some particulars illustrating what may be called the external history, or the manner in which the establishment of the schools took place. This was in a large measure by way of corporate action in some of the towns, and paid for out of the common funds. But the more numerous instances are those in which the origin is found in a personal gift or bequest. It is true that there were numerous localities without a school, yet the charitable endowments are sufficient to discover a widespread enthusiasm for education. Probably

<sup>1</sup> "Rep. Char. Comm.," iii., p. 96.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, iii., 282; vi., 119; and viii., 23—25. Of hospitals in the modern sense or even of care of the sick simply as sick, there are few traces. What there is to be said on this subject will come most conveniently in section 9.

<sup>3</sup> The endowed charities do not, however, in themselves, at all indicate how general an interest was taken in education. A perusal, e.g., of the volumes of wills published by the Surtees Society, shows very frequent gifts, which were mostly small and were not left on trust. But if small absolutely, they were often relatively large, for they are frequently gifts of quite poor men.



sufficient justice is done to the zeal of the period in popular estimation owing to the various schools at present in existence, and bearing the names of the Tudor sovereigns, titles which frequently conceal the fact that the only connection these monarchs had with the establishment lay in the gracious permission for someone else to pay the cost.

Some few examples may suggest the whole. At Wolverhampton there was a school for instructing boys in good morals and literature.<sup>1</sup> Thomas Burbank, in 1577, founded a school at Great Blencowe, through his affection for bringing up young children in learning and virtue as well as for the affection which he bore towards the town where he was born.<sup>2</sup> The loyalty to one's native place is further illustrated by the gift of John Fox, citizen of London, and goldsmith, for a school at the neighbouring village of Dean.<sup>3</sup> The school at Penrith, refounded by Elizabeth, about 1563, had existed there from time immemorial, and the incumbent of the chantry had taught grammar gratuitously. The Queen simply restored to the town an advantage of which Edward had robbed it.<sup>4</sup>

The blue coat school at Guildford is interesting in that it was for the express purpose of teaching the three *r*'s. It was endowed with numerous gifts between 1520 and 1586, with appropriate chantry property by Edward VI., and out of the town property.<sup>5</sup> The free grammar school at Southwark, for the teaching of accidence and other low books and writing, was for children and younglings as well of the rich as the poor, and is of interest as springing not from a personal gift, but from the corporate action of the inhabitants, on whose petition the Queen granted her Letters Patent in 1571.<sup>6</sup>

The object of this type of school is entirely or mainly educational. There are others in which the idea of maintenance

<sup>1</sup> Rep. Endowed Charities, iv., 349.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, v., 134.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 55.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 156.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. x., 617—630.

<sup>6</sup> London Reports, ii., 663. My London references are drawn from the new series of reports, 1897,



is prominent. Thus a hospital, after the manner of Christ's Hospital in London, is built for poor orphan children at Bristol in 1586,<sup>1</sup> and Coventry had its Bablacke's Hospital (1560) maintained by the city and the charity of well-disposed persons. Education is included in an omnibus endowment at Bedford in 1526, and the bringing up of poor children as well as the disposing of them to masters at Totnes, in 1589.<sup>2</sup>

Gifts for the support of poor scholars at the Universities are not infrequent, and the mention of these leads us to other forms of bequest for the benefit of the young who were already past school age. The funds for apprenticing boys to trades are not indeed very important, and the part they played in the social economy was much less than at a later period. Still they are not altogether lacking. There was Peter Blundell's charity at Tiverton for apprenticing four boys in husbandry, and among others in various parts, one at Maulden for putting forth orphans.<sup>3</sup>

Another form of charity, and one in which the sixteenth century was rather rich, is that of making loans to young men starting in trade. These bequests are particularly numerous at Coventry, and, to judge from the frequency with which they disappear, were peculiarly liable to abuse. It would, however, show an undue scepticism to doubt that in some cases they proved to be of real utility. We find also loans to poor artificers at Tiverton, to four honest labouring men at Ludlow, to clothiers at Burton-on-Trent, etc.;<sup>4</sup> besides the unwieldy endowment of Sir Thomas White, under whose will, by a complicated arrangement, no less than twenty-four towns were to benefit, or to suffer.<sup>5</sup>

Just as boys were given a start in life through the higher learning or in a trade, so girls are occasionally thought of, as in the gifts for poor maids' marriages. But it is not easy to

<sup>1</sup> Rep., vi., 463.

<sup>2</sup> Rep., vi., p. 5.

<sup>3</sup> Rep., iii., 135; viii., 25. It is worth considering whether the comparative infrequency may be in part accounted for by the Act of 1563, which conferred the right of being apprenticed to a trade to children of parents of some social standing.

<sup>4</sup> Rep., iii., 141, 299; xi., 557.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, viii., 585.



discover any social utility in such gifts as that for forty marriages at 4*d.* apiece.<sup>1</sup>

(c) *Charity Briefs*.—A charity which has the merit of being curious to our modern thinking, now that we are accustomed to the payment of insurance policies, but which was not without a real public utility in the past, before fire insurance was yet invented,—and when, if the responsibility for risks and casualties was to be diffused, and so rendered tolerable, a more primitive and less business-like arrangement was the only one possible,—is the taking of special collections at the churches, or even by domiciliary visits on the authority of the Royal Letters Patent or Charity Brief. The Briefs which before the Reformation emanated from the ecclesiastical powers were afterwards issued in the name of the Sovereign. It is for the repair of losses by fire that they were most frequently granted. This disaster was naturally a common one while houses were chiefly built of wood. The particulars given in the year 1584, *e.g.*, in Mr. Bewes' comprehensive study, are very instructive. A fire at Nantwich destroyed 800 houses, so that great numbers of inhabitants were "utterly spoyled and undone," while a few years later the premises of a maltster at Thetford were burnt down; and at Penzance houses, church and fishing boats were wasted, spoiled and burnt, to the impoverishing and undoing of the said poor inhabitants, their wives and children.<sup>2</sup>

In these and many other cases, Briefs were issued for making collections either in some specified district or generally in all the parishes of the country. Recourse was also had to this fund of charity for many other purposes, as for building hospitals;<sup>3</sup> for repairing the Cobb at Lyme Regis;<sup>4</sup> for the erection of a church at Bath;<sup>5</sup> for reparation of a Yorkshire bridge; for the relief of Protestant refugees;<sup>6</sup> and for keeping "certain mariners taken by the Turks' Gallies."<sup>7</sup>

<sup>1</sup> London Rep., ii., 686.

<sup>2</sup> "Charity Briefs, 1896," pp. 80, 84, etc.

<sup>3</sup> P. 64.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* 63.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.* 78.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.* 67.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.* 76.



(d) *Highways*.—One of the results of the dissolution of the monasteries was that the roads of the country fell rapidly into a state of disrepair. The monks had found it to their interest to maintain them, since, as landed proprietors dealing in agricultural produce, the facility and cheapness of transit had been a matter of business-like concern to them.<sup>1</sup> The monasteries had also held in trust numerous charitable gifts for this purpose, for from a very early period this had been a popular object of bequest;<sup>2</sup> and, after the Reformation, gifts for mending highways and bridges continued to hold a leading position among the minor charities. They are to be found in several counties.<sup>3</sup> In some cases, as in that of Kingston, in Surrey, we find a whole series of bequests for the single object of maintaining the great bridge and highway so that every one might pass freely.<sup>4</sup> Whether the Surrey roads were specially bad and neglected, or particularly in use, or whether the people of Kingston had a higher ideal of public convenience, or whether this is merely an illustration of the rule of imitation in charities, so that when one has set an example another follows it, cannot be decided. A good specimen of a princely road charity is that of John Lyon,<sup>5</sup> who gave in trust to the college at Harrow nearly eighty acres of land in Marylebone for the repair of the roads from Edgware to London and from Harrow to London. It would appear, however, that these highways did not improve to any great extent, for the state of the road "between Tyborne and Edgworthe"<sup>6</sup> was such that early in the seventeenth century Ed. Harvist, "citizen and brewer," made a further bequest of about seventeen acres at Iseldon (Islington) for its repair.<sup>7</sup>

The mention of these road charities suggests one of the

<sup>1</sup> On this point, see Thorold Rogers' "History of Agriculture and Prices," iv., 114, &c.

<sup>2</sup> Particulars will be found in, e.g., Stow's "Survey of London."

<sup>3</sup> See Rep. viii., 456; viii., 8; x., 319, 599, 745; and the "Northern Wills," published by the Surtees Society.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* x., 599 in 1516, 1520, 1550, 1556.

<sup>5</sup> "London" iv., 713.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 709.

<sup>7</sup> Mention should be made of the gifts for paying taxes of the poor; and of the more considerable and important bequests for the repair of churches.



reasons for the frequent failures recorded in the history of philanthropy to attain the purpose set before themselves by benevolent people. The maintenance of the roads was by law and in the necessity of the case a public charge. If they were to be kept in reasonable repair it could only be by a well organised and continuous service. So long as this remained a matter of private philanthropy every condition of success was ignored. It was not in fact until the roads did come in reality under the activity of local government that they became other than a disgrace. The defect to which we draw attention in the psychology of charity is that philanthropists, while often quick to discover evils that need a remedy, are constantly under the illusion that a mere casual act of goodwill is sufficient to supply the need. If the records of philanthropy are strewn with monuments of failure it is because the charitably minded characteristically lack a due sense of proportion, and while they are able to see the end that is to be attained, yet cannot command the means to achieve it.

(e) *Doles*.—By far the most numerous charities are those that provide small gifts of money, food, clothes, fuel, or some other commodity. How numerous they were, not only in the sixteenth century, but throughout our history, is suggested by the heavy and largely unsuccessful efforts of the Charity Commissioners to divert them to less mischievous uses. Some specimens may not be without interest as suggesting the social manners of the period. There were three little table boards at Exeter, which were to be covered with linen cloths and the loaves to be set out before the church service for distribution at its close.<sup>1</sup> One, John Peter, left 20s. a year for the poor of each of twenty parishes in Devon.<sup>2</sup> Another gift is to twelve poor women, for frocks of frieze, meat for their bodies, and smocks of new linen cloth.<sup>3</sup> Gifts of fuel, "sea cole" as it was known, are also frequent. There is a grim feeling in a bequest of shrouds for prisoners who should

<sup>1</sup> Rep. vi., 143; cf. "London," ii., 35.

<sup>2</sup> Rep. vii., p. 10; and at this cost the name of Peter decorates all these 20 reports. Cf. ix., 198; x., 319.

<sup>3</sup> Rep. vi., 125; cf. vii., 405; viii., 17 and 224.



suffer at Ryngswill at Exeter.<sup>1</sup> An Exmouth charity, of which I have come across no other instance, is that of Th. Browne, mariner, who left £4 for the purchase of two milch kine for the poor of the parish.<sup>2</sup>

The gifts are to be bestowed, at Christmas, midsummer, mid-lent, some anniversary or saint's day, frequently on All Souls', and there is an occasional clause withholding the benefit from tipplers and haunters of taverns.

(f) *Almsgiving*. — Harman's "singular good lady," Elizabeth Countess of Shrewesbury, may be accepted as representative, alike in her "most tender, pytyful, gentle, and noble nature," and in the numbers of destitute whom she attracted to her "lucky gates," of other benevolent women of the period, of some her equals in the ability to give, and of many who from a smaller revenue bestowed with an equal liberality. But it was not only while at home that the rich had the opportunity of giving an alms to the poor; they were also beset with claimants on their bounty during their progress from place to place. In the case of Sir E. Coke, charitable gifts formed an important item in his travelling expenses if the account of "rydyng charges" from Godwicke to London affords any indication of his usual custom. For while the total expence of the journey was £24 2s., the gifts amount to no less than 18s. 7d. It is true that much of this is accounted for by two large gifts at Norwich, one of 5s. to a poor woman, and the other 2s. 6d. to "poore." Yet on this journey there are thirteen separate entries of alms, ranging in many instances from 2d. to 7d.<sup>3</sup> It was possible to be much more economical, for in the journey charges of Edward Darrell there are only two entries, to poor people at Newbury 3d., and a poor man at Spene 2d., out of a total expense of £3 7s. 4d. for the two days' ride.<sup>4</sup> It was usual for the poor to receive the refuse meat, scraps and parings from the tables of the rich, and gifts of worn out clothing

<sup>1</sup> Rep. vi., 118.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* v., p. 182. Numerous instances of the dole charities are to be found in Stow's "Survey."

<sup>3</sup> From "Household Book," Printed in Eden, Appendix cxx., 6.

<sup>4</sup> Hubert Hall, "Society in the Elizabethan Age," p. 207.



are not infrequent. We may suspect Stubbes of exaggeration when he tells us that people thought themselves half way to heaven as a reward for giving away an old ragged coat,<sup>1</sup> although such donors do manage to recoup themselves by a curious amount of self-satisfaction.

More serious efforts, which involved an element of real self-denial, were also made for the relief of the poor. We know that this was the case at Wakefield.<sup>2</sup> There, as elsewhere, the poor were many and needy, the "poor indeed" quite apart from the sturdy beggars, yet, as H. A. writes, "this much in truth I may speak that if anie be pinched with penurie, the default especially resteth in themselves, though some other persons cannot be excused." He then enumerates the house of correction, the stock in clothiers' hands for setting poor on work, a voluntary assessment for the poor, besides the "Wednesday suppers." If this policy of going without suppers once a week had been followed by all, as it was followed by many, there would have been no need to beg. There are traces of indignation at the general neglect of this form of self-denial in other towns, from which we may probably infer that it had in some measure been practised. There was, however, a widespread indifference. This is evidenced by the angry remonstrance of Brinklow. The rich are said to have left the blind and lame unhelped except it were on Sundays with a few halfpence, or by a "penny meale whiche helpeth lytle or no thyng."<sup>3</sup>

## 7. POLICE AND CHARITY.

In the preceding paragraphs we have mentioned some types of charities which will meet us again when we consider the relation between charity and the local government, and notice how at the end of the century the State itself turned philanthropist. But before doing this it will be as well to pause and regard some general qualities of most of the

<sup>1</sup> "Anatomie," p. 105.

<sup>2</sup> See "Provision for the poore, now in penurie," by H. A. (1597), a Wakefield man.

<sup>3</sup> "Lamentacyon," p. 88.



charities we have been reviewing, together with the result of the Government policy of leaving poor relief to private individuals while confining its own contribution to the problem to measures of police. The charities proceed from an impulse of goodwill, the donors are often truly humane people, and in some cases have a real understanding of the needs they wish to relieve. On the other hand a great deal of promiscuous giving must have tended rather to increase than to alleviate poverty. Too frequently the charitable acted without forethought. They had not the means, even if they had the inclination, to form any estimate of the extent of the need or of the proportion between their gift and its power to yield adequate relief; charitable action moreover was intermittent, now rising and now falling. There could be no guarantee that the heir of a benevolent person would continue his kindly ministrations. This leads us to the further fact that charity was unevenly distributed, abundant in some places, penurious or absent in others.

The indiscriminate nature of the measures of police was of another type. While charity acted sometimes, and here and there, the aim of the law was to punish vagrancy and unlicensed begging always and everywhere. In this it was not uniformly successful, because the severity of its penalties was quite disproportioned to the offence, and on this account numerous ill doers escaped. The Government confounded under one category several distinct classes. We have seen that even among the vagabonds, or not easily to be distinguished from them, there were poor men whose wandering was not the result of choice but of misfortune. The difficulty that beset both the legislator and the charitable in the early part of our period was therefore in essence the same. There was no criterion whereby to distinguish between the superficial appearances of people whose condition and merits were in reality widely different. The Government found it convenient to make its measures very comprehensive, with the result that while it afflicted many poor who were also worthy it failed in its object of suppressing vagrancy. Charity on the other hand was still less able to discriminate, and if the theory of



the law was "Here is a wanderer, whip him," the practice of charity was on the principle "Here is a hungry man, feed him." Now the double consequence of this was that men were punished who had done nothing to merit punishment, while the relief that should have gone to the deserving poor was largely appropriated by those who were certainly less worthy of it. The honest poor were punished and sometimes fed; the vagabond was fed and sometimes punished.

### 8. CHARITY AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT.<sup>1</sup>

The various philanthropic activities, which we have been reviewing, were supplemented in some important respects by the corporate action of the towns. The municipal authorities commonly worked in some kind of co-operation with private benefactors. We have now to study in this connection two groups of charities which possess an interest entirely out of proportion to their numerical importance. The first group, that for setting the poor on work, is a very small one, and even the bequests simply "for the poor" are not very frequent. What is noticeable in them is this, that while most of the charities hitherto have been isolated expressions of feeling, left to the administration of casual and not always competent trustees, those that we are now to look at become a part of a larger whole, are not left in isolation, but enter into a general scheme of charity. Many of these bequests are in trust to the communal authorities, commonly to the mayor, the mayor and corporation, the churchwardens and constables, or the magistrates. It is this bringing of charitable funds into the range of local government that lends them their social significance. This revenue becomes *in posse* as generally valuable as the more regular funds levied by means of taxation. They are not indeed saved from all risk of abuse,<sup>2</sup> but they are rendered available for the uses of the public under conditions in which they might be administered by those whose official duty it was to take a comprehensive

<sup>1</sup> On this subject see Leonard, "Early History of English Poor Relief."

<sup>2</sup> See further in Chap. II.



survey of the necessities of the people. And they were as secure as the municipal income.

(a) *Setting the Poor on Work*.—These bequests are not numerous. They are, however, well worth our attention in view of the great poor law of 1597, under which this form of poor relief was recognised and systematised. They are to be found at Henley, Lyddington (the gift of Lord Burghley), Exeter, Totnes, Bristol, York,<sup>1</sup> and probably at other places. A special interest attaches to the gift at Thornabie, near York, since it contains a provision against the cheapening of charity wages. The money is to be spent "in wooll flax or hemepe to be delivered within the parish of Thornabie to be by them wrought and made into cloth and the poore people for the working thereof to be paid after such rate as nowe or hereafter shall be used for such lyke work within the same parish."<sup>2</sup> It is doubtful indeed whether apart from such a clause it would have been legal in the sixteenth century for philanthropists to cut down wages. Wages were low everywhere, but such as they were by the justices' assessment, it would seem that the Act of 1563 applied equally to all employers, whether their aim was benevolent or simply commercial.

Attempts to find work for the unemployed were carried out in several towns by the town governors. It is interesting to speculate whether their policy prompted testators to adopt this form of bequest, or whether it was the action of testators which stimulated the governors. Both may have been the case. In some cases the private donor would certainly be also official administrator, as Lord Burghley, *e.g.*, was largely responsible for the legislation with which the century closed.

(b) *Hospitals*.—The most important of the objects for the attainment of which there was co-operation between the rulers and the philanthropists is undoubtedly the care of the sick. The supply was far from being equal to the demand, and if we consider the country as a whole was altogether

<sup>1</sup> Rep. iv., 209; v., 368; vi., 53 and 135; vii., 54; viii., 62 and 612.

<sup>2</sup> Miss M. Sellars, "English Historical Review," Ap. 1894.



inconsiderable. The general indifference in that period to what is the most popular form of philanthropy at the present time is suggested by a remark in H. A.'s little book: "For touching the sick poore (though they have some goods gotten by sore labour in their health) yet I see no reason that they should sell the cow which gives the children milk, nor . . . nor . . . all which things in compassion are to be spared."

There are a few bequests for the sick in various places, as at Dartmouth in 1595 to provide the poor with meat, fire, and candles in their sickness, and after their death with shrouds; there are some small money bequests for the bedridden; a few lazar houses also. Thus, in 1538, John Gilberd left a house for lepers at Newton Bushell, because great numbers were then infected with that disease.<sup>1</sup> A lazar house may have served almost as a general hospital since leprosy was a common name for several distinct diseases.

All these do not amount to much, and if we look for any organised relief of the sick, we must turn to London and Bath. In both of these towns the responsibility was a joint one, divided in different ways between private liberality and corporate government. In London the City assumed the charge of maintaining its hospitals, St. Bartholomew's and St. Thomas's for the sick, and Bethlehem for lunatics, as a condition of receiving by royal grant the dissolved monastic foundations from which they take their origin. But the charge proved a greater burden than the taxpayer approved, and the authorities were obliged to invite the supplement of philanthropic gifts. At Bath, on the other hand, the task of the corporation was to control and increase the efficiency of private benevolence.

The three London Hospitals had existed before the Reformation. Bethlehem, from its foundation, with the object for which it has ever since served; but St. Bartholomew's and St. Thomas's were originally for the receipt and relief of the poor. There had been other hospitals for lepers such as that founded by Matilda, wife of Henry I., at St. Giles-in-the-Fields. Stow mentions in all eighteen

<sup>1</sup> Rep. vii., 15; vi., 116.



houses for the afflicted, the poor, the aged, three of which were suppressed under Henry V., and the rest in the course of the Tudor Reformation. Two of these, partly by grant, partly by purchase, were refounded by the City of London, together with the royal palace of Bridewell, and Christ's Hospital for fatherless children. In the petition of the Mayor, etc., to King Henry VIII., in 1538, it is set out that these hospitals are to be for the "ayde and comferte of the poore sykke blynde aged and impotent persones, beyng not hable to helpe theymselffs nor having any place certeyn wheryn they may be lodged . . . tyll they be cured of their dyseases and syknesse . . . frankly and freely by phisicions surgeons appotycaryes, whiche shall have stypende, salary and wages."<sup>1</sup> They bind themselves, accordingly in 1546, by Act of Common Council, to find 500 marks yearly for this purpose,<sup>2</sup> and in the following year a tax of half a fifteenth was voted. This, the first compulsory rating for poor,<sup>3</sup> proved to be unpopular, in fact, the whole city "not a little grutched and repined."

In 1548 the Council assessed the sums on the livery companies,<sup>4</sup> freely and lovingly requesting them to find money, seeing that of necessity it must needs be done. The Companies paid, but only after such protest as to make it clear that this was not a secure source of revenue. The method of weekly church collections was also tried with fluctuating results.<sup>5</sup>

While the living thus, with one consent, sought to shift the burden, it would have seemed to be wrong not to draw upon that other fruitful source, the goodwill of the dying. Accordingly in the charge to the Scrutineer of Christ's Hospital, we find it laid down that "your office is diligently to serch for guiftes, legacies, byquests, as have or shal be

<sup>1</sup> "Memoranda, References and Documents relating to the Royal Hospitals" (1836), App. i.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, App. iii. and vi.

<sup>3</sup> Leonard, 39.

<sup>4</sup> "Memoranda, References and Documents relating to the Royal Hospitals," App. vii.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, App. xiv.



geven . . . and finally, when yow shall hapen to be in companie of good welthy men," you shall to the best of yr wits commend the hospital as a boon to England and chiefly London: you are also to resort to wardens of the Scriveners, and get them to call their Co. together and exhort that at, making of testaments, they put the testator in remembrance to commend somewhat to relief of the poor provided for in the hospital. You shall also request the Bishop of London for the time being to exhort ministers not only to provoke their parishioners, but also when God by sickness shall visit any, that then they fail not to remind them to make some special legacy.<sup>1</sup>

The water cure at Bath had been famous from an early period. The Hospital of St. John was founded as early as 1180, by Bishop Reginald, for the succour of poor people resorting to the Hot and Cross baths; and the baths were vested in the monastery, which received the profits arising from them.<sup>2</sup> After the Dissolution they fell into decay, so that about 1562 Dr. Turner doubted if any rich man had spent on "these noble bathes one grothe these twenty years."<sup>3</sup> In 1576 Abbott Feckenham, who had retired to Bath, built an hospice for the poor who frequented the mineral waters.<sup>4</sup> Shortly after this they seem to have been in full use, for Harrison tells us that the rich might spend there while they would, and the poor beg while they listed for their maintenance and diet as long as they remained.<sup>5</sup>

The baths seem to have remained in a ruinous condition, for it was found necessary a little later to rebuild them. At the same time Mr. Bellott erected a new one. The expense of rebuilding fell on the corporation, and in return for the costs thus incurred the Hospital of St. John was granted to the Mayor in 1616. It was not only the local authorities

<sup>1</sup> Memoranda, References and Documents relating to the Royal Hospitals (1836), App. xiii.

<sup>2</sup> Dugdale's "Monasticon," vi., 773; Warner's "Bath," p. 317.

<sup>3</sup> Warner, p. 319.

<sup>4</sup> D. N. B., xviii., 285.

<sup>5</sup> "Description of England," p. 216.



who assisted the charitable provision for the poor at this earliest of English watering places.

People had flocked to Bath and to Buxton in annoying crowds from distant parts of the country, and while on their journey had made this an excuse for begging. The nuisance had become so great as to demand legislative notice. It was therefore enacted that no diseased or impotent poor person might leave his dwelling-place either for Bath or Buxton, unless he had obtained a license from two justices. This entitled him to ask for relief without being accounted a beggar, and limited the time within which he was to go and return. Failing this license he was to be "reputed, punished and used" as a rogue and vagabond.<sup>1</sup> The water cure thus received national recognition, and was supported jointly by the charitable on the spot, the town governors, and the alms of the people at large under legal sanction.

(c) *Almshouses*.—As we have already seen, there are several almshouse charities entrusted to the towns, and the control of some of the schools was placed under the same hands. Bridewell, which was from the first under the responsibility of the City of London, assumed by degrees rather the nature of a prison than an almshouse, and provided from the first enforced and penal labour, but it received numerous gifts and bequests. The same remark applies to Christ's Hospital for 100 children, and to similar establishments in other places. At York again three hospitals were set aside for the employment and maintenance of the poor. For these the City was responsible, but the cost was in part met by private donors, who subscribed in six months of the year 1574-5 the sum of £25 6s.<sup>2</sup>

(d) *Corn and Water*.—The Mayor of Bristol, in 1552, a year of drought, moved by "his charitie towardes the comen wele," ordered corn to be brought into the city from a distance.<sup>3</sup> He acted as a private individual, yet not without the authority attaching to the chief officer of the corporation.

<sup>1</sup> 39 Eliz. c. 4, s. 7.

<sup>2</sup> Miss M. Sellar's "English History Review," April, 1894, p. 287.

<sup>3</sup> Leonard, p. 40.



The example was followed in 1566, and again in 1587, when two of the citizens left bequests for the purchase of corn to be sold to the poor at cost price.<sup>1</sup>

It is in London that this co-operation of the rulers and the benevolent, for the supply of the prime necessities of life, was most usual. Stow mentions several of these charities, which were intended to assist the corporation in their efforts to check the advance of prices. In the early part of the century there were divers granaries near the Bridge House for the sake of storing up corn in the fat years for cheap sale in the lean ones. Moreover, ten ovens were built, of which six were very large. These were set up to bake the corn out of the said granaries for the relief of the poor citizens when need should require.<sup>2</sup> In 1525, in pursuance of the same policy, a Gloucester man gave a large barge with two water mills to be kept near the bridge for the gratuitous grinding of corn. These, unfortunately, did not last long without decay, and had to be removed.<sup>3</sup> A granary left in 1554 was afterwards increased "at the charges of the citizens."<sup>4</sup>

Stow also gives interesting particulars of charitable gifts of a pure water supply, including one with a conduit "more than 2,000 yards in length," which cost £1,500.<sup>5</sup>

In most of the matters related in this section, the chief and regulative action was that of the town corporation. The charities were subsidiary to a policy of local government which had taken in hand what was a philanthropic interest.

## 9. THE STATE AND PHILANTHROPY.

The sharp distinction that has since been drawn between public and private action was not felt in the sixteenth century. The Poor Law, *e.g.*, was as much an act of charity as was a gift of bread or an almshouse. Except

<sup>1</sup> Rep., viii., 585 and 612.

<sup>2</sup> "Survey," p. 155.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 135.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 144. For a similar charity at Lichfield see Rep. Endowed Charities, vii., 395.



for such purposes as the preamble to a statute the Tudor statesmen did not imagine that the State existed for the citizens or the Sovereign for the subject. The citizens were for the State and the subjects for the Sovereign. Government was not by the people, and along its main lines there was little pretence<sup>1</sup> of its being for them. Its duty was not to them, but theirs to it. Nevertheless, the governors were often humane as well as farsighted men. Their first concern was the maintenance of order, the obvious means to which lay through measures of police. But experience quickly threw doubt on the efficacy of these, and it was to the failure of severity in suppression that we owe the legislative attempts to relieve poverty. But another motive, one of goodwill, also animated them; and as legislation proceeding from kindness for the well-being of the poor and the relief of distress did not readily fit into the current theory of politics, it was necessary to find some fresh interpretation. The explanation made use of by the Elizabethan statesmen is that this legislative provision for the poor was by way of charity. If this reading of the implicit thought of the age be correct, it throws some light on what would otherwise be the inexplicable reluctance of the Government to make the poor relief compulsory, even after the failure of voluntary action had become obvious. There are first some early statutes providing that beggars may not wander beyond the limits of their parish or hundred,<sup>2</sup> with the suggestion implied that they may beg in the places where they live. Then, by the 22 Henry VIII., c. 12, the justices may license the impotent poor to beg in certain assigned districts, and five years later (27 Henry VIII., c. 25) governors of shires . . . parishes are to keep the aged poor by way of voluntary and charitable alms, while no one is to give any common dole, but only to the common (church) box for the poor. Out of these alms the poor are to be relieved, and the justices, acting, however, rather in their private than in their official capacity, are to be the distributors. There is not yet a suspicion of making

<sup>1</sup> Always excepting the preambles.

<sup>2</sup> 12 Rich. II., c. 7; 11 Hen. VII., c. 2.



the relief compulsory, or ensuring that it shall be adequate. This same unforced charitable impulse, proceeding by way of weekly collections, is trusted under Mary.<sup>1</sup> A further step was taken when (5 Eliz., cap 3) it is enacted that collectors are to be appointed in every parish, and that if anyone obstinately refuse to pay reasonably, or discourage others from paying, the Justices may assess him, and if necessary commit him to prison. The disguise of a voluntary charity has worn very thin, but has not even yet been discarded. The stage marked by this Act is that at which the authorities may stimulate people to be reasonably charitable. The next step is taken when the Justices are empowered to make a rate of 6*d.* or 8*d.* a week on each parish for the relief of prisoners, and when it is enacted that a stock to set the poor on work shall be provided in every city and town corporate.<sup>2</sup>

The sick, hurt or maimed soldiers and mariners required a special care, both because of their liability to accident and because of the penurious policy adopted by Elizabeth. The Government had long before endeavoured to repress the beggars who feigned to be mariners in distress, and in the absence of any ready means of distinguishing real from pretended suffering had probably unjustly punished many who had served the fleet of their country. By the Act 35 Eliz., c. 4, a fresh policy was initiated, that of affording special relief to these men out of the rates. And as early as 1590 provision had been made for them in the establishment of the "chest at Chatham."<sup>3</sup> The Act was renewed in 1597 and again in 1601.<sup>4</sup>

We have now reached the series of laws in which the endeavour was made to bring under one view the whole question of poverty and to provide for it in all its forms. Of these the chief is the one for the Relief of the Poor.<sup>5</sup> This Act was for setting to work the children of all such whose parents shall not . . . be thought able to keep and maintain their children; and also for setting to work all

<sup>1</sup> 2 & 3 P. & M., c. 5.

<sup>2</sup> 14 Eliz. c. 5; and 18 Eliz., c. 3.

<sup>3</sup> W. L. Clowes, in Trail's "Social England," iii., 468 f.

<sup>4</sup> 39 Eliz., c. 21; and 43 Eliz., c. 3.

<sup>5</sup> 43 Eliz., c. 2; 39 Eliz., c. 3.



such persons, married or unmarried, as have no means to maintain them, and use no ordinary or daily trade of life to get their living by; and also to raise, weekly or otherwise (by taxation . . . ), a convenient stock of flax, hemp, wool, thread, iron and other necessary ware and stuff to set the poor on work, and also competent sums of money for and towards the necessary relief of the lame, impotent, old, blind, and such other among them, being poor and not able to work, and also for putting out of such children to be apprentices.

The problem has been stated. The means adopted by philanthropists for its solution have been reviewed, and it has been shown how these efforts sometimes were brought into connection with the local and general state administration. It is obvious that the charitable measures are lacking in depth and discrimination. The future developments of philanthropy largely spring from successive discoveries that social distress is much more complicated than had been supposed, and that it is necessary to adopt many different plans for the relief of different wants arising from various causes. The misery that the sixteenth century relieved is less than that for which it was unable to provide. Perhaps their chief importance is not to be found in the precise number of the prisoners they visited, the hungry they fed and the sick they healed. It is impossible even to guess how great that number may have been. But beyond its direct achievements in this its primary aim, the charity of the century had some considerable influence on the legislation. By its sometimes unsuccessful efforts to relieve poverty it brought this matter in all its serious significance to the attention of the state. And although the Elizabethan legislation was not always very successful, yet it is no small thing that in the course of half a century the country had been able to lay down the main lines upon which a remedy must be sought, and to leave to future generations the pregnant discovery that if poverty is to be relieved provision must be made not only for those who are unable and those who are unwilling to work, but also for many who are willing to work, but unable to find employment.



## CHAPTER II.

## CHARITY IN THE BEGINNING OF THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY.

## I. THE STATUTE OF CHARITABLE USES.

LEGISLATION is in some sense an expression of a social ideal ; it is also, and perhaps more commonly, a recognition of forces already become actual. Sometimes a point of departure for further advance, it is often merely a summary of actual conditions. This is rather strikingly the case with our earlier laws in reference to philanthropy. The legislation with which Elizabeth's reign closed served in the main to select and sanction such experiments of the municipalities and of charitable persons as approved themselves to the deliberation of the age. This remark applies particularly to the Statute of Charitable Uses.<sup>1</sup> Ingenuity and thought had gone to compile the long series of activities contained in the Act. But the thought was only secondarily that of the statesmen, and could only in an obscure form be called thought at all. There was no single comprehensive judgment that these things and no others were good and useful and deserving of protection. The Act did but gather into one miscellaneous class the actual forms in which men had given of their property for the use of their survivors. The thought was that of innumerable forgotten and commonplace people, aided by the suggestions of priests and ministers who have passed into an equal oblivion.

The statute was intended to safeguard gifts and bequests "for relief of aged, impotent and poor people, some for maintenance of sick and maimed soldiers and mariners, schools of learning, free schools, and scholars in Universities, some for

<sup>1</sup> 43 Eliz., c. 4.



repair of bridges, ports, havens, causeways, churches, sea-banks and highways, some for education and preferment of orphans, some for or towards relief, stock or maintenance for houses of correction, some for marriages of poor maids, some for supportation, aid and help of young tradesmen, handicraftsmen and persons decayed, and others for relief or redemption of prisoners or captives, and for aid or ease of any poor inhabitants concerning payment of fifteens, setting out of soldiers, and other taxes." The Act passed in the first year of the seventeenth century sufficiently indicates that the philanthropy which expressed itself in these several directions was far from inactive.

A reading of this preamble suggests two lines of reflection. Break up this interesting medley, and classify the objects for which at that time men bequeathed their goods. It appears that some have become obsolete: others are now provided for without any recourse to charity. The Government had already accepted a concurrent responsibility for its maimed soldiers and sailors, who are thus left to the dual care of the nation and of benevolent individuals.

With regard to many of those wants which were then relegated to the provision of charity, the state has since then, and at different times, recognised first one and then another as too common in their incidence and possessed of too general a social significance to be safely left in private hands. It has accordingly assumed the charge of them. The repair of bridges, ports, havens, causeways and highways had all along been in theory a public charge, whether as part of ancient *trinodas necessitas* or under the commissions of sewers and other Acts. But it was not until theory was translated into practice that this, which now has come to be regarded as an elementary function of public authority, was adequately attended to, and meanwhile the pathetic attempts of private persons to ensure that their neighbours should not suffer as they had done from the noisome footpaths and roads, deserved all the encouragement afforded by this statute. The free schools, of which mention is made, continue through a long history of private



philanthropy, but have at length been recognised as of national importance fit to be a public charge. There is still no reason why benevolent people should not pay their neighbours' taxes as well as their own if they are so minded, but it has long been recognised that a better relief of the poor would be found in a fair system of taxation. Much necessary care of prisoners is still left to the philanthropists, but not in the crude form of providing them with occasional bread and water, or straw for sleeping on during their imprisonment. Our first reflection, therefore, must be that there was a magnificent boldness in thus light-heartedly accepting the responsibility of providing, out of a wealth so much smaller than our own, for wants so various and considerable that some of them appear to be beyond the resources or the inclination of the modern state.

A second and a disturbing reflection arises when we read that the Act (43 Eliz., c. 4) was for the purpose of redressing the misemployment of lands, goods and stocks of money heretofore given to certain charitable uses, inasmuch as these lands, etc., have not been employed according to the charitable intents of the givers, by reason of frauds, breaches of trust, and negligence in those that should pay, deliver and employ the same. For evidence that the assertions of the preamble are not overstated, we may turn to the pages of John Stow, who concludes a recital of several charities thus:—"Thus much have I noted their charitable actions, for the most part done by them in their lifetime. The residue left in trust to their executors, I have known some of them hardly (or never) performed; wherefore I wish men to make their own hands their executors, and their eyes their overseers, not forgetting the old proverb,

"Women be forgetfull, children be unkind,  
Executors be covetous, and take what they find."<sup>1</sup>

The statute aimed at providing a mild remedy for this mischief. Under it, Commissions might be appointed to enquire into the abuses arising in the case of certain charities, and in extreme cases to enforce restitution. No

<sup>1</sup> P. 44.



less than forty-five such Commissions were issued within a year from the passing of the Act, and from this it may be inferred that fraud and negligence were rather common. The Commissions continued to be numerous throughout the century. More than 1,000 must have been granted before the year 1700. The action taken under the Act was far from commensurate with the evil to be redressed. When at length the Commissions became infrequent, it was not because the mischief was remedied, but because recourse was had to other forms of legal process. In fact, the apparatus of this Act had proved commonly to be insufficient, and the decisions given were sometimes unjust.<sup>1</sup> Thus, while the funds available for philanthropic purposes were certainly inadequate to the tasks proposed, they were further liable to serious depletion through negligence and breach of trust.

## 2. VARIOUS CHARITIES.

We propose now to give some description of a group of charities which are characteristic of the period, either because they then first came into prominence, or because they serve to illustrate the attitude of philanthropy to the social life of the age. Having done this it will be possible to throw some further light on the subject by a more particular account of certain individuals or groups of people who were specially active in charitable work or projects.

(a) *Divinity Lectures*.—The development of theological interests and the growing influence of the Puritan party finds expression in a group of charities for the distribution of Bibles and the founding of sermons and lectures. These bequests are not a new thing in the seventeenth century, but they are more numerous and seem to have gained more importance. The giving of Bibles may have received encourage-

<sup>1</sup> See Shelford's "Law of Mortmain" (1836), p. 278. The records of Commissions issued previous to 1643 are said to be defective; from that year to the Restoration they numbered 295; 344 more were issued up to 1678, and 197 more before 1700. After that time they became less frequent, and had almost ceased before 1760. Particulars of some of these Commissions are to be found in the Reports of the Endowed Charities, e.g., "London," ii., 65.



ment from the fact that there was now an authorised version, and if so these charities have an added interest as throwing light on the means by which the work of the King's translators became the possession of the people. Bibles are bequeathed to be chained in the pews in church<sup>1</sup>, or to be distributed to young people in the smallest volume printed.<sup>2</sup> There are also numerous endowments for sermons. At Coventry the ordinary and not excessive remuneration is 6s. 8d.; while one bequest for the large number of fifty-three sermons a year is at the reduced cost of £7.<sup>3</sup> Sometimes the subject of the discourse is specified, as when John Noble founds two sermons at Shoreditch against gaming.<sup>4</sup> The woman's view appears when Joan Smales, of the same parish, is mindful of the poor who listen. These are to receive 20s. for their labour, while the preacher is to be paid 10s.<sup>5</sup> Sometimes the sermons are to be delivered on a special day, as on All Saints' Day.<sup>6</sup> The divinity lecture is nearly allied to the sermon. It is delivered in the church, but it is usually to be on a week-day, not on the Sunday: it is expected that it shall be something in addition rather than in the ordinary course of the minister's duty.<sup>7</sup> The lectures were delivered; the people sometimes evinced a very modern indifference to them, for brave clergyman James Bamford tells us that "many in and about London are winter hearers, attending the word when they have nothing else to do."<sup>8</sup>

(b) *The Captives at Algiers*.—The redemption of captives is one of the forms of charity mentioned in the Statute of Charitable Uses, and we have already met with this as one object of the charity briefs. A growing commerce and the increasing enterprise of the Mediterranean pirate states

<sup>1</sup> "London Rep.," ii., 448.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 804; cf. Bibles in 8vo. in English to poor men's children; to every house a Bible to the world's end; *Ibid.*, 689; A.D. 1645.

<sup>3</sup> "Coventry," 170.

<sup>4</sup> "London Rep.," iii., 450.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.* 455.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.* ii., 595.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.* i., 531; iv., 535.

<sup>8</sup> "A short dialogue concerning the Plagues infection": Epistle Dedicatory.



combined to bring this peril to our seamen, as well as to the inhabitants of the towns on our coasts, into greater prominence. The mention of this form of charity again brings us into touch with the larger life of the nation, for the occasion of the disastrous attempt to levy ship-money arose out of the need to defend the country from the pirates who pursued our ships and captured them even in the Channel.<sup>1</sup> The country had been deeply moved by their still bolder action in attacking and destroying Baltimore in County Cork in 1631.<sup>2</sup> As early as 1621 an attempt had been made to destroy the pirate shipping and harbour, but the fleet despatched for that purpose had not met with any real success. The efforts of philanthropy were not any more effective, unless indeed it be counted success to have helped to enrich Sir Francis Verney and other Englishmen who were among the leaders of the pirates.<sup>3</sup> The condition of the captives was pitiful, they were "put to dayly extream and difficult labour, but a poor supply of bread and water for their food, stripped of their cloaths and covering, and their lodging on the cold stones and bricks," they were chained, bastinadoed, and subjected to other outrages. But this mischief was not to be remedied by monthly collections for the pious purpose of relieving their brethren abroad under a barbarous people.<sup>4</sup> A significant passage in FitzGeffrey's book suggests that many traders in England made their profit out of the captives, and incidentally from these charity funds. Charity, he writes, "bids me to be incredulous of that which grieve and passion causeth some of ours boldly to divulge, that there are among us who for their private gaine doe not a little advance the prevailing of the common enemy against their country-men and brethren, that ours are surprised with our owne powder and shot, and afterwards laden in Barbarie with English gyves and yrons. God forbid that it should beso; but if it be so" and so on.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Cunningham, ii., 217-18.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 217 n.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* 113.

<sup>4</sup> See the Address to Worshipfull John Cavse, Maier of Plymouth, in C. FitzGeffrey's "Compassion towards Captives" (1636).

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, Address to Christian Reader.



An undated petition to Parliament carries the charge into further detail.<sup>1</sup> It suggests that charity should be turned into other channels than this, for it "may be easily supposed rather to raise the price of their redemption, then to lessen it"; and further asserts that the Jews in Algiers who are in too great correspondence with the Jews in England are the cause of enhancing the price to be paid by charity. Exactly this same phenomenon of cost raised against philanthropic funds will meet us in connection with the prison charities.<sup>2</sup>

(c) *Apprenticeship*. — We have already noticed in the preceding paragraphs the chief directions in which the charities of this period are to be distinguished from those of the sixteenth century. Besides these, we may mention the greater popularity of bequests for apprenticing poor children. An Act (7 Jac. I., c. 3) was passed to encourage this form of benevolence. The most interesting provision of this statute is the enactment that, unless otherwise ordered by the donor, the management of these funds was to be in the hands of the authorities — the corporation in towns corporate, and in other places the parson, together with the constable, churchwardens, collectors, and overseers.

(d) *Almshouses*. — This period is rich in new foundations of almshouses or colleges. Sometimes, as in the case of the ten houses set up by Dame Alice Owen, at Islington, in 1610, they owe their origin to a chance adventure. "An arrow from the bow of an archer exercising in Islington fields having pierced the high crown of the hat of the foundress, she raised this almshouse as a votive offering of gratitude for her protection."<sup>3</sup> There are some curious particulars in the rules for Trinity Hospital, Greenwich, which was partly built by the Earl of Nottingham (13 Jac. I.) during his lifetime.<sup>4</sup> The foundation was for a warden, twenty poor men, one butler, one cook, one poor woman to

<sup>1</sup> "The case of many hundreds of poor English Captives in Algier." The British Museum catalogue gives date [? 1680].

<sup>2</sup> *Infra*, p. 173. For more extensive effort made by the Parliament to liberate the English slaves, see Chap. III.

<sup>3</sup> A. Highmore, "Pietas Londinensis," ii., 565.

<sup>4</sup> London Rep. ii., 250 f.



attend to the poor men in their time of sickness, one laundress and one barber. The poor men were to be such as had decayed by casual means and not through their own dissolute life; no idiot or person unable to say without book the Lord's prayer, creed and commandments, was eligible. Each of them received yearly a gown of good durable cloth of one sad colour. Their bread, beer, and other victuals were to be good and wholesome: salt fish was prescribed for Lent: no meat was to be eaten on Wednesday or Friday.<sup>1</sup>

(e) *Bread, etc.*—The bread charities of the period afford one element of special interest. They were numerous, though perhaps not more so than this favourite form of bequest has been before and since. What is worthy of notice is that about this time it was frequently provided that the loaves were to be of white, or wheaten, or sweet wheaten flour, although wheaten bread was too dear for common eating, and other cheaper flours were largely in use. This fact may have a bearing on the history of food products, for I think it probable that these charities assisted in maintaining the tradition that wheaten bread was the proper food of the poor, and so in preventing the permanent adoption of a cheaper substitute. In the parish of Hackney, *e.g.*, there are no less than six bread gifts between 1603—1671. From these there was a weekly supply of six or seven dozen 1*d.* or 2*d.* loaves to be distributed on Sundays at the church. In four cases it is stipulated that wheaten bread is to be given. Hackney was not a populous parish, and these loaves must have reached quite a large proportion of the poor inhabitants.<sup>2</sup>

As instances of the sporadic charities which spring from the occasional discovery of a want not so commonly felt, I notice a gift at Bedford in 1609: 40*s.* a year is left to provide better candle light in dark nights from the feast of All Saints to the Purification, and 6*s.* 8*d.* for salary to a night bell man. Another bequest is for pea straw and green rushes to furnish the pews in the church at Deptford.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Alleyne's College of God's Gift (1619), at Dulwich, is another of the considerable charities of this period.

<sup>2</sup> London Reports i., 157—164.

<sup>3</sup> Rep. viii., 70; London Rep. ii., 148.



## 3. THE PLAGUE.

The first two Stuart kings began to reign amid the horrors that attended the deadly epidemic known under the significantly simple title of the sickness. The outbreak in 1625 was the more fatal, but even in 1603 the London mortality was over 30,000.<sup>1</sup> The death-rate began to rise steeply in June, reached a climax at the beginning of September, when for three weeks the deaths numbered over 2,200 a week, and fell off rapidly in October. The history of the epidemic is given in Creighton's ninth chapter, and many particulars are to be gathered from "A Treatise of the Plague" by the dramatist, Thomas Lodge; "A short dialogue concerning the plagues infection" by the Rev. James Bamford; and other authorities cited by Creighton. To these may be added the Act (1 Jac. I., c. 31), entitled "an act for the charitable relief and ordering of persons infected by the plague." The story of this epidemic illustrates the threefold machinery of private charity, municipal action, and legislative enactment, and these last, though they were the acts of public authority, were regarded as equally philanthropic with the first. The end common to all was to make provision for the needy and more suffering population, although, as we shall see, some of the measures taken would at the present time be classed rather under sanitation or police than charity.

"Where the infestation most rageth there povertie raigneth among the commons, which having no supplies to satisfie the greedie desire of those that should attend them, are for the most part left desolate and die without reliefe."<sup>2</sup> The lot of the poor in the crowded liberties was rendered the more intolerable because the city rulers compelled them to remain in their houses, not only if they themselves had the plague, but also if they lived in an infected house. This is

<sup>1</sup> C. Creighton, "Hist. Epidemics in Britain," i., 477. The epidemic was not confined to London, but was widespread throughout the country. In some of the country towns it began earlier than in the metropolis, as, *e.g.*, at Chester (Sept., 1602), where cabins for the plague-stricken were erected outside the city.

<sup>2</sup> Lodge, p. 3.



a rough measure of isolation, and while the resources of the time do not suggest the possibility of a more humane policy, it is not surprising that the poor should regard it as an act of "extreame cruelty." They believed, not unreasonably, that since they were prevented from going abroad to seek relief or maintenance, the power which made them prisoners in their own houses ought also to provide for their necessity during their enforced seclusion. One of the provisions of the Charitable Act is directed towards the removal of this hardship. Permission is given to the mayor (or in country districts to the justices) to levy a rate for the poor who are thus shut up, and, if the town be too poor to do this, then the justices may assess the tax on the county within a radius of five miles. Even before the passing of this Act it had been regarded as right that if the plague-stricken were poor and indigent they should be supplied by the charity and liberality of the citizens.<sup>1</sup>

The policy that should be adopted by a city in plague time is described by Lodge, and the provisions of the Act show that the means approved were largely carried out.<sup>2</sup> Vagabonds and masterless men coming from an infected area are to be prevented from entering the city. The streets should be kept clean from "stinking rubbige," and slaughter houses (says Lodge)<sup>3</sup> should be removed outside the city. He also recommends, and the statute authorises, the appointment of "discreet and skilful men in every parish," whose duty it would be to watch all sick people, and find out whether they are suffering from the plague. It was a common custom, and a good one, to compel infected persons to keep indoors, but not until a physician had certified the disease, and even then humanity should be observed to "such as are seazed." This is a counsel of perfection not perhaps absent from the minds of the rulers, yet hardly to be

<sup>1</sup> Lodge, chap. viii.

<sup>2</sup> There is little doubt that the Act, 1 Jac. I., c. 31, which follows the plague, enacts measures that had been actually tried, thus giving legal sanction to what the local authorities had done on their own responsibility. The Bill was introduced on May 11th, 1604, and passed on July 3rd (I. Ho. Com. i. 207 and 251).

<sup>3</sup> Lodge lived in Warwick Lane, close to Smithfield market.



obeyed in general practice, because the extent of the evil was far too great to be successfully coped with by hasty measures of emergency. Had humane provision been the rule, it would hardly have been necessary to resort to such drastic deterrents as those specified in the statute. The poor who had been shut up were adjudged to die as felons if they went abroad with the plague sores on them; and if, being free from the disease, they wandered contrary to orders they might be punished as vagabonds.

At the time of outbreak, a Pest House was already partly built in the fields towards Finsbury.<sup>1</sup> It had been set, according to Lodge, too near the highway, and it was not, in his opinion, equal to the "charitable intent of those good men who have already contributed to the same." The hospital that might have been built and furnished from the "liberality and faithfull performance of the deceaseds will" would have been large and airy. It ought to face north and east. There should be not less than fifty-six rooms, and in each room two beds, so that the sick man might change from the one to the other. A second building was needed where convalescents might "make their probations." Some further particulars as to the seventeenth century ideal of hospital management may be inserted even at the risk of interrupting the narrative.<sup>2</sup> The chamber may be sprinkled with rose vinegar, or rose water if the patient be rich; it should likewise be strewn with odoriferous flowers and sweet smelling herbs, namely in summer-time, with roses, violets and pinks, with leaves of willow and the vine. It is good also to have quinces and citrons to smell to. It will comfort and quicken the patient's heart if he rub his nose, ears, hands and face with a preparation of white rose vinegar, good malmsey wine, powder of zodoarie, cloves, dried roses, and musk. This hospital belongs rather to the world of Lodge's imagination than to the actual London of the Stuart plague years. The real Pest House, it is true, was regarded as a monument of London's right honourable and

<sup>1</sup> Lodge, p. 49—51.

<sup>2</sup> Lodge, c. x.



Christian charity, and we read of divers who were there "well used and thence well returned." But it was not, in the absence of odoriferous flowers, a desirable place, and people were strongly averse from being sent there.

The philanthropy of James Bamford sheds a bright light over the plague year. When others fled he remained.<sup>1</sup> Magistrates, ministers, physicians, together with others who had the means, did "runne away." Bamford is not able to decide whether doctors "be bound in conscience to be resident, in regard of their profession and ability to do good," or whether "they may use their liberty to shift for themselves . . . in regard they are no publicke persons, and live (not by a common stipend but) by what they can get." He is, however, quite certain that magistrates and ministers ought to remain at their posts.<sup>2</sup> His own position was the more difficult, in that his teaching was unpopular. The common notion was that the plague was not infectious. The poor clung to this error as a ground for their objection to being shut up. The minister knew that they were wrong, and he was diligent in telling them so in the church. He warned them against going out while the plague was on them; pointed out the dangers of visiting others who had the disease; and denounced those women who took their children to the burial of plague-stricken bodies. The people were angry. It seemed to them a breach of "pietie and charity" not to hold assembly in the sick man's room, or to take a lingering look into the grave of the dead. Bamford was not to be daunted. What he had said, he put in a book, and he had endeavoured to "speake as plaine" as he could. It is gratifying to be able to add that his good relations with his people were not permanently affected. As the summer wore away they began to flock to his lectures, and he was finally able to dedicate his book to his well-beloved in Christ, the parishioners of St. Olave's in Southwark.

In addition to what was done in London, the charitable activity of the outlying village of Hendon deserves a mention

<sup>1</sup> As also did Dr. Lodge and others.

<sup>2</sup> Bamford, p. 72.



which may be inserted here, although the account relates to the later outbreak of 1625. They relieved the sick, collected £8 (being but a small village) for the poor of St. Andrew's, Holborn, and paid good weekly wages to two men for attending and burying the dead. At Tottenham also the inhabitants began to extend hospitality to the sick, but sundry royal servants lived there, and they were quickly warned to desist from receiving patients.<sup>1</sup>

#### 4. REV. ABRAHAM COLFE.

It may serve to bring out the characteristics of the philanthropy of this period with more fulness if we set down some particular description of a few people who were active in the practice of charity. The motives that moved them, the kind of want that appealed to them, and the nature of the provision that was thought to be sufficient, will be unfolded before us in the personal instances that I adduce in this and the two following sections. The first of these illustrative cases is concerned with the parish of Lewisham, near London.<sup>2</sup>

The ancestors of Abraham Colfe had lived at Calais until that town was lost to the English in 1558. They had then removed to Canterbury, and formed part of the French congregation that met in the crypt of the Cathedral. It was in the neighbouring Free Grammar School that Abraham received his education. These incidents of birth and childhood leave an impress on his will made in 1656, in which bequests are recorded for the city, the school, and the French Protestants. Colfe was appointed curate at Lewisham at the age of twenty-four; a few years later he became incumbent of the parish, in which for over half a century he united an active benevolence to his religious ministrations. The young man's ardour was evinced when he led a procession of his parishioners through the London

<sup>1</sup> Creighton, i., 518.

<sup>2</sup> The material for this sketch is taken from the Reports of the Charity Commission, London, ii., 404-39, which contains extracts from Colfe's will; the Memorials prefixed to W. H. Black's "*Bibliothecæ Colfanæ*" (1831), and the D. N. B.



streets to protest against the unjust, though apparently legal, enclosure of some common land. The privileges of the parishioners had been curtailed. The aggressor was no less a person than a yeoman of the King's Boiler House; but this did not deter the vicar and his throng from intercepting the King near Topnam High Cross and petitioning for redress. It was a last device, and a successful one. The commoners had previously appealed to the Law Courts, but enclosing of common land was the fashion of the day, and the decision had been against them. But the King, unwilling to be worried in the matter, now instructed the Privy Council that he would hear no more of it. A new trial was granted, and this time "a verdict passed in the behalf of the poore inhabitants."<sup>1</sup>

Mrs. Colfe was no less active in other directions, and might almost have been the original of Herbert's country parson's wife. Her duties were various, and included many things that have since come within the sphere of professional attendance. The epitaph inscribed to her memory by her husband when she died, in 1643, will show the character of her service. He records that she had been above forty years a willing nurse, midwife, surgeon and in part physician to all, both rich and poore; without expecting reward.<sup>2</sup> Husband and wife were generally popular and beloved. It would have been strange had it been otherwise. They were, notwithstanding, saved from the peril of unmitigated praise by "the wonderful unthankfulness of some few" of the inhabitants.

The list of Colfe's benefactions is a long one, and it is probably safe to infer that his charities during his lifetime were similar to his endowments. In fact, we know that to a large extent this was the case. He left money to found sermons and a divinity lecture, to purchase Bibles, to pay for catechising, for providing libraries, for taking care of the church clock. His gifts further provided for the perpetual distribution of sweet wheaten bread in several

<sup>1</sup> Black, xx—xxii.

<sup>2</sup> Black, xxv.



parishes, charities to prisoners, gifts on their marriage to honest maid-servants, who should have continued for seven years with one master or mistress, and funds for amending the footpaths, and draining the highways. But the most considerable part of his estate was given to the foundation of almshouses and schools. The almshouses for five persons were to be strongly built of flint and brick, each one furnished with a chimney and with a little garden plot. The inmates must be over three-score years old, past their bodily labour, and able to say the Lord's Prayer, the Belief, and Ten Commandments. Their dress was a gown of black or dark-coloured stuff, and they enjoyed a small pension.

The scheme with which Colfe's mind was chiefly concerned was the founding of the two schools that bear his name. One of these was for the free teaching of thirty-one poor men's children. They were to be taught to read well and write well, to sing the ordinary tunes of the Psalms, to enter into the casting of accounts, to understand all the English accidence, and to be entered also into the learning of the grammar. The children eligible were destitute orphans, and children of parish pensioners, day labourers, poor tradesmen or the like; only if there were not enough of these might the children of comparatively well-to-do parents be admitted. The schoolmaster was allowed to make certain small and carefully restricted charges for materials supplied to the scholars, as pens, ink, paper, brooms and rods; but he is forbidden to receive gratuities, "be it wigs, cracknels, or any other gifts or money." He is provided with a salary and the southern half of a house. In return, he is to behave himself religiously towards God and diligent in teaching. There were also funds for distribution of prizes, and for the apprenticing of children on leaving school.

The second school was for the teaching of Latin, Greek and "the Hebrew."<sup>1</sup> It was open to the sons of several

<sup>1</sup> From an early period of his residence at Lewisham, Colfe had been one of the governors of the Free Grammar School of Queen



specified clergymen, and then in the first place to the same class of boy who went to the reading school. Failing poor children, others might be admitted. As there was apprenticeship for the children at the elementary school, so there was an exhibition tenable at the University for the grammar school boys. But it would seem that the love of scholarship was not strong in Lewisham, and that education was regarded primarily as a means of livelihood, for Colfe was evidently doubtful whether enough boys would be found to learn Latin, Greek and "the Hebrew," unless he held out some inducement of a more practical nature. He accordingly provided for a writing master who was to buy for the pupils " (but at their charge and their parents being willing) the most excellent printed writing copy books of the fairest hand," and the boys were to be taught "a fair secretary or Roman hand" for two hours every Thursday and Saturday afternoons.<sup>1</sup>

Such were the benevolences of Abraham Colfe, "which matters God of his great mercy hath (for about thirty years past) put into mind." During this period he had been fulfilling the ordinary duties of his ministry, and even adding to them fresh tasks; as Governor of Queen Elizabeth's College he had been learning from experience the needs of education; and a severe economy of his personal expenses must have been necessary to enable him to purchase the lands and make the investments which should yield an income of some £200 a year. A glance at his various properties shows us how persistently he had kept his purpose in mind. He was not able to buy any large estate; but now and again he acquired a few acres of meadow land, or a house and orchard, or tan yard, or an osier bed, which he grubbed up to turn into pasture. Thus, by little and little, and in spite of such risks and vicissitudes

Elizabeth's College, and throughout his life he took a keen interest in education. His scheme for his own schools may be regarded as an epitome of personal experience.

<sup>1</sup> Both master and usher, are to take care that the school is swept weekly and kept sweet and clean. The latter is to be a single person, and by God's grace to remain unmarried.



as attended investments in those times of civil strife, he amassed the means of perpetuating after his death the charities which had employed the half century of his ministerial life.

### 5. LITTLE GIDDING.

The charities of Colfe, although they were more than ordinarily munificent, and indicate an unusual concentration and persistency of thought, were yet similar in kind to those of many of his contemporaries. Our next instance occupies much more distinctly a class by itself, even if it should not be regarded as a unique prevision of the modern settlement movement. This settlement of the Ferrar family at Little Gidding<sup>1</sup> was the subject of widespread curiosity, and some malicious gossip in the seventeenth century, and became again an object of literary interest in the nineteenth through the publication of "John Inglesant." Nicholas, the guiding spirit of a retired community of over forty persons, came of a stock notable in commerce, and not lacking in philanthropic interests. Uncle and father were engaged in trade with the plantations: the son also had proved his business abilities by his conduct as acting secretary of the Virginia Company. The elder Ferrars had promoted mission schools for the "young savages" of America;<sup>2</sup> the claims of religious education were strongly felt by the younger man. We find in him the not unusual combination of great practical capacity with mystical fervour. The idea of a "retreat" had long been in his mind, although he was only thirty-three when he withdrew to Little Gidding. But before he was able to realise his great design he had already become generally recognised in London as one who was likely to fill a large place in the world of affairs.<sup>3</sup>

The immediate occasion of the retirement to Little

<sup>1</sup> See "Two Lives of N. Ferrar, by his brother John and Dr. Jebb," edited by J. E. B. Mayor.

<sup>2</sup> "Two Lives," p. 205 n.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 217 *et pass.*



Gidding was the outbreak of the plague in London in 1625. The residence selected was in a neglected condition, but is described as a "fair house set in a fair garden." The church hard by was in still more serious disrepair, and had so far passed from its original purpose as to be in use for the storage of hay and straw. The quality of the new owners is indicated in an anecdote related of old Mrs. Ferrar, the widowed mother of Nicholas. On her arrival on horseback, and at the close of day, at the new home, she refused to enter her own house until they had first been into the church to pray. But before they could do this it was necessary to remove the stuff with which the building was filled. This misuse of sacred edifices was quite common. Some of the correspondence of Nicholas with his friend, George Herbert, had reference to another church, at Leighton, which had fallen down a long time and lay in the dust. A brief had been granted for a collection, for the purpose of rebuilding it, and had proved unproductive. Ferrar, accordingly, urges Herbert to do what he could in the way of raising money among his friends.<sup>1</sup>

When the church at Little Gidding had been restored, it was in constant use for daily services. Frequent exercises of worship were as much in Ferrar's intention as the numerous charities which we proceed to consider. A Sunday school was conducted by the elder girls of the family. To this the children of the neighbouring villages were welcomed, assembling in the summer time in a gallery of the house, and during the winter in a room with a good fire. The task of the morning was to repeat the Psalms from memory, a reward of one penny being given for each psalm properly learned. Some of the children, we are told, earned as much as threepence or fourpence. The new psalms said, those learnt in previous weeks were recollected. Later in the day the children were entertained to dinner of "baked pudding and other meat."

The day school, conducted by three masters, was primarily for the children of the family, but those of other parishes

<sup>1</sup> "The Life by his brother John," pp. 49-50.



were also allowed to attend. A fact connected with this school shows a rather acute social conscience: The maintenance of flocks of pigeons was fashionable, and there are frequent complaints of the mischief done by the birds to the crops of the poor. Little Gidding possessed a dove-cote, but since the property was pasture land, and inasmuch as it would not be fair to keep pigeons on other people's corn, it was decided to convert the dove-house into a schoolroom. Whereas the Ferrars' pigeons might have flourished on their neighbours' food, in fact their neighbours' children were freely taught in their new model school.

Another charity is the dispensary. Ferrar had gained a "sudden proficiency" in physic during his sojourn in Italy, and retained his interest in the healing art. He did not allow the young women of the community to practise as physicians, but "they were fine surgeons, and they kept by them all manner of salves oils and balsams: a room they had on purpose to lock up these and cordial waters of their own distilling. All which being as freely given by them to the country folks, as themselves freely received all from God and their kind uncle, they were sure not to want customers, which every year cost them a good round sum. None of them were nice of dressing with their own hands poor people's wounds, were they never so offensive."<sup>1</sup> In another room, the walls of which were "texted" with verses of Scripture, Mr. Ferrar daily received such as came to him for ghostly or bodily comfort. At these times enquiries were made as to what people were sick, in order that he might send to relieve them.<sup>2</sup>

In addition to these acts of healing and instructions, the girls were always curious at their needles for service of the altar or the poor. We read, too, of many charities and casual alms. In particular, benighted travellers, genuine or counterfeit, were entertained with a night's lodging, together with a supper, "such as their oven supplied, of warm baked meats."<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Jebb, 231-232.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 280.

<sup>3</sup> Dr. Jebb, 248.



For a dozen years, until his death in 1637, Nicholas Ferrar continued to preside over this little community, gathered firstly, it is true, for the more orderly practice of a religious life, but finding expression for itself also in the charitable labours we have noticed, and in literature and handicrafts as well. The settlement survived the death of the founder for some ten years, but the life of the inmates was more and more subject to disturbance through the progress of civil strife until in 1647 both house and church were spoiled by some adherents of the Parliament.<sup>1</sup> Dr. Jebb relates that a minister who visited Ferrar on his death-bed began to congratulate him on the joy he might now have in the many almsdeeds he had done. With characteristic sincerity the dying man interrupted the pleasant discourse:—"What, speak you of such things? it would have been but a suitable return for me to have given all I had, and not to have scattered a few crumbs of alms here and there."<sup>2</sup> It is perhaps natural that the man to whom this reflection suggested itself was one whose charities had been more extensive and considerate than was usual.

We possess contemporary evidence of the benefits which the plain country folk derived from the philanthropy of this family. A mighty change was effected in their manners: in place of the accustomed "naughty or lewd or else vain ballads," the "sacred poetry of David's harp" was heard in the streets; while the fathers and mothers after their work was done would sit in their cottages listening to the children as they read and repeated verses from the Psalms.<sup>3</sup> But this might not continue. For twenty-two years Little Gidding was marked out in happy contrast to other villages. Chance had brought their benefactors there, and chance had removed them. We may imagine the memory of the Psalms lingering on after the inducement to learn them had ceased. But the sick were not visited, the salves were not prepared, the oven fires were cold, and Little Gidding, as a centre of beneficence, became a memory of the past.

<sup>1</sup> D. N. B.<sup>2</sup> Dr. Jebb, 261.<sup>3</sup> Dr. Jebb, 235.



## 6. THE GOLDEN VALLEY.

Such as Little Gidding may have been before the happy episode in its history, such the Golden Valley was, and probably in an aggravated degree. An account of it will therefore serve to supplement the last two sections, illustrating as it will do the fact of large areas of distress beyond the aid of charity.

Rowland Vaughan in his entertaining little book<sup>1</sup> enters a plea that he may not be considered "fantasticall," but at the worst only curious. The details of his projects will be seen to justify at least the milder title. We must be content to refer to this book for much racy information of an autobiographical kind, and also for particulars of the extensive irrigation scheme carried out by him, for this, though possibly more useful than many charities, sprang from an industrial rather than a philanthropic motive. He spent enormous sums of money on his water-courses, dikes and hatches, and found his return in a vastly improved property. In this matter he was successful. His more directly charitable purposes were rather visionary than practical. His plan was ambitious, but if it failed it was from want of financial support; or at least, if there was anything essentially unsound in his proposals, the defects do not appear in the book and had no opportunity of appearing in an actual "commonwealth."<sup>2</sup> The laughter with which he was greeted in the ordinaries may probably be due in part to the originality of his conception and in part to his quaint manner of advocacy.

"The Golden Vale in Herefordshire (being the pride of al that county) . . . being the richest" was nevertheless for want of employment "the plentifullest place of poore" in the Kingdom.<sup>3</sup> Vaughan tells us that beggary was raised to a great reputation, and yet, as he could perceive, a beggar was

<sup>1</sup> "Most approved and long experienced Water-workes."

<sup>2</sup> Mrs. E. B. Wood speaks of the Commonwealth of Mechanicalls as actually established. But I think it is clearly shown in Rowland Vaughan's account of his project that this was not the case.

<sup>3</sup> P. 30.



potential labour power.<sup>1</sup> Within a mile and a half of his house there were 500 poor habitations. The chief means of support was to be found (next to begging) in spinning. The lot of the labourer was painful and that of the beggar intolerable.<sup>2</sup> The curse of the poor was their poverty, for there was not one amongst ten that had 5s. to buy a bale of flax. They were obliged to borrow in order to set up trade. Hereford was the nearest market, and it lost them a day's labour to fetch their material. Then they had to go three or four miles to buy their half bushel of corn, and further time was lost in awaiting the miller's convenience before they could have it ground. "And thus many dayes are mispent in most miserable maner."<sup>3</sup> The poverty of the district appears further in the fact that in the hundred of Weabtre there were "foure and twenty parishes; not any one of all able to maintain a Preaching Minister."<sup>4</sup> The country seems to have been much neglected in this respect until Vaughan himself procured a young minister, "having a good witte, a good memory and a pritty dribble of learning" and this man made himself "fytte to teach children."<sup>5</sup> It does not appear that besides Vaughan himself there was any amongst the well-to-do residents who took an interest in the poor. The surrounding villages were badly off even in that least useful charity, the bequest. It is true that Dame Blanche Parry, Rowland's grand-aunt, a chief bedwoman of Queen Elizabeth, had in 1589 left as much land as would yield seven-score bushels of corn for the poor of Bacton and Newton;<sup>6</sup> but I cannot find record of any charity previous to 1610 (the date of Vaughan's book) in the following parishes of the Golden Valley:—Dorstone, Abbey Dor, Peterchurch, St. Devereux, Vowchurch or Ewyas Harold. Vaughan's

<sup>1</sup> P. 32 f.

<sup>2</sup> P. 31.

<sup>3</sup> P. 33.

<sup>4</sup> P. 43.

<sup>5</sup> P. 38.

<sup>6</sup> Rep. xxxii., part 2, p. 286. Mrs. E. B. Wood mentions another bequest of Dame Blanche's for repair of road between Moat, Douro, and New Court.



Valley, then the pride of Herefordshire, was suffering from severe poverty and he thought he discovered the cause of destitution in the inability of the inhabitants to find profitable employment for their labour. It was to amend this mischief that he devised his project for the great benefit of the Commonwealth. The central idea is perfectly sound. His function, as he conceived, it was that of a benevolent middle man. He would obviate the need to run hither and hither in search of a market, and would bring buyer and seller together in order to save the time and cost that were wasted in unprofitable wanderings.

The plan for achieving the end was a good one, although brodered with some "curious" suggestions.

Erect, in the first place, a mill for twenty broadcloth looms; add ten looms for narrowcloth, yet other ten for fustian and an indefinite number (as might be necessary) for the weaving of silk. In connection with this chief industry such minor crafts would spring up, as those of tailors, shoemakers, glovers, and the rest; and the whole number of the "mechanicalls" would amount to 2,000. Now it is important that the workers should not be obliged to leave their proper work in order to prepare their own food. Accordingly there was to be one great common kitchen where the roasting, boiling, baking might be done in Vaughan's "owne range, ovens and furnesse."<sup>1</sup> Let the feeding (how wise is this) be nothing mean. There shall be "a pasty of venison to dinner and another to supper" in the season, and this shall suggest the menus of the year. Adjoining the common kitchen must be a common dining-room, in which is to be placed a high table for "knights and gentlemen."

This industrial community is to be, as far as possible, co-operative and self-sustaining. When the members interchange the product of their labour with one another the Recorder will fix fair prices; and when any grow too old for work they are to be supported in almshouses, which were already so firmly set in Vaughan's imagination that he almost forgets their want of more substantial existence.

<sup>1</sup> P. 36.



Within the community fair prices would be maintained; but all "out and in-commers" were to be left "subject to their fortune."<sup>1</sup>

Vaughan can never have been a phlegmatic man, and he is sometimes moved beyond endurance by the comments of his neighbours, as when they tell him he could manage if he had money enough.<sup>1</sup> "So (my Lord) if a man had money ynough (with the Lord's permission) Hee might build a Towre of Babell. I cannot see how money can be wanting, I have so many honourable friendes."<sup>2</sup> To these honourable friends he appealed, to the Earl of Pembroke, the Bishops of Worcester, Hereford, Gloucester, and many others.<sup>3</sup> But he sought their assistance in vain. Yet it is difficult to see what further inducements he could have invented. His plan provided for a turret with a sentinel whose duty it would be to give signal by the ringing of a bell on the approach of any "contributer" who might visit the establishment. If he should be a footman he would enter to sound of drum: a trumpet would herald the visit of one on horseback.

During the visit the artificers would humble themselves with respective obedience, acknowledging them by word and deed to be the "Founder of their well-doing and happy Commonwealth." The "contributers" did not come, even though their visit was to be the occasion for "all joy and merriment," with wind instruments and all sorts of "musicke plaies." Whether they suspected the soundness of Vaughan's project, or foresaw that so much comfort for the workers would yield small profit to the "contributers," cannot be determined. What is certain is that Vaughan was saddened by a generous failure, and that the poverty of the Golden Valley remained unrelieved.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> P. 37.

<sup>2</sup> P. 44.

<sup>3</sup> P. 69.

<sup>4</sup> A similar instance of poverty is supplied by Cunningham, "Growth of English Industry and Commerce," ii., 206 n. The population of Sheffield in 1615 was 2,207: there were 725 begging poor; 100 householders which relieved others, though there is not one of them able to keep a team on his own land, and not above ten who possess a cow; there were 160 householders not able to relieve others, "such as are not



## 7. WORK AND POVERTY.

The conditions of destitution revealed in the Golden Valley and at Sheffield cannot be regarded as peculiar to a few districts or as anything but common in the kingdom at large. Such poverty was not casual or incidental, but a result of general causes. Centres of industry and modes of commerce were shifting. Governmental interference with trade was determined in part by the royal demand for revenue, and in part was the result of well intentioned if not always successful efforts to relieve the poor by the regulation of business. Great distress in the clothing districts of Gloucester is shown by a petition which the artificers presented in 1616. A Commission was appointed to enquire why the men were out of work, and the masters were ordered to find them employment. An unexpected result of this policy was that the manufacturers of Wilts and Worcestershire joined in the cry, thus demonstrating that the distress was more than local.<sup>1</sup>

A further cause of distress is found in the growing disparity between the price of labour and the price of corn.<sup>2</sup> Corn, as one writer puts it, was "brought and doth continue at too

able to abide the storms of one fortnight's sickness but would be thereby driven to beggary." The balance of population consisted of children and servants, who were "constrained to work sore to provide them necessaries."

<sup>1</sup> Gardiner's "History of England," ii., 388-9.

<sup>2</sup> See Rogers, "Hist." iv., 292, 524-5; v., 276, 672-3.

Average Price.	Corn.	Carpenter.	Thatcher's Man.	Farm Labourer.
	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.
1401—1540	5 11 $\frac{3}{4}$	0 5 $\frac{7}{8}$	0 3 $\frac{1}{2}$	0 4 per day.
1540—1582	13 10 $\frac{1}{2}$	0 10	0 6 $\frac{1}{2}$	0 6 $\frac{1}{2}$ „
			Artizan's Labourer.	
1583—1592	23 8 $\frac{1}{4}$	5 11 $\frac{1}{2}$	4 0	4 7 per week.
1593—1602	34 10 $\frac{1}{4}$	6 0	4 0	4 5 „
1603—1612	35 3 $\frac{1}{2}$	6 0 $\frac{1}{2}$	4 0	4 10 $\frac{1}{2}$ „
1613—1622	37 9	6 1 $\frac{1}{4}$	4 0 $\frac{1}{4}$	4 10 $\frac{3}{4}$ „
1623—1632	43 7 $\frac{1}{2}$	6 3 $\frac{1}{4}$	4 4 $\frac{1}{4}$	4 9 „
1633—1642	41 2	7 0 $\frac{1}{4}$	5 0	5 6 $\frac{1}{2}$ „



high a rate for the poore artificer and labouring man; by which dearth, to oft ariseth discontentments, and mutinies among the common sort." Shortly before 1611 there were corn riots "in Warwickshire, Northamptonshire, and other places."<sup>1</sup> Some doggerel verses found in the "minister's porch" at Wye will serve to indicate the exasperated condition of popular discontent sharpened as it was by the pains of hunger:

"The corne is so dear,  
I dout maini will starve this yeare.  
If you see not to this,  
Sum of you will speed amis.  
Our souls they are dear,  
For our bodyes have sume ceare.  
Before we arise  
Less will safise.  
The pore there is more  
Then goes from dore to dore."<sup>2</sup>

The fact of the scarcity of corn is further evidenced by the measures taken to relieve it, which, however, seem sometimes to have aggravated the dearth.<sup>3</sup> Destitution, or at least the consciousness of it, was accentuated by the enclosures of commons. The condition of the commoners was a miserable one. Yet a considerable population did manage to subsist on the wastes, keeping a few sheep or cattle, getting their feed where they could, and securing game when they could find any. These half savage people went to swell the unemployed or the vagrant class when the enclosure of land drove them from their wild. They had lived wretchedly on a swampy undrained earth; when they departed it was with rancour and regret.<sup>4</sup>

Vagabonds were numerous,<sup>5</sup> and their ranks were recruited from various kinds of poor. Many of them were idle rogues by profession. The pretences of these were detected by a shrewd landowner at Sutton-Coleshill. This early single-handed mendicity society offered to every vagrant work at gathering stones; and set lusty stout servants to keep them

<sup>1</sup> "Commons Complaint," by Arthur Standish (1611).

<sup>2</sup> Collection of State Papers (Dom.) (1630), p. 387.

<sup>3</sup> Leonard, 187, 192.

<sup>4</sup> "Bread for the Poor," by Adam Moore (1653).

<sup>5</sup> Less so then in the sixteenth century according to Cunningham.



to hard labour. The vagrants naturally journeyed elsewhere, and this device of Mr. Harman's induced the idle poor of his own parish to seek work for themselves. "Would to God there were more such Harmans" exclaims the writer. But he also tells us that he had heard the "beggars curse the magistrates unto their faces, for providing such a law to whip and brand . . . and not houses of labour for them."<sup>1</sup> This may have been raised as an excuse by rogues who did not really want to work. It was also the perfectly natural complaint of those who were thrown out of employ by the exigencies of commerce, or who found the enhanced prices of food beyond the purchasing power of their wages.

Lack of employment as a central cause of poverty engaged the anxious attention of statesmen and entered into the hearts of numerous philanthropists. Work was very generally provided throughout the larger part of the country for some years after 1633. This was done through the ordinary machinery of local government, and it was only rendered possible by the persistent action of the Privy Council.<sup>2</sup> The amount of charitable provision for setting poor on work was not large, and could not in any way supply the want. This was one of those large common needs that could obviously only be met by public corporate action. But the bequests for this purpose are extremely interesting and suggestive. It would seem that in this instance philanthropy exerted an indirect influence very much more considerable than its immediate range of action. I find forty-six bequests for setting the poor on work between 1572 and 1692. Of these

8	are before	1601.
3	between	1601—10.
3	"	1611—20.
19	"	1621—30.
2	"	1631—40.
4	"	1641—50.
1	"	1651—60.
2	"	1661—70.
3	"	1671—80.
1	in	1692.

<sup>1</sup> "Stanley's Remedy" (1646), p. 4 and 5.

<sup>2</sup> See for a full account of this national policy Miss Leonard's "Early History of English Poor Relief," Chap. xi. and Appendices.



That is to say, the one period when bequests for setting poor on work are frequent, is the decade that preceded the period in which the Privy Council and the justices made a strenuous effort to absorb the surplus labour power of the country. Now these bequests indicate a very considerable interest in the problem. In all probability many of the testators had themselves made experiments in this direction, for it may be accepted as a law of bequests that it is the interest of a lifetime that seeks to perpetuate itself after death. It is certain that when so many left estates for the provision of work, a much larger number, who did not make such *post mortem* provision, had nevertheless been concerned in this policy while they were still alive. The necessity of finding work for the poor had been impressed on the upper classes.<sup>1</sup> The case of Gloucester is particularly striking. In 1616 the clothiers were complaining of lack of employment, and the Government ordered the masters to employ them. In the following year, Mrs. Dutton, of Northleach, in that county, left a bequest for the purpose of lending money to some honest tradesman in fustians, or such trade, as might keep people from idleness by setting them on work.<sup>2</sup> I suggest that the bequests for finding work in nineteen parishes between 1621—30 indicates a considerable popular recognition of the need. The poor cry out for work: the gentry wish to provide them with work. I think the movement was a widespread one; what is certain is that the perception, so far as it goes, by the philanthropists, precedes the organized measures of the authorities. The action of the justices was not only stimulated by the pressure of the Council, it was also supported by the sympathy of their neighbours. The sound policy of the state owed its initiation to the enterprise, and in part its success to the support of the benevolence of private individuals.

It is only for a few years that the policy was carried out with any thoroughness. It went under during the troubles

<sup>1</sup> I am struck with the number of people of position to be found in this group of testators.

<sup>2</sup> Rep., xxi., 118.



that preceded the Civil War, and though there are some scattered gifts, both during and after the time of strife, the experiment was never resumed.<sup>1</sup> The later bequests are only a dying memory of the temporary effort to find state employment for those who were left without resource by the ordinary requirements of the labour market.

<sup>1</sup> A glance at the dates of these later bequests indicates that they chiefly come from those who had lived through the period of the experiment in the public provision of employment.



## CHAPTER III.

## PHILANTHROPY UNDER THE PURITANS.

## THE SET-BACK TO PHILANTHROPY.

THE period of Puritan rule initiated by the Civil War and terminated at the Restoration overthrew the edifice of political absolutism which had been so laboriously constructed by Tudor statesmen, and which the zeal of the Stuart Kings had already undermined. The history of political and ecclesiastical controversy is outside of our present concern, but an incidental effect of the years of struggle through which that great conflict of ideas worked itself out, calls for some observation. The practice of philanthropy as it had grown up in the course of a century was hindered in many directions. Along certain lines it would be resumed with greater energy and more manifold devices in the succeeding period. Its central idea, as we shall notice in a later chapter, was not only overthrown but forgotten. The point which we have to consider at present is the interruption of the ordinary charitable activities which resulted from the disturbed condition of the country.

“ We finde a strange impayrement in our estates, especially those of us that are wealthy, having largely contributed to these wars; and those of us that are poore, and had out of the bounty and charity of our neighbours, by their impoverishment, having scarce bread to put in our heads, or to sustaine languishing nature; but draw out weary and miserable lives . . . those of us who had wont to live indifferently well in our widowhood, by our owne endeavours,



and the benevolent contributions of our neighbours, are now enforced to feed upon the bread and water of affliction."<sup>1</sup>

The pamphlet from which these sentences are drawn is not above suspicion of being a political satire, and its evidence, distinct as it is, could not be accepted if it stood alone. But there is abundant confirmation from other sources. The charities of the time suffered a serious curtailment and the period for those who habitually rely on eleemosynary aid was one of enhanced disappointment.

The effect of the war in bringing to a close the charitable community at Little Gidding has been noticed. The endowed charities, which are always, as we have seen, liable to vicissitudes, were now subject to more than ordinary malversation.<sup>2</sup> When Abraham Colfe carried to the Guildhall "thirty-nine ounces of silver plate" as part of his contribution to the forced loan of the Parliament, he did not allow his charities to suffer. At his death the loan was not repaid. But he had sent it on the public faith; he trusted that his executors would recover it. He did not so far rely on it as to name that debt as part of the fund for his charity, but the money if it were refunded was to pay the cost of his funeral.<sup>3</sup> But we cannot imagine that as a general custom men rated provision for the poor more highly than the due observance of their own obsequies.

We are not surprised to hear that the accustomed weekly meals, old clothes, hose and shoes were less regularly forthcoming than heretofore.<sup>4</sup>

Even the wives of wealthy citizens who had been used to expect a country house and to complain of the fuel they

<sup>1</sup> "The Widowes Lamentation" (1643). It is marked in the British Museum Catalogue as a satire. It looks fondly to the old religion, and might be supposed to emanate from the Royalist camp did it not contain large and coarse descriptions of the relations between gentlemen of the Court and the women of the city.

<sup>2</sup> Peter Chamberlen, "The Poor Man's Advocate" (1649), p. 29.

<sup>3</sup> Char. Reports, London, ii., 414.

<sup>4</sup> "Poor Man's Advocate," p. 18.



burned because it had a "stinking smell" now cried, "would God we had seacole."<sup>1</sup> A reflection here of an intermittent supply even for those who had the means to purchase. There were very numerous small charities for giving coal to the poor. It would seem that the lack of these was not unknown. In any case we are told that the people were put to various shifts of dishonesty to obtain a fire. Humour lurks in the circumstance that they sometimes took the stocks intended for their punishment for a use of which they felt a keener need. But the comic spirit which plays over the burning stocks-wood need not disguise a painful necessity. The general lack of firing prompts the ingenuity of a benevolent writer to publish recipes for cheaper substitutes.<sup>2</sup>

These miscellaneous pieces of evidence as to the intermission of casual charity find a parallel in the complaints of the Royal Hospitals. "In respect of the troubles of the time, the meanes of the said Hospitall hath very much failed for want of charitable benevolences, which formerly have been given and are now ceased, and very few legacies are now given to Hospitalls, the rents and revenues thereto belonging being also very ill-paid, besides the want of bringing cloth and other manufactures to London, which have formerly bin brought to Blackwell Hall, the Hallage whereof was a great part of the poore children's maintenance."<sup>3</sup> The reduced funds were subject to increased charges, for at St. Bartholomew's and St. Thomas' Hospitals many maimed soldiers occupied the beds of the ordinary patients. Bridewell also has to lament the incursion of "cavaliers and wandering souldiers." Thus, in a double sense, the common provision for the poor was impaired. We are fortunate in possessing reports for several of these years, which show to what a considerable extent the work of

<sup>1</sup> "Artificial Fire or Coale for Rich and Poore" (1644).

<sup>2</sup> *E.g.*, cow-dung mingled with sawdust and smal-cole was said to make a very good fuel for the poor though "something noisome," see "Artificial Fire."

<sup>3</sup> "A True Report of the Great Costs and Charges of the foure Hospitals in the City of London" (1644).



the hospitals suffered. It should be observed that in 1644 the strain on the funds had already become serious.

	1644.	1645.	1647.	1648.	1649.	1650.	1655.	
Christ's Hospital	758	630	597	735	838	749	948	} children maintained.
Bridewell	... 1128	793	575	545	521	725	668	
St. Bartholomew & St. Thomas <sup>1</sup>	{ 2185	1621	1583	1792	1765	2006	2206	cured.
„	497	472	483	546	524	536	610	{ under care at end of year.

It will be noticed that the year 1647 shows the greatest falling off, and that it was not until 1655 that the recovery was complete. The figures for Bethlem do not show any falling off; on the contrary, there is an increase: for the respective years they are 44, 43, 52, 53, 35, 51. The Bridewell figures may be affected by the houses of the Corporation of the Poor.<sup>2</sup>

Comparing, then, the various lines of evidence, we find reason to conclude that there was a rather serious diminution in the usual stream of charity, and, consequently, an increase of want in that class which permanently depends on such means of subsistence. The irregularity of these charitable supplies, which serve to infuse a feeling of dull gratitude into the minds of the poor, was a real cause of the louder complaints heard about this period. Another cause may be looked for in the general disturbance of thought. The complaints may also indicate that more was expected from the age of freedom as well as that less was received.

We should not be justified in concluding that the greater outcry indicated greater general distress. In fact, while the complaints were louder, poverty was less severe. During the war, a fresh and considerable market for labour was opened. The profession of arms absorbed a good deal of surplus labour power. The complaint of lack of employment was again heard after the disbanding of the armies, and when the soldiers accustomed to better even if irregular

<sup>1</sup> I have added together the figures of St. Bartholomew and St. Thomas for facility of comparison. Their work was of a similar character.

<sup>2</sup> See below, sect. 3.



wages were thrown again out of work. Their camp experience had perhaps fitted them for the only calling that was always open, and they may have been fairly willing to become "rogues."<sup>1</sup>

The labouring classes, at least in the towns, were relatively better off. The long-continued and enormous rise of prices was ceasing. Wages, which had risen in response tardily and only slightly, were now appreciably increasing. The rise of agricultural wages, on the contrary, was still trivial. But the adult man of 1643-52 was more able to purchase commodities than his father had been.<sup>2</sup>

## 2. PARLIAMENTARY ACTION.

(a) *Captives*.—Even during the war period, the set-back to philanthropy was only partial. Among the bewildering multiplicity of Acts and ordinances of the Parliament are some which had for their aim the alleviation of distress in some of its many forms, and that by way of charity. The condition of the Christian captives at Algiers engaged the attention of the legislature "with a proportional equality of care to release the whole, and its several parts." In this matter the action taken marks an advance on the ideas of the previous generation. The method adopted was more systematic, although it was hardly more successful. A petition was presented in 1643 from the wives or widows of several sailors who had been seized by pirates.<sup>3</sup> The petition shows, incidentally, that earlier measures for relief of the captives had not enjoyed any permanent success. The petitioners, it appears, had already exhausted their own means, and the help of their friends before appealing to the Parliament. They now asked for assistance in making up the fund necessary for the release of their relatives. Previously to this, the Parliament had resolved to take this

<sup>1</sup> "The Poor Man's Advocate."

<sup>2</sup> Thorold Rogers, "History of Agriculture and Prices," v., 276, 672-3.

<sup>3</sup> Journals House of Commons, iii., 55-6.



matter up, but their design had been interrupted by the outbreak of the war. All that was done immediately in response to the petition, was to pass a resolution requiring collections to be made in the London churches from the charitable benevolence of well-disposed Christians.

But the original design was resumed in 1645, when a ship was despatched to the Mediterranean. This vessel, however, proceeded no further than Gibraltar, where it was disabled by an outbreak of fire. No long delay resulted from this accident, for in the following year a "ship of strength" was sent out. The business was in the hands of one Edmond Cason, the agent of the Houses. His first step was to secure the goodwill of the Basta by a gift of 10,000 dollars. Having thus prepared the way for negotiations, he was so far successful as to be able to redeem and send home 244 persons, men, women, and children, at a cost of about £38 6s. per head.<sup>1</sup> For the 244 this was good. But as to any larger or ultimate gain there is a reservation. The places of those released were quickly filled. Nothing had been done to check the traffic; on the contrary, much to encourage it. The same policy, however, was repeated in 1651, when we find the House of Commons approving the intention of the Committee of the Navy to despatch £10,000 or £15,000 in "peices of eight" for the redemption of captives. The question again attracted attention towards the end of the century, and the mischief was then unabated.

(b) *Prisoners*.—From the captives abroad to the prisoners at home is a natural transition, and the sufferings of the latter hardly fell behind those of the former. A pamphlet of the year 1644 has for frontispiece a woodcut showing a queer geometrical arrangement of debtors' heads looking out through the iron bars of their prison in a way that suggests, it can hardly exaggerate, the crowded condition in which they were herded. The moral of the picture is pointed by

<sup>1</sup> "A Relation of the whole proceedings concerning the Redemption of the Captives in Algier and Tunis" (1647). A list of the ransomed captives is given, from which it appears that they belonged chiefly to the towns along the English and Bristol Channels, and to London. A few came from places further north.



some uncouth verses, which describe the awful fate of those on whom "Grym Gripe the Usurer" had laid his hand.<sup>1</sup>

The condition of these prisoners was very miserable. Nominally, the creditor was responsible for supplying his debtor with bread and water "that he die not:"<sup>2</sup> in reality, the obligation was evaded. If the prisoner were well-to-do, he paid for his own board and lodging and might riot filthily, but when, as was more frequently the case, he was poor, his portion was cold, hunger, cruelty and neglect, mitigated or aggravated by some small and uncertain charities. It was not difficult for a prisoner, on payment of a fee ("Ned, Dick, and Will must have their fees"), to obtain such access to the street as enabled him to obtrude a begging bowl on the notice of passers by. Sometimes, no doubt, he had thus received an alms. In addition to these casual alms, there were the funds of the numerous bequests for prisoners, as, for instance, Ralph Rokeley's, who left money for poor scholars and other educational purposes, and also for the Fleet, Ludgate, Newgate, King's Bench, and Marshalsea £100 each, and to the White Lion £20;<sup>3</sup> or that earlier bequest for the debtors at Ludgate of the blessed and devout woman Agnes Forster, who built a walking-ground, with a large room above, for their use, and provided a water supply, that they might have lodging and water free. Instances might be multiplied, for this form of charity was regarded as having direct evangelic sanction, and had been carefully fostered by the Church.<sup>4</sup>

Of course, these funds were entirely inadequate, and probably served to render the lot of the prisoners harder by fostering the notion that something was being done. They were also subject to the defalcations of trustees and were frequently intercepted by the gaoler. The blame should not be thrown too heavily on this official, who paid for his post and had to make his living out of the prisoners. Moreover,

<sup>1</sup> "The prisoner's observation by way of complaint."

<sup>2</sup> 11 Ed. I., ss. 14-15.

<sup>3</sup> Stow, p. 145.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 16. Lists of charities at a number of prisons will be found in Howard's "State of the Prisons." Many of them are early bequests and available at this period.



it was not always he who was in fault. There is the case of Henry Agard, gaoler at Derby. In 1647 he is found petitioning to be reimbursed his expenses. He was spending about 25s. a week for bread and straw, and could not get his bill paid. Out of £30 spent two years since for the same purpose the county still owed him £6. In addition he was still their creditor for certain other expenses.<sup>1</sup>

This, then, was the condition of things brought before the notice of Parliament in petitions and pamphlets manifold. An expectation was gaining ground that the struggle against tyranny would also involve the remedy of all social mischiefs and, in particular, a general gaol delivery. This, of course, was no part of the intention of the reform leaders. Something, however, they did, and the legislation of these years is noticeable in several respects. The Acts of 1649 and 1653 represent the earliest attempts of prison reform, in which a humanitarian motive is discernible.<sup>2</sup>

The Act of 1649 was for the liberation of debtors who made oath that their total possessions, beyond bed, clothes and tools, were of a value under £5.<sup>3</sup> The measure of 1653 was for the relief of those still in prison.<sup>4</sup> A Commission was appointed to enquire into and redress abuses. Its jurisdiction extended only to some of the London prisons, with power to examine into all matters of misemployment of charities, to compel the offenders to make a twofold restitution, and in the worst cases to set the guilty parties on the pillory. The Commissioners were also to cause a table of just and moderate fees to be made and set up in the prisons. Little immediate good resulted. The regulations remained or quickly became a dead letter. But the table of fees clause stood and was to serve as a point of departure for the reformers of the next century.

<sup>1</sup> Cox's "Three Centuries of Derbyshire Annals," ii., p. 5.

<sup>2</sup> Gardiner treats these Acts as part of the attempt to win popular assent by popular legislation, see "History of the Commonwealth," i., 190.

<sup>3</sup> Scobell, part ii., p. 87. The Act was extensively used, and before May, 25th, 1653, 130 prisoners had been released under it. At that date 234 were still in prison, see Gardiner, i., 190 n.

<sup>4</sup> Scobell, p. 259.



(c) *Soldiers and Sailors*.—Parliamentary philanthropy may be traced along yet another line, although it would now be considered that provision for the sick and maimed soldiers was a matter of business rather than charity. In 1647 a series of ordinances was passed. The purport of them was that every parish was to be rated in varying sums, and in addition to what they were liable to under 43 Eliz., c. 3, in aid of the county funds for pensioning soldiers disabled in the service of the Parliament. This provision, which stamps the ordinance as a purely partisan measure, may account for the complaints that in several counties the justices would not put it in force.<sup>1</sup>

Another ordinance for the relief of sick and maimed soldiers and for their widows and orphans, followed in 1651, and in 1654 a sum of £26,260 was granted out of the Excise for this purpose, to be in lieu of previous grants.<sup>2</sup> There were hospitals for the cure of the sick and maintenance of the aged at Ely House and the Savoy, and we read of 220 sick soldiers of Colonel Pride's regiment being sent to Bath under the charge of officers who were to see that "nothing prejudicial" was done by them while abroad.<sup>3</sup> An attempt also was made to establish a hospital for seamen at Deal; surgeons and medicaments were sent to that place as well as to Portsmouth and other towns, and officers are charged to take some care for old linen for wounds.<sup>4</sup>

### 3. THE CORPORATION OF THE POOR.

The general question of poverty remained and the Parliament was no more able to ignore it than the Privy Council had been. An ordinance of 1647, reciting that there had been a great increase of poor in London, enacted that a

<sup>1</sup> Scobell, part i., pp. 123, 130, 136.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, part ii., pp. 176, 299.

<sup>3</sup> Collection of State Papers (Domestic) for 1653-3, pp. 332, 341, 363, *et pass.*

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 42, 80, 182.



corporation is to be formed with the Lord Mayor as president.<sup>1</sup> The corporation might receive donations of land or money until their estate should amount to £2,000 a year, and was to erect one or more workhouses for setting the poor on work and binding out apprentices; also one or more houses of correction for punishing rogues. This is worthy of note, as the last recognition we shall find of the distinct functions of the different institutions, one for the industrious, the other for the idle. This ordinance is reminiscent of an earlier system under which the house of correction, a place of punishment and of forced labour, is supplementary to and in no sense confounded with the other means for setting the honest poor to a willing employment; the action of the corporation in building workhouses only is suggestive of the later system under which the single building was expected to serve the double purpose of a place for punishment and a place for genuine work, and, owing to this confusion of thought, failed in both its objects, so that the honest poor could not find honourable work, and the dissolute poor were able to live in sloth, without the discipline of any sufficient deterrent measures.

Two workhouses were erected, one near Blackfriars, the other at Minories.<sup>2</sup> A hundred children were maintained and educated, many hundreds of poor were employed, and more could have been set to work if they had applied. The beggars, nevertheless, refused work and preferred to beg—how should they readily change the one profession they had been allowed to learn? Another branch of the work of the corporation aimed at repressing casual mendicity by the establishment of an organised system of collecting the broken bread and meat which would otherwise have been given to the beggars. For this duty such “basketmen” as should be judged convenient were to be licensed by the churchwardens and the victual was to be distributed to the

<sup>1</sup> A point of interest in this ordinance is that an equalising of the poor rate was allowed. Similar measures to those mentioned in the text might be taken by any county or borough.

<sup>2</sup> “Report of the Governors of the Corporation of the Poor” (1655); cf. “At a Court held by . . . the Governors . . . (1655).”



poorest sort of people. The action of the corporation on behalf of the children is specified, as also the relief measures adopted, but whether by accident or otherwise the extent of provision made for the working poor is left vague and uncertain.<sup>1</sup>

#### 4. INDUSTRIAL DEMOCRACY.

We turn from the sober routine of constituted authorities to the more heroic remedies of social dreamers, for it is only so that we can seize what is most significant in the Commonwealth period. For the most part these advanced no further than mere projects. Yet the Diggers, the True Levellers,<sup>2</sup> did make a spasmodic effort to translate their theories into practice. Some fifty of the Diggers, under the lead of Everard and Winstanley, were engaged during the month of April, 1649, in digging up the common land on St. George's Hill, near Oatlands. Everard had been directed in a vision to do this. The earth was the Lord's, therefore obviously it belonged to the Lord's people. At first, he explained, they would only work the wastes, but very soon men would voluntarily surrender their lands and all would live in community. But the dream passed; troops of horse dispelled the Diggers, passers-by, whether military or civilian, ill-treated them, and though they struggled on for a while, their ill-starred enterprise came to nothing.<sup>3</sup>

If it was difficult to carry out revolutionary schemes, nothing was easier than to launch them through the Press. The facility of publication was amply utilised. The proposal of the Poor Man's Advocate, provocative as was his style, were comparatively conservative, although they included the confiscation of misused "clergy-houses." The idea rather was that the poor were to be brought into a

<sup>1</sup> "The work of the Corporation of the Poor continued, but it never seems to have been great or to have grappled seriously even with the London poor," Leonard, p. 273.

<sup>2</sup> Not to be confused with the so-called political Levellers, as Lilburne, who was shocked at the notion of "equalling men's estates"; see Gardiner, i., p. 47.

<sup>3</sup> Gardiner, i., p. 48-9.



community for their own advantage, but under some control of their superiors. The scheme of Peter Cornelis-son, van Zurik-Zee, was more democratic. The length of the title is out of all proportion to the size of his book, and he condenses into it the gist of his proposals: A Way propounded to make the poor . . . happy, By bringing together a fit, suitable, and well-qualified people into one Household-government, or little Common-wealth Wherein every one may keep his propriety, and be imployed in some work or other.<sup>1</sup> The community was to include husbandmen, handicraftsmen, mariners, masters of arts and sciences, together with surgeons, who would give gratuitous attendance. There should be a house by the river side, a London warehouse, and ships plying between. An associated home possesses many tangible advantages besides the ease and comfort of living in community. Economy on a large scale is possible, as, *e.g.*, in the matter of fuel, for whereas 100 families need 100 fires, all purposes are served by four or five. In time of sickness, again, one member is indisposed, yet the rest being "united as members of one body shall work for him, and being assured of one another's faithfulness, shall excel in love all other societies."

Peter knew that when people lived together they often had quarrels, but he did not consider this inherent in the communal life, and was confident that disputes would not spoil his little commonwealth. The passage in which he treats this question throws a good deal of light on the seamy side of almshouse life in the seventeenth (or any) century. It has the appearance of being a reply to objections raised against his own scheme, and if so it reflects the popular imagination of the disagreeable consequences likely to result from living in community as Cornelis-son proposed. This is what he says: "It is far otherwise with us than in Hospitals of old men and women, where they come in out of necessity, not being able otherwise to provide for themselves, for their own benefit onely, with their contentions, opposition, and deeply-rooted infirmities, having

<sup>1</sup> Published in 1659.



oftentimes their bodies by hard labour spoiled and made decrepit, and their minds corrupted by evil manners being many times besides, a deep stupid ignorance, so ill-natured, that no reason can sink into them.”<sup>1</sup> The antidote in the little commonwealth is this, that the settlers will be in the prime of life, and that “all things wherein the kingdom of God doth not consist” are to be left free to the decision of the inhabitants. It is true that the projector does not contemplate such unlicensed liberty as would permit the wearing of “unnecessary trimmings.” But in other matters, and this is the essence of the scheme, the society was to be a democratic one. The Governor, in particular, was to be elected annually by popular suffrage. Later experience suggests that such a constitution contained in itself a danger of those “contentions and oppositions” as to which the writer expressed himself so vigorously. But this he could not foresee.

## 5. COMMUNISTIC IDEAS.

Side by side with the serious discussions carried on at Edgehill and Worcester, or at Westminster, the Headquarters of the Scots army, and at Breda, certain thoughts as to the structure of society were being thrown off in innumerable pamphlets from the pens of irrepressible idealists. They include such concrete and comparatively conservative proposals as those which we have now been glancing at, but they go beyond them to the roots of the whole conception of the State. The socialistic proposals of the Levellers were quite outside the range of seventeenth century thought, and they did not even enjoy the temporary success granted to the less drastic policy of the republican statesmen. They were concerned with that largest class which was left, as Thorold Rogers says, outside progress. The Anglican and the Puritan were at issue on almost every conceivable consideration of abstract thought or political theory; but they had one point of agreement in common,

<sup>1</sup> P. 9.



hostility to anything in the nature of a social revolution. The bases of civil order were not open to criticism. Presbyterianism did not yield to Papist, neither outvied Independent, in loyalty to the accustomed hierarchy of society, in which the welfare of the poor was to be ensured by allowing them to toil for the support of their masters. The changes in our constitution which were for a time actually adopted, and which continued to linger on in a world of ideas, until at length they became the leading factor of modern liberalism, are made to wear an aspect of timidity which does not belong to them when they are compared with the more pungent criticisms we are now to listen to. It is fair to remind ourselves that statesmen are statesmen and that Levellers are Levellers.

This being so, it may be admitted that the actual Government of the day could not adopt such a proposition as that "in the beginning of time, the great creator Reason made the earth to be a common treasury," a proposition that is seen to go even beyond the amiable theory of a later age, that all men are free and equal.<sup>1</sup> No court of law could even consider such an appeal as this:—"O, thou powers of England, thou hast promised to make this people a free people. Yet thou hast so handled the matter, through thy self-seeking humour, that thou hast wrapped us up more in bondage." A free nation did not imply empty prisons, neither was political liberty to be carried so far as to overturn the laws of commercial enterprise and involve the well-being of all. The commonwealth, therefore, could obviously not "take notice, That England is not a Free People, till the poor who have no land, have a free allowance to dig and labour the commons, and so live as comfortably as the landlords that live in their Inclosures."<sup>2</sup> It would obviously not return any answer to the question, a rhetorical question not susceptible of reply, "is there a necessity in Nature, Reason, or Religion, that they that are rich must

<sup>1</sup> "True Leveller's Standard Advanced." The Epistle init.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 11, 15.



be continued so, and they that are poor must always be so?"<sup>1</sup>

Nevertheless, it is in these communistic criticisms that the significance of this period for the growth of philanthropy is to be found. Charity was not inactive under the Commonwealth, and continued to flow in familiar channels. The old almshouses were inhabited, and new ones were built; schools were founded and boys were apprenticed to trades; poor maids were portioned, and in fact the Statute of Charitable Uses remains an index of philanthropic activities, and need not be repeated. In the matter of prisoners we have noticed an advance on the earlier period. But in spite of this the Commonwealth was somewhat barren as compared with the ages that preceded and followed it. It certainly cannot be regarded as exerting much original or initiating influence on charitable practice. In one respect only, viz., in the extreme opinions just alluded to, we find something that points the way for the future. Even in the question of "The Poor Man's Advocate" there is the germ of thoughts that were to be worked out in fuller detail at a later period,<sup>2</sup> and would provide modern philanthropy with a regulative ideal.

<sup>1</sup> "The Poor Man's Advocate," p. 12.

<sup>2</sup> See below, Chap. xi.



## CHAPTER IV.

## A FRESH STARTING POINT.

## I. THE NEW IMPULSE.

THE closing years of the seventeenth century are among the most important in the history of philanthropy. We have arrived at a new starting point. From the time of the dissolution of the monasteries until the outbreak of the Civil War, it is possible to discover the working of a single idea—the poor law, and especially that clause which provided for setting the poor on work, was the keystone of the edifice. An attempt had been made by the state to bring into the unity of a single policy, the business of providing for the weaker classes in the community. It had encouraged the spontaneous expression of pity and care for the poor, because in voluntary alms there was an important source of revenue. But this source was subsidiary. The problem of philanthropy was recognised as belonging ultimately to the decision of the state itself. This principle, which had for some years come to be almost a consciously directed aim of the Privy Council, was forgotten in the years of strife and was not afterwards resumed. When the country again settled down into something like the traditional forms, the impulse of philanthropy was found to be not less active than at an earlier period. But the working of the impulse was after quite another manner. The first considerable attempt was now made to apply to the relief of the needy a principle which possessed unlimited possibilities when applied to the production of commodities.

The power implicit in a joint-stock had indeed been discovered long before, and applied particularly to foreign



trade; at the close of the seventeenth century this royal road to wealth opened before the age in all its allurements. The knowledge that the individual might become rapidly rich preceded and perhaps obscured the less welcome fact that this good fortune would frequently be at the expense of others who suffered loss. Men were dominated by the bewildering discovery that small investments produced large returns, and this in the extreme instance ran out into the notion that something might be had for nothing. The spirit of the gambler reigned and found support in the lotteries by which the Government at once carried on its wars abroad and struck at the morality of its subjects at home. It was not until the following century that this fever of a nation, having passed through innumerable schemes for insurance upon births, marriages or deaths, into which everyone was to put a little and from which the shrewder ones took a great deal out, resulted in the inevitable cold fit that followed the South Sea Bubble.<sup>1</sup>

Similar expectations to those which were exciting the world of commerce were beginning to influence the methods of philanthropy. This is the new impulse which gives cardinal significance to this period and constitutes the fresh starting point in our history. Benevolent persons were discovering with wonder what were the glorious effects it had pleased God's infinite goodness to produce by subscriptions merely during the will of the contributor, and many of them not exceeding one guinea a year.<sup>2</sup> In reference to an underlying thought the joint-stock is hardly more than an instrument. A feeling for the power of association is the really significant thing we have to study. This was the conscious and subconscious idea of the age. In philanthropy we shall have to observe that the association was voluntary, partial, and accordingly was insecure. This inadequacy or insecurity will come under our notice in a later chapter,

<sup>1</sup> See, in addition to the ordinary histories, Thorold Rogers' "First Nine Years of the Bank of England," for the fevered imagination of the period in respect to joint-stock business.

<sup>2</sup> An Account of . . . St. George's Hospital, 1737.



where it will be seen to give rise to a mood of disillusionment. At present we are concerned with the first tentative movements of the new associated philanthropy, and shall see that with increased use the principle gained greater credence until it finds its fullest expression about the time of the report of 1737 just referred to.

The early efforts of the associated philanthropy are based on the fact that while many were willing to subscribe guineas, some were prepared to co-operate in persistent work for the relief of distress. At the outset the two classes were not so sharply defined as they rapidly tended to become. The new impulse was not the only one, and before describing it in fuller detail it is necessary to pause over the reminder that the old tradition of charity showed no signs of falling into desuetude. The endowed charities, deriving mainly from the familiar bequest did not cease; on the contrary they continued to become more numerous. They were still administered, exactly as in earlier periods, with more or less efficiency. But they showed little of that capacity possessed by the new methods of adapting themselves to the changing perception on the part of the well-to-do of the mischances that befall the poor.

## 2. THE PHILANTHROPIC TRADITION.

Mention has previously been made of the method of charitable collections on Briefs for the succour of those who had suffered loss from fire. The time was now approaching when the old custom would fall into disuse, giving place to the more businesslike insurance policy. But although the earliest fire offices of the modern type were being established, there was still, up to the close of the seventeenth century and later, scope for the exercise of earlier forms of relief. Charitable assistance was liberally forthcoming after the Great Fire of London, and, "to the amazement of all Europe," the city was in four years' time rebuilt with so much beauty and magnificence that those who beheld it could



only wonder whence the money came.<sup>1</sup> It was derived in part from free gifts throughout the country, and in a larger measure than was apparent, since of the moneys given for the relief of the poor much was intercepted before it reached its destination. So much was this the case that an Act of Parliament was required to enforce payment.<sup>2</sup> Occasion was taken of the Fire and the resulting distress to pass a law for the release of poor debtors; but although the "sad and dreadful" Fire was stated to be the cause, this law was merely the re-enactment of the Act of 1649.<sup>3</sup>

A few years later Northampton was the scene of a disastrous conflagration, and we are told that "relief was sent thither from well-disposed Christians" from a distance. Part of these funds was employed for the purpose of finding employment for those who had been thrown out of work by the fire. The method chosen was that of financing poor traders, who were thus enabled to employ "other poor people under them."<sup>4</sup> It was not only towns which were relieved, but numerous individuals continued to be assisted in this way, although the cost of collection swallowed up an undue proportion of these smaller funds.<sup>5</sup>

Chelsea Hospital for soldiers was founded in 1682, and Greenwich Hospital for sailors in 1694. The Scottish Corporation for relief of those who would otherwise become chargeable on the rates is rather earlier (1665), and may perhaps be regarded rather as pointing to the future than as springing from the tradition of the past. Charities for the Welsh, for Spanish and Portuguese Jews, for widows and orphans of ministers of various denominations, serve to show the growing need for specialisation which affords one of the conditions for the later associated philanthropy.

The King's touch reminds us of an older world, and, indeed, did not long survive the childhood of Samuel Johnson. It was, however, in great request after the Restoration, so much

<sup>1</sup> Burnet, "Own Times," i., 452.

<sup>2</sup> 22 & 23 Charles II., c. 16.

<sup>3</sup> 22 & 23 Charles II., c. 20.

<sup>4</sup> Kidder, "Charity Directed" (1676).

<sup>5</sup> See Margaret Mortimer, "Proposals tender'd . . ."



so that March 28th, 1684, six or seven people were crushed to death in the press at the Court surgeon's door, where they were attending to get passes for their children to the Royal presence. The children who were successful in gaining admittance "each had a white ribbon, with a medal of angel-gold hanging from it, put round the neck by the King," so that even if no cure followed they did not go away unrewarded.<sup>1</sup> A more useful, because a less uncertain, assistance was rendered by many individual almoners, among whom Peter Barwick may be named.<sup>2</sup> Barwick was one of the physicians who did not flee from London at the time of the plague. Afterwards, when he went to reside in Westminster, he "constantly frequented the six o'clock prayers, consecrating the beginning of every day to God, as he always dedicated the next part to the poor, not only prescribing to them gratis, but furnishing them with medicine at his own expense, and charitably relieving their other wants."

Mr. and Mrs. Robert Berkeley, of Spetchley, near Worcester, had great riches, "and their charities kept measure with them." The character of their benevolence may be gathered from the fact that after her husband's death Mrs. Berkeley, in 1693, founded a hospital at Worcester, as well as a school for poor children.<sup>3</sup> This almshouse was only one of many founded during this period, and it is sufficient to add that the various familiar forms of charitable endowment show no falling off. The mention of the school leads us to consider the newer modes of well-doing. The earlier schools, even when they were for the poor, were in the main intended to be places of scholarship; the schools of this period were for the children of the destitute, and the instruction that was given, while it hardly deserves the name of education, was not the primary object for which they were established.

It was necessary to give some account of the older forms of charity at this time in order to mark the fact that in turning to consider the associated philanthropy we are

<sup>1</sup> "Social England," iv., 464-5.

<sup>2</sup> D. N. B., "Social England," iv., 361-2.

<sup>3</sup> D. N. B., under Elizabeth Burnet.



dealing not with methods which took the place of the old so much as with activities which were carried on side by side with them. The newer methods certainly become much more considerable than the older ones, but that is not because the traditional forms suffered at first any particular check or diminution, but because the new development proceeded rapidly, and because it was able with considerable facility to adjust itself to changing needs or ideas. We may, with advantage, glance at some of the subsidiary influences which went to produce the phenomenon of philanthropic association with which we shall be engaged in this and the following chapters.

### 3. FOREIGN EXPERIENCE.

The new methods in philanthropy are considerably influenced by the more general intercourse between this country and Europe. And in this connection mention must be made of the close relations between people in England and the Court of the Prince and Princess of Orange, of which Burnet gives us so vivid a picture. It is not an accident that Robert Nelson, F.R.S., who played so important a part in the charities of his time, should have made the grand tour, and have resided at Paris, Aix-la-Chapelle, Florence, and Rome. He made ample use of this opportunity of becoming acquainted with the charities of Europe.<sup>1</sup> These seemed to be far in advance of our own to the Englishman who travelled or had commercial relations with foreign countries. This feeling is reflected in the report of our first provincial hospital at Winchester, where mention is made of "a charity which is the glory of other countries, and has long been the reproach of our own." The settlement of foreign refugees in England also contributed to a larger knowledge of what others were doing in this direction.<sup>2</sup> These things will explain why it is that men who were active in the practice of benevolence, or were interested as statesmen or

<sup>1</sup> D. N. B.

<sup>2</sup> For an account of the charities of the refugees in London, see Chap. vii.



otherwise in the condition of the needy classes refer so frequently in support of their various proposals to the experience of foreign lands. Thus Bellers drew up his rules for the College of Industry "from a comparison of all the hospitals" of Holland; Sir Matthew Hale refers to the institutions of Holland, Hamborough, New Holland, and Paris; the author of "England's Wants" looks to Brabant, Flanders, and not only to Rome, the capital, but to the whole country of Italy; while Firmin justifies his kindly title, "Fathers of the Poor," from the usage of the French and Dutch Churches.

#### 4. SPECIALISATION.

Thus we are led to regard a growing familiarity with philanthropic methods abroad as one of the causes of increased activity in this country, and this closer preoccupation with deeds of charity produced in its turn that specialisation which distinguishes the later period. We shall notice in a later chapter how the whole problem was lost sight of and the most important factor ignored; but at the same time a more considerable and deeper attention was paid in various matters of detail to the task of the relief of distress. This movement of expansion was accompanied by the division of the charitable public into two sections—a large number of small donors, and a small number of workers, who were for the most part liberal in the expenditure not only of their toil but of their wealth.<sup>1</sup> We are able to trace the beginning of this distinction in a little work published as early as 1676,<sup>2</sup> where we read, "'Tis advisable that the alms-giver bestow his charity with his own hands. That he do both inquire out for the Needy, and afterwards relieve them himself. . . . Let him visit sick and wounded poor people, and dress their wounds with his own hands if he can, or at least see them dressed. . . . 'Twere well we would now and then go to prisons and hospitals, and

<sup>1</sup> The third class, that of stipendiary philanthropists, only comes into prominence at a later period.

<sup>2</sup> Kidder's "Charity Directed," pp. 27-28.



the poorest houses and families. . . . 'Tis a most Christian office to do this, and would well become persons of the greatest Quality and the fairest Circumstances. But this may not be expected."

With increasing specialisation an increasing number of people would find that whether from the greatness of their quality, the exigencies of their business, or a certain coolness of sympathy, it was inconvenient to make their own hands their executors, while yet they would be ready to assist the labours of their friends in a way that was not troublesome to themselves, and the more so if the claim upon them was made somewhat importunate. It is possible to trace the growth of this tendency from the time of Gouge or Firmin, who were supported by the genuine interest of some few friends who assisted them with funds, to the long list of subscribers who responded to the full-bodied pathos of the later hospital reports.

## 5. THE CHARITY SERMON.

Yet another influence making for the creation, or at least for the growth of a specialised class of philanthropists, is to be found in the prevalent funeral or charity sermon, and in the frequent short accounts that were being published of the life and acts of benevolent persons. These served on the one hand to emphasise a need, and on the other to claim admiration for those who supplied it. It is in the nature of a sermon to isolate, and therefore to overstate one aspect of things, and in the funeral sermon especially there is an almost irresistible tendency to exaggerate. Let this be an *à priori* judgment. But Archbishop Tillotson is witness that the tendency was not successfully resisted in his days. "I am no friend to funeral panegyrics," he tells us, "for where there is no extraordinary worth praise is not due to the dead, and may be mischievous to the living," and he adds that "men of his profession who made a practice of preaching funeral sermons fell under the suspicion of 'officious and mercenary flattery.'" The frequent insistence on



a want, the as frequent eulogy of the benevolent person, appealed to different motives in the mind of the hearers, and led men with curiously mingled intentions into the paths of philanthropy.

## 6. THE RELIGIOUS SOCIETIES.

The great movement of associated philanthropy which marks the close of the seventeenth century, and has continued to develop down to the twentieth century, has a two-fold beginning. What may be termed the secular motive, a direct reference to the actual needs of the poor, is most prominent in the work of Thomas Firmin, which will come before us in the next chapter, and in the founders of the hospitals and similar institutions.<sup>1</sup> But in the Religious Societies charity towards men was subsidiary to a religious attitude and observance towards God. They were not primarily philanthropic institutions, but they had nevertheless an important bearing on the various charitable activities that followed.

In 1671, Horneck, a "most pathetic" preacher, was appointed to the chapel of Savoy. The church became crowded to hear him, the communicants at the frequent celebrations of the Lord's Supper were very numerous. His own charity was said to be "divine, and a mighty revelation of the love of God." He seems especially to have attracted young men, some already of a serious disposition, others rescued from the pleasures of a godless life. Out of this band of young men, persuaded by Horneck to a life of devotion and stern self-examination, there was formed, about 1678, one of those Religious Societies which then rapidly sprang up to the number of forty in London, and which spread into various parts of the country, and to Ireland.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The impulse from which the Religious Societies sprang died away with Queen Anne and Dr. Sacheverell. The other or secular impulse continued unchecked.

<sup>2</sup> Woodward's "Rise and Progress of Religious Societies," p. 40. See also D. N. B., "Anthony Horneck," and "Life of Horneck," by R. Kidder (B. of Bath and Wells).



The meetings were for prayer, preparation for the sacrament, and for interchange of spiritual experience. This was the ostensible object and the real motive. But it is noticeable that one of the rules drawn up by Horneck reads thus: "Every time they meet every one shall give sixpence to the box;" and another sets out that once a year the members are to meet for a "moderate dinner." On this occasion a sermon was to be preached, and the money collected was to be distributed to the poor. Not only did they contribute to the alms-box, they assembled to consider the wants of the poor. By these means many poor families were relieved, some poor people established in the way of trade, sundry prisoners set free, needy scholars furthered, several orphans maintained, and poor children educated.<sup>1</sup> Thus these societies, founded for worship, were drawn to action. Yet their significance is less in what they themselves actually did than in the fact that they gave rise to the Societies for the Reformation of Manners, and for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge, some account of which must now be given; and in the discovery, for which they prepared the way, of the great power to be obtained through free association. Their zeal worked as a leaven in a somewhat low-minded age. Dr. Woodward notices as a strong witness to their strenuous intention that the members were always ready, after shutting up their shops, to go "three or four miles to the outmost parts of the suburbs" to encourage or assist a new society,

<sup>1</sup> Woodward, pp. 23 and 90. Two instances mentioned by Woodward may be added, for they show the early stages of movements that were afterwards to become clearly defined. To a certain seafaring man who had come ashore sick, they gave a pension for eight weeks; one of their number, a surgeon, dressed his sores; and they read good books by his bed (p. 93). The other instance has a bearing on the later orphanage movement. "It was an act of great good nature, and savoured no less of a spirit becoming our merciful religion, which some of them express'd towards a poor widow upon her death bed, whom they found in extreme trouble, for fear lest her two young children should be cast upon the charity of her relations, who were papists, and by that means be brought up in their errors; it being in the reign of King James II." Some of the members undertook "both to maintain and educate these forlorn orphans." This they did until the children were fit to be bound apprentices, and then secured them good places (p. 92).



returning home late through "all the inconveniences of the darkness."<sup>1</sup>

## 7. REFORMATION OF MANNERS.

The attempt to suppress by legal penalties the misdemeanours of their neighbours is always attractive to some minds. This dubious policy gains even an added zest when vice is aggravated by the circumstance of squalor. In 1691 Queen Mary issued a letter to the justices of Middlesex urging them to enforce the laws against prophaneness and debauchery.<sup>2</sup> Numerous societies were formed for the support of informers, and for ensuring the punishment of offenders. The membership of these societies was largely recruited from the Religious Societies, though while these latter were confined to members of the Church of England the former were open to dissenters as well. The procedure of the societies was by way of issuing large editions of blank warrants, and by remonstrance against magistrates who were slow to convict. They also issued broadsheets detailing the penalties for breaches of good manners; and tracts containing miraculous stories of the fate of swearers, drunkards and sabbath breakers.<sup>3</sup> The results achieved were considerable, for according to a Black Roll of 1694, a hundred and fifteen persons (of whom only seventeen were men, chiefly husbands with their wives) had been indicted and some fined; forty (of whom ten were men) had been "carted"; one hundred and fifty-seven (of whom only thirteen men) "whipt at Bridewell." The crusade, that is to say, was mainly directed against women; and that these were chiefly of the poorest class appears from the fact that only in two or three cases are the victims of such social standing as to have "Mrs." prefixed to their names.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> P. 103.

<sup>2</sup> See "Account of Societies for Reformation of Manners."

<sup>3</sup> *E.g.*, "The Theatre of God's Judgments" [? 1680], (this not being an actual Society for Reformation). Printed papers were also circulated in the 6,000 or 7,000 public houses of the Metropolis, and except in about twenty cases were well received by the frequenters of these places. "Journal" of the S. P. C. K., p. 137.

<sup>4</sup> "Proposals for a National Reformation of Manners" (1694).



The fines that were recovered, so far as they fell to the share of the reformers, were expended in charities for the poor. The amount was considerable, yielding in one parish in a single year no less than £55.

The whole movement was subjected to the severest criticism. The gentlemen of the Societies for Reformation were invited to reform themselves. The laws they strove to enforce were described as "all cobweb laws, in which small flies are catch'd, and great ones break through." Their action was denounced as unjust, partial, and a sort of cruelty too, in taking advantage of the poverty of the "plebii" "because they want estates to purchase their exemption." And again it was urged that "to think to effect a reformation by punishing the poor, while the rich enjoy a charter for wickedness, is like taking away the effect while the cause remains."<sup>1</sup> The criticism does not hold against all of the members, for men like Horneck did plainly reprove the rich, but although some few might speak against the wealthy, we do not hear that any took legal action against them.

A criticism of another kind is that of Dr. Sacheverell, who preached against the societies on the ground that churchmen and dissenters were acting in co-operation with one another. There was also the quiet but not inappreciable condemnation of a public that would not subscribe for the support of the campaign. For Nelson tells us that few would engage in it, or contribute to it, though in most other charities even "vicious persons" would consent and would be very liberal.<sup>2</sup> We need not accept this description of the people who held aloof. But the passage is instructive as to the necessity felt for an outer circle of subscribers beyond the inner circle of zealous workers.

## 8. SOCIETY FOR THE PROMOTION OF CHRISTIAN KNOWLEDGE.

The S.P.C.K. founded in 1698-9 as a voluntary association of five members, was a result of several different tendencies,

<sup>1</sup> Defoe, "The Poor Man's Plea."

<sup>2</sup> "Address to Persons of Quality," p. 155.



as it aimed at various objects, and it may be regarded as the act of bringing into the unity of a single purpose the religious and charitable ideals of the age, so far at least as these were subservient to Anglican doctrine and discipline. The most considerable section of its early work, the establishment of charity schools, will be described in a following chapter. The purchase of libraries, the publication of good books, and the sending out missions to the colonies, may be most conveniently dealt with in this section in connection with the earlier work of Bray and Gouge, and the project of Cromwell to establish a Protestant congregation *de propaganda fide*.

In 1695 Thomas Bray was appointed Commissary to the governor of Maryland with the pastoral oversight of the plantation. It was two years before he was able to start for the scene of his new labours, and the interval was spent in seeking out missionaries to work with and under him. The mission field had then no attractions for first-class men, the only ones Bray could enlist being, if not quite illiterate, yet poor and unable to buy books. This circumstance directed Bray's attention to the need for theological libraries. He knew, or became aware, that the country clergyman was generally ill provided in this respect, or, as Macaulay picturesquely describes the situation, he was "unusually lucky if he had ten or twelve dogeared volumes among the pots and pans on his shelves."<sup>1</sup> Bray discovered also that his missionaries were in even worse case when, as often happened, they were windbound at the seaports, and for want of improving reading were apt to misuse their time in the taverns.<sup>2</sup> He accordingly threw himself into the task of providing libraries in the country parishes and at the seaports. He succeeded, largely from his own small means, in collecting nearly 3,000 volumes in folio, and above 4,000 in 4to. or 8vo.<sup>3</sup> During his lifetime he founded sixty-one of these parochial libraries, and to aid him in the work formed a society under the title of The Associates of Dr. Bray, which continued his policy, and had

<sup>1</sup> History, i., 331.

<sup>2</sup> D. N. B.; Secretan's "Life of . . . Pious Robert Nelson"; Nelson, "An Address to Persons of Quality."

<sup>3</sup> "Address to Persons of Quality," p. 171.



by 1769 set up ninety other libraries.<sup>1</sup> It was in part to further this design that Bray founded the Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge. The society was from the first a publishing company, and its early works dealt with matters of controversy, of religion and of morals.<sup>2</sup> This branch of the society's work received an impulse or a model from the labours of Gouge, and it will be necessary to go back a little and notice his missionary efforts in Wales.

Thomas Gouge,<sup>3</sup> "nonconformist divine and philanthropist," was one of those clergymen who were forced to resign their livings after the Restoration. He turned his steps from London to Wales, preached the gospel there, started catechetical schools, a practice which he had always largely observed in his parish, and distributed books among the people. In order that the use of them might be complete he had some volumes, including the popular "Whole Duty of Man," translated into the Welsh language. On his return to London he busied himself in collecting money for his literary propaganda, and this fund, of which Firmin was treasurer, continued its operations after his death in 1681. The diffusion of such literature fell afterwards within the scope of the Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge.

The other branch of the work of the Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge that falls to be mentioned here is concerned with the need for missions to the colonies. Bray's professional position in Maryland might be supposed to account for his interest in the scheme, were it not that the appointment itself was the result of his evident aptitude for the work. He was one of those whose passion is for righteousness and well doing, and whose sympathy is large enough to think in continents. Missionary

<sup>1</sup> "Account of the designs of The Associates of Dr. Bray."

<sup>2</sup> *E.g.*, "Corruption of the Church of Rome"; "Great Importance of a Religious Life"; "Soldiers' Monitor" (of which 30,000 copies were distributed); and "Kind Cautions to Watermen" (for circulation among the West-country bargemen), Secretan, pp. 101-103. The Book Society, a Dissenting institution, was not founded until 1750 (A. Highmore, "Pietas Londinensis," ii., 935); but we learn from Burnet that the state of learning among them was higher in his days, though they had not the parochial libraries.

<sup>3</sup> D. N. B.



enterprise, it is true, had not at this time looked beyond the colonies ; in the colonies it aimed to reach both the English settlers and the heathen peoples. And in this work Bray had not lacked forerunners.<sup>1</sup> Ferrar had had respect to the spiritual needs of the children in Virginia, and clergy had been sent out to preach to the servants of the East India Company,<sup>2</sup> while a more considerable enterprise was undertaken when, in July 1649, an ordinance was "passed by the Long Parliament for the propagation of the gospel in New England. A collection for the purpose having been made in every parish, a large sum was realised in consequence." Lands were purchased, the annual proceeds of which were to be devoted to the support of the missions.<sup>3</sup> A still more ambitious plan was projected, if we may accept the account given in Burnet on the authority of Stoupe. Cromwell proposed to form a state department for the conversion of the world to Protestantism. There were to be four secretaries, with salaries of £500, charged with the duty of keeping "a correspondence everywhere, to know the state of religion all over the world, that so all good designs might be by their means protected and assisted."

Bray's aim was not so vast, nor did he wish to carry it out under state control. He did, however, desire a society that should act with the prestige of a royal charter. This he had not been able to obtain for his former association. Accordingly, in 1701, the members of the Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge formed themselves for the special purpose into another society, that for the Propagation of the Gospel, and for this a charter was obtained.<sup>4</sup>

### 9. A FIRST SURVEY.

It may be convenient at this point to supplement our description of certain early efforts of the spirit of association by a brief conspectus of the details of the philanthropic problem as they presented themselves to a thoughtful

<sup>1</sup> *Ante*, p. 51.

<sup>2</sup> "Social England," iv., 138.

<sup>3</sup> Stoughton's "Religion in England," iv., 241. "Own Times," i., 132.

<sup>4</sup> See on this section, "Publick Spirit," by Thomas Bray.



observer; and also to trace the general conceptions then prevailing as to the nature and object of charity.

"An Address to Persons of Quality and Estate, Ways and Methods of Doing Good," is the instructive title of a work by Robert Nelson, published in 1715. Its aim is two-fold, to supply a persuasive to charity, and to give full information of actual or projected methods of assisting the "inferior part of mankind." The need for such a work seemed obvious, because the wealthy classes were set at such distance from the poor that they could not be expected to have "actual knowledge of the misery that affected the lowest classes." A scheme of charities is, therefore, offered in order that the rich might know how to assist the destitute whenever they were "disposed to do so."<sup>1</sup> Nelson's list is divided into two classes—Wants which relate to the souls and to the bodies respectively. Under the former he mentions the need of more adequate support for churches; and the provision of Bibles and other plain practical treatises. He urges his readers to subscribe to the Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge and the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, and appeals for donors to Queen Anne's Bounty. Colleges were required for candidates for holy orders and for missionaries, also superior schools for training schoolmasters and schoolmistresses. The charity schools through which children might be stored with all Christian knowledge are already in existence, but claim more liberal support. The religious societies and those for reformation of manners complete Nelson's list of spiritual charities, those that were in existence, and those that were still a demand of the future.

Turning to the wants of the body we find that when people were disposed to do so, they could help the needy in many different ways. They might maintain the widows and orphans of the clergy; or establish the poor in a way of industry.<sup>2</sup> Poor distressed housekeepers must be assisted,

<sup>1</sup> P. 100-103.

<sup>2</sup> Instance: Corporation of Poor. Nelson mentions 12,000 children; 1,500 vagrants. The Corporation at that time did not provide work for the industrious. Nelson had the original project in mind. The rapidity with which people forgot that is very significant.



though it was "almost incredible what hath been done in this kind."<sup>1</sup> Decayed tradesmen could be wonderfully helped, "without any very great expense."<sup>2</sup> Poor prisoners might always be relieved; and the hospitals of this great city, which are the most useful ornament of it,<sup>3</sup> were sufficiently known, while dispensaries had been set up in several parts of the town.

In addition to these actual forms of benevolence Nelson gives a number of charitable desiderata, such as hospitals for incurables, for the blind, for stone, gout, rheumatism, consumption, dropsy, asthma, palsy, and for foundlings; houses for young women convinced of their folly, houses for decayed gentlemen and gentlewomen, a house of hospitality for strangers, homes for converts from Popery, a school for children, called the "Blackguard"; "and," he concludes, "there are several other wants."<sup>4</sup>

When we consider that the movements of associated charity began with the formation of the religious societies, barely a generation before Nelson made his survey of the philanthropic field, we cannot fail to be impressed with the numerous directions in which, in so short a period, the benevolent activity of later times had been anticipated; while if we reflect on the variety of the schemes that the philanthropists of that age planned out and advocated, we may readily admit the first-rate importance of these years in our history. Nevertheless, they deserve our consideration, not only on account of what was done or purposed to be done. For the essential interest of these movements is to be found rather in the fact that they were the products of a new principle, that of free co-operation for ends that could not be attained by separate individuals. The particulars I have inserted seem worth recording in themselves, but there is a danger that they may obscure the underlying social fact, so that at the risk of some repetition I shall venture to mark

<sup>1</sup> P. 189.

<sup>2</sup> P. 191.

<sup>3</sup> P. 199.

<sup>4</sup> P. 215.



out the complex intermingling of men and schemes. Gouge engages in work which links him with Bray; his personal relations are with the Socinian Firmin. Bray, thus indirectly related to Firmin, is the centre of the group of Church movements. He is also connected with General Oglethorpe, through him with prison reform,<sup>1</sup> and the facts of unemployment, and is thus again brought into touch with non-ecclesiastical interests. The Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge, deriving in part from the religious societies, has affinities with Puritan religion. Church and Dissent combine for the suppression of disorderly vice. The charity schools, in which the Prayer Book exercises its central influence, are prepared for by the work of Firmin, and spring up in rivalry to the schools of the Quakers. In fine we discover that chasms in thought and habit are bridged by the growing preoccupation with deeds of charity. The philanthropists interchange experiences, learn from one another, and impetus is given to the movement by mutual recommendations or mutual rivalries. The societies divide from one another for greater effectiveness of operation. Different groups of men combine for the same purpose; or the same men form themselves into various groups with different intentions. The forces compelling to this are, on the one hand, personal friendships prompting to common work; on the other hand, a common object brings into a single society or into separate groups, men who would otherwise have lacked even a half-accepted principle of union in practical activities.

#### 10. A PERSUASIVE TO CHARITY.

We have drawn from the "Address to Persons of Quality" an indication of the particular forms of charity which engaged men's energy before and during the reign of Queen Anne. But in doing so we have not by any means exhausted its interest. We may learn from it also a great

<sup>1</sup> *Post*, Chap. viii.



deal about the ideas that were entertained on wealth and poverty; the motives that animated philanthropy; and the effects that were expected from it.

There are several passages in the treatise that are, in effect, an essay towards a doctrine of wealth. The argument is not entirely clear, because there are some dilemmas which Nelson perceives, but from which his dialectic is unable to provide an escape. He finds it "impossible to reflect seriously upon those several declarations, that Almighty God hath made in the Old and New Testament, in relation to the rich and great of this world, without dread and astonishment."<sup>1</sup> He is convinced, again, that the moral peril of life is less for the poor than the rich, since the enemies they have to contend against are "either much weakened by labour and fatigue, as the Flesh; or partly disarmed of their power, as the World; or discouraged by the little profit that redounds from the victory, as the Devil."<sup>2</sup> It would seem, then, better to be poor. But he is met by the fact of experience, for religious people who are also wealthy show every disposition of remaining so. And he concurs in the opinion that it is not desirable for the rich to enter voluntarily on the safer estate of poverty: the Scriptures are not to be understood in a strict or rigorous sense.<sup>3</sup> Is it not, indeed, the Infinite God, that hath made some rich and great and appointed the poor and needy to work day and night for their service?<sup>4</sup> If it should be asked why God had not made an equal distribution, a question is proposed for which there is no answer.<sup>5</sup> It did not occur to the author to consider the question which might have helped him out of his confusion, viz., whether, as a matter of fact, poverty is superior to wealth, and where if anywhere a line is to be drawn between the two. But although he does not explicitly raise this inquiry, he writes in different places with a very undecided opinion as to

<sup>1</sup> P. 34.

<sup>2</sup> P. 62-3.

<sup>3</sup> P. 42.

<sup>4</sup> P. 78.

<sup>5</sup> P. 231; yet cf. p. 225.



whether poverty, however greatly superior it may be to wealth, can be regarded as itself good. At one time, and in order to reprove the upper classes, he sounds the praise of the poor in an idyllic picture which convinces us that, although he did not lack sympathy, he was certainly not gifted with that rare touch of prophecy which occasionally enables a rich man to understand poverty. At another, when his object is to show how the upper class may draw the inferior to God, he describes the depravity of the latter with the vividness required by his argument.<sup>1</sup> The doctrine of wealth then hardly goes beyond this:—Wealth is good for the rich, poverty for the poor; only it must be remembered that those who have this world's goods should share with those who have them not. At any rate, the conclusion drawn from an exposition of the parable of the sheep and the goats is that "God only requires from us superfluities."<sup>2</sup>

It is right to give alms. In what way can men be prevailed on to discharge this duty? For Nelson has no doubt that this is an obligation, and that it is ingratitude to God not to bestow the talents he has given to some for the service of their fellow creatures.<sup>3</sup> The inducement is twofold, in this world and the next. In the first place charity is a good investment. Men are ready, runs the argument, to put money in the funds; if they have a design upon heaven, they should invest in this way in "so many spiritual banks where their money is secured by the word of infallible truth, and where the profit is as durable as their souls."<sup>4</sup> It is only by charity that rich men can cover their sins,<sup>5</sup> escape oblivion, and gain immortality.<sup>6</sup> The argument should be conclusive, but Nelson evidently is doubtful, and he adds a reflection drawn from a more

<sup>1</sup> Pp. 38-40; cf. pp. 86-7.

<sup>2</sup> P. 241.

<sup>3</sup> P. 91.

<sup>4</sup> Pp. 103-4. The simile of a bank is no doubt prompted by the recent foundation of the Bank of England.

<sup>5</sup> P. 74.

<sup>6</sup> P. 12. This, of course, is the constant theme of the fashionable charity sermon.



mundane selfishness. Charity may be immediately profitable: "an unexpected inheritance, the determination of a lawsuit in our favour, the success of a great adventure, an advantageous match, are sometimes the recompenses of charity in this world."<sup>1</sup> Heaven and earth have witnessed for our author, and he may refrain therefore from the darker argument found in the fear of Hell.<sup>2</sup>

It remains to consider what effects on the poor were expected from all this philanthropic expenditure. The immediate effects are suggested in the catalogue of institutions mentioned in the last section. Some less obvious advantages must now be described. It was supposed that at first the poor would be held to their benefactors, as their benefactors to God, only by ties of interest. But a purer motive might be expected to intervene. It was granted that even though the poor were not relieved they had no reason to murmur against the providence of their heavenly Father, though they might fairly "complain of the injustice and hard-heartedness of the rich."<sup>3</sup> In fact they did both. Charity, then, while it would save them from an irreligious discontent, should also move them to patience and submission, to attendance at the public prayers and the sacraments,<sup>4</sup> and to amend their morals, for "good advice accompanied with a gift enters into the very bottom of the soul."<sup>5</sup> The moral reformation could hardly be expected to go far in that generation. However they might despair of their present age, there was, and this is the constant pathetic refuge of the half-disillusioned philanthropist, great hope that the next age would "put on a new face."<sup>6</sup> In one respect, Nelson did look for the result without delay. He turned to the children (as others have done and do still). They were being trained in the charity schools to "become

<sup>1</sup> P. 254.

<sup>2</sup> Pp. 23-4, 27-33, 266.

<sup>3</sup> P. 260.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. the frequent bequests of bread to be given after church service to those who attend.

<sup>5</sup> Pp. 86-7.

<sup>6</sup> P. 164.



useful servants, and by their honesty and diligence prove great blessings to the rich, who want such serviceable instruments to make their lives happy and easy."<sup>1</sup>

Such are the considerations by which Nelson expected to move his contemporaries into the paths of philanthropy. He no doubt believed the arguments he adduced to be valid and sufficient. I think, however, that we should do him and some others an injustice if we imagine that the motives which actuated them were entirely of this character. The *Address* was intended in the main not for those who were seriously concerned in the works it describes, but for the larger class which was required to provide financial support for schemes of philanthropy in which only the few were really interested. Nelson's own feelings were forceful, he had a strong purpose to be helpful, but he was appealing to those whose sympathy was languid, and whose strong purposes had other aims. The instinct of the advocate told him that he must offer such inducements as were likely to prove successful with what can only be called by courtesy the benevolent public.

<sup>1</sup> P. 160.



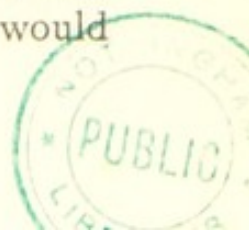
## CHAPTER V.

## ELEMENTARY EDUCATION AND CHILD LABOUR.

THE educational movement that falls to be considered in the present chapter begins with the establishment about 1775 of Thomas Firmin's spinning school, and includes the three further experiments, the charity schools, the workhouses, so far as these were receptacles for children, and the Sunday schools, which became numerous at the close of the eighteenth century. The history of elementary education during this period is inextricably bound up with the philanthropic device of employing cheap child labour. The relative importance attached to toil for wages and to literary instruction varied considerably at different times. The first motive was the leading one with Firmin and in the workhouses: in these education was a subsidiary interest. In the charity schools, on the other hand, at least during the earlier years, the educational aspect was the more prominent. Later, in response to hostile criticism, and by a process of assimilation to the workhouses, the policy of finding wage-labour for the children assumed in the charity schools also a leading place.

## I. TRANSITION FROM ADULT TO CHILD LABOUR.

We have already had occasion to notice that although the Corporation of the Poor was instituted for the purpose of dealing with the unemployed, its early reports are vague and indefinite on this point, precise only in relation to vagrants and the children. By the year 1712 we find that while the corporation continued its work for these classes it had apparently entirely ceased to find work for adults. It would





even seem that this part of its function had been forgotten.<sup>1</sup> This shifting of attention from the parent to the child is characteristic of the period subsequent to the Restoration which witnessed the beginnings of the associated philanthropy. For this there are several causes, some of them economic.

England was feeling severely the effects of foreign competition, and the country was barely able to "hold her own against new continental rivals."<sup>2</sup> In this fact may be found an explanation of the desire for child labour. The wages of adults were low: it was possible to make the wages of children still lower.<sup>3</sup> This tendency in favour of child labour was aggravated by the greed or the necessities of the parents. The fresh source of income was a welcome addition to their own inadequate earnings.

A third circumstance concurred. As we learn from the industrious pamphleteer, Richard Haines, the growth of the linen trade gave an opportunity for "great numbers of poor families, who have little to do . . . unless . . . in harvest," and who "might hereby the most profitably be set to work constantly . . . not only men but also women, boyes and girles, that can do little thing beside it."<sup>4</sup> Haines's interest in the trade was in part a practical one, because he had invented a spinning engine<sup>5</sup> by means of which he claimed that the labour of those incapable of "stronger work" might be utilised.

These economic forces would no doubt have been in themselves sufficient to bring about that exploiting of little

<sup>1</sup> See the Spittal Sermon (1712) by the Bishop of Lichfield and Coventry. He quotes from an official report put into his hands, particulars of the 384 children maintained and the 583 vagrants arrested. But of work provided there is no mention.

<sup>2</sup> Cunningham, "Growth of English Industry," ii., p. 340.

<sup>3</sup> Firmin, "Proposals for the Employment of the Poor," p. 38, says that in some trades wages had fallen from 2s. 6d. or 2s. to 1s. a day; cf. Thorold Rogers, on the effects of the wages assessments.

<sup>4</sup> "Prevention of Poverty."

<sup>5</sup> "Proposals for building in every County a Working-Alms-House" (1677). His engine does not seem to have been a success, to judge from the lengthy reply to objections called forth by it. But it and Haines's pertinacious writings show in what direction things were moving.



children almost before they had ceased to crawl, which entails on the country so large a heritage of degradation. And of course it must be remembered that what was now happening was not the first introduction of child labour, but the opening of a large new field for its employment. The noticeable feature for our history is the adoption of this tendency as an instrument of philanthropy. Whereas in the early years of the seventeenth century the philanthropic policy was to find employment for adults, at the close this had given place to the working of little children. To this extent the responsibility of giving added impetus to the growing disregard of human life in comparison with commodities must be fastened on the founders of charitable working schools. The intention of Firmin, *e.g.*, was purely benevolent, and his experiment enjoyed some measure of immediate success, but this was not equal to the more lasting if less direct mischief that ensued.<sup>1</sup>

## 2. FIRMIN'S EXPERIMENT.

According to Tillotson<sup>2</sup> it was the practice of Thomas Gouge, vicar of Spitalfields, in providing work for the poor of his parish, "which gave the first hint to that worthy and useful citizen, Mr. Thomas Firmin, of a much larger design . . . He being, by the generous assistance and charity of many worthy and well dispos'd persons of all ranks, enabled to bear the unavoidable loss and charge of so vast an undertaking." The younger man did not, however, require models for imitation, because his interest in the poor was strong and his knowledge of industrial conditions was gained at first hand. One fact that could not fail to impress him as he passed through the streets was the great amount of clamorous poverty. More clear-sighted than many of his contemporaries, he discerned behind this much undeserved and

<sup>1</sup> He may have been animated by a motive similar to the one assigned by Bellers for a somewhat similar proposal: "The will being the greatest enemy a man hath when it is not subject to the will of God; how valuable is it, then, for a child's will to be kept under another direction than its own" ("Colledge of Industry" (1695), p. 17).

<sup>2</sup> Funeral sermon on Gouge.



unregarded destitution. Wages were low, and there was in many directions lack of employment. Firmin did not feel himself able to do much for the adults, although he did employ a few "ancient people," some of whom could see no more than the wheels in his spinning school. What he did propose was to provide work for the children. The money they earned would be a welcome addition to the family budget on Saturday night, and it did not occur to him that his policy might increase the evil by rendering it yet more difficult for the fathers to obtain remunerative employment. Firmin's establishment in Little Britain was in part a factory, in part a school.<sup>1</sup> Children were admitted from three years old: those of the younger sort were to be taught their letters and to read until they were able to spin. Probably the year from three to four was entirely devoted to a literary education. Even after that a daily interval for reading was held to be necessary. But from about four years old the period of technical instruction must begin, because by the time the children were five or six they were able to earn 2*d.*, and when rather older 3*d.* a day. No children were kept after they were old enough to be put out as apprentices. A woman was employed at 5*s.* a week to teach spinning and apparently reading to a class of twenty to thirty children. It is difficult to avoid the suspicion that the reading lessons must have been perfunctory for children of five or six who were earning 2*d.* a day. It is a commonplace to-day that such young children ought not to be industrial wage-earners at all, and yet it is probable that Firmin would have found it impossible to get the children together to learn their horn-book if he had not coupled with it the opportunity of gaining a wage.

The undertaking was one of considerable magnitude, for Firmin's outlay in the year preceding the writing of his book had been about £4,000. It had not paid its way, and this is hardly surprising, yet the loss had not been above £200, including, as it seems, the cost of instruction as well as the proper costs of manufacture.<sup>2</sup> On the other hand, it

<sup>1</sup> See "Proposals for the Employment of the Poor," by T. F. (1681).

<sup>2</sup> Cf. cost of the half-blind ancient people.



is to be noted that the loss would have been greater had not some of Firmin's friends purchased his linen cloth for charitable distribution. This opening of a new market may be set to the credit of the experiment, which thus stimulated an interest in the poor on the part of the well to do.

### 3. THE CHARITY SCHOOLS.

The working school in Little Britain was the achievement of one man, though it was only rendered possible by the assistance of many charitable donors. When the directing influence ceased the experiment itself came to an end. The charity schools, which quickly spread into all parts of the country, and which at first had little resemblance to Firmin's institution, represent a more widely-spread interest; they were the outcome not of one mind, but of an association, or rather of a large number of associations, and though each school doubtless owed its existence to a small number of people, yet the association continued even when the initiator had been withdrawn. These schools are interesting in many respects. It is impossible to overrate their importance as the first concerted effort to provide an elementary education for all the children of the country.<sup>1</sup> They were also the first considerable achievement of the new joint-stock principle in philanthropy.

The subjects for consideration in connection with this educational movement are first their origin in certain associations of voluntary subscribers; second, the numbers and distribution of the schools; further, the kind of instruction that was given in them, which will lead us to notice the religious intentions of the founders; while, lastly, we shall trace certain changes of policy which were introduced early in the eighteenth century, whereby they largely lost their educational intention and fell into a condition of arrested development.

(a) *Voluntary Subscription*.—When we look through the volumes of endowed charity reports for the last decade of

<sup>1</sup> They did succeed in providing for about 30,000.



the seventeenth and the first decade of the eighteenth century we find again and again endowments which do not bear the name of an individual founder, but are said to be the result of a voluntary subscription or of church collections.<sup>1</sup> There is something bewildering in the rapidity with which in the course of a few years this same object commends itself to so many detached groups of people. But the explanation is a simple one. The establishment of charity schools was the special concern of the newly-formed Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge. This society was chiefly composed of representatives of the different London parishes, and had correspondents, lay or clerical, in many parts of the country. Individual members naturally interested themselves in the need for schools in their own localities. But they were drawn together in the weekly meetings of the society, and it was the action of the society, a common policy directed from a common centre, that gave the unity of a single purpose to these apparently independent movements.<sup>2</sup> The work received a further element of permanence through the appointment by the society of agents who were charged with the formation and conduct of the schools, but were engaged especially in organising the collection of subscriptions for their foundation and maintenance. Behind the large number of people moved by a gentle benevolence to give subscriptions, stands the small group of men who devote themselves steadfastly to the carrying out of the charitable object.

(b) *Distribution of Schools*.—The charity schools do not become numerous until within the last three or four years of the seventeenth century; but there are a few earlier, and one in the parish of St. Botolph dates from about 1689.<sup>3</sup> Even twenty years earlier than this Gouge had been

<sup>1</sup> Some few of these schools have a founder of the ordinary type; but even these are dependent on donations for their upkeep.

<sup>2</sup> See "A Chapter in English Church History" (i.e., the early minutes and correspondence of the Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge).

<sup>3</sup> "Reports," Charity Com., London. i., 408. Mrs. Trimmer gives 1688 as the date for this school, and one at Westminster: "Economy of Charity," i., 14.



founding catechetical schools in Wales, and might, therefore, fairly be regarded as the initiator of the movement. The early increase in the number of schools and scholars was rapid, so rapid, indeed, as to suggest that what could be done in some places could easily be imitated everywhere. The charitable funds that were equal to supplying some sort of education to a few were deemed adequate to the support of all the necessary schools throughout the country. By the year 1707 there were fifty-five schools in London; two hundred and sixteen schools in the country. The country schools, many of them situated in small villages, were naturally much smaller than the London ones; in the latter there was an average of nearly fifty children, in the former of rather more than seventeen to each school.<sup>1</sup>

The movement continued to increase rapidly until by the year 1734 the numbers were :—

			London.		Country.
Schools	...	...	132	.....	1,329
Children	...	...	5,123	.....	19,506

From this time on the growth continued, though at a slower rate, until in 1752 the numbers were for London 5,604 and for the country 23,421. Six years later we find a slight falling off. We may conclude that the limit had been reached in London soon after 1730, and in the country by the middle of the century.<sup>2</sup> This arrest in development is in part a result of slackness of interest. The figures for the country schools remain the same, 23,421, for the years 1750, 1751, 1752, 1758, and this clearly indicates, not that the total was exactly the same for these years, but either that the London society was less persistent in seeking information, or, which is more probable, that the country correspondents had become remiss in making up their returns.

<sup>1</sup> "A list of the several Charity Schools" (1707). A few of the Welsh schools were maintained by the mine adventurers of England for the miners' children; and a school in Yorkshire by the master of an ironworks.

<sup>2</sup> If we take the total for the whole country, including Scotland and Ireland and the itinerant schools in Wales, the date may be put a little later. See "Accounts" of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge for 1734, 1750, 1753, 1758. See also Lecky, "England in the Eighteenth Century," ii., 603-4.



In any case, the official statistics became stale and out of date. A slovenly statistical practice need not necessarily imply a perfunctory method of working, and no doubt many of the schools were still administered with undiminished energy. The need for doing any piece of work is often more obvious than the necessity for an accurate record of the same. Nevertheless, in a survey of the whole field, the statistical omission is, in all probability, an indication of flagging interest in the actual work of education, and marks the beginning of the general condition of neglect so noticeable later in the century, when the extreme instance is mentioned of a well-endowed school containing only a single scholar. This rhythmic ebb of philanthropic interest is not an uncommon phenomenon. Less being achieved than had been hoped for, the voluntary principle betrays itself in the gradual abandonment of a task that has ceased to engage any sanguine expectation. A further explanation may be found in the rise of other forms of associated philanthropy towards the middle of the century. Numerous illustrations of the injurious effects resulting from the rivalry of newer projects will come before us in a later chapter. The dying away of the High Church movement has also something to do with the failure of the schools. Whatever the cause, the limit of the movement had been reached.<sup>1</sup>

(c) *The Curriculum*.—The miserable condition, and especially the ignorance, of the children of the poor, was such as to impress the minds of all who were concerned with questions of education, religion, or economics. The desire to do something for this multitude, which was growing up through neglect to poverty or vice, was one of the leading motives with those who were responsible for the charity schools. Thus the Bishop of Chester, in the course of a charity sermon, refers to the abundance of beggars, thieves, prostitutes and "worse villains," and enquires "whence,

<sup>1</sup> Davies, "Case of Labourers in Husbandry" (1795), pp. 95-6. The number there given, 30,000, is no greater than had been reached a generation earlier.



think we, have these mischiefs chiefly arisen? Has it not been almost wholly from want of a due care in educating the children of our poor?"<sup>1</sup> Here, then, is the broad consideration that should govern the instruction to be imparted.

But it was held that no education would be worth the name unless it was religious. And since most of the schools were established by members of the Church of England, it was commonly provided that the particular doctrines of that Church were to be taught. In fact, side by side with the purpose of saving children from ignorance and crime, was this other purpose of rescuing them from the errors of Papists, Dissenters, Quakers, and Infidels. We are told that the Jesuits had opened a charity school in the Savoy to "corrupt our poorer youth," and that the best way to counteract this had been found in the establishment of other schools "for a better education in learning and the Protestant religion." This was the occasion of the school at St. Martin's, Westminster, and though all the schools had not been "opened directly on the same view," they would all "serve directly to the same purpose." In another sermon, preached before the society, the advantages of the schools as a preventive of dissent of all kinds are dwelt upon. At the same time, it is to be remembered that the schools were not all church schools, some belonged to Quakers, and others were for the instruction of Protestant Dissenters, or, as in one case where the children were not all of the same creed, the prayers of the Church of England were repeated in the school, and the children attended a dissenting chapel. In another school, it was provided that the trustees were to be neither popishly affected nor fanatically inclined.<sup>2</sup>

Religious and doctrinal instruction was the first and most essential element in the education of the charity children. For the rest, it is well expressed in an extract from an official report read by Kennet in the course of his sermon in

<sup>1</sup> "Charity School Sermons" by Bishops of Peterboro' and Chester, 1706 and 1713. Traces of the jealousy of Dissent are found in Burnet, *e.g.*, v. 235, vi. 193.

<sup>2</sup> Char. Com. Rept., London, i., 537 and 730.



1706. "In all these schools the children are taught civility and good manners, and reading, and catechizing: in some of them the boys learn writing and arithmetick, and navigation; and the girls are taught to knit, and sew, and mark, and spin, and card, and mend and make their own cloaths."<sup>1</sup> Some regulations for particular schools help to complete the account. The boys in a school at Aldgate were to be taught "to read and to write, and the grounds of arithmetic," and to be instructed "in the knowledge and practice of the Christian religion." Another school, at Stratford-Bow, was for teaching the "rudiments and principles of the Church of England; and to teach the male children to read, write, and cast accounts, and the female children to read, write, and to work at their needle." In Whitechapel the mistress, "a skilful woman of the Church of England," with a salary of £20 a year, was to spend one part of the day in teaching the girls "to read, and at convenient times to learn without book the catechism of the Church of England, and the other part of the day to knit and sew plain work."<sup>2</sup> And at Lewisham the children are to be taught from "proper and pious books of instruction." In this school there was a fund for giving to the children Bibles, Prayer Books, "The Whole Duty of Man," or "other plain and useful tracts."<sup>3</sup>

This scheme of education was intended to fit the boys to be put out as apprentices, and the girls to enter domestic service. For these vocations it was supposed they would be particularly apt, for, in a sentence full of clerical eloquence, a "neat, tractable, and virtuous and religious little scholar, is like young Joseph." In the early years of the movement, the number apprenticed in London alone was little if anything short of one hundred a year.<sup>4</sup> It should be added that, in London at any rate, more than half of the children were clothed, and sometimes in a specified dress, as, *e.g.*, clothes

<sup>1</sup> "Twenty-five Sermons," p. 72.

<sup>2</sup> Char. Com. Rept., i., 365, 568, 730.

<sup>3</sup> Rept. Char. Com., ii., 440.

<sup>4</sup> "List of several Charity Schools" (1707).



of an orange colour ;<sup>1</sup> that sometimes a meal was given at the school ; or some of the children were entirely maintained. In brief, the general theory of the charity school was that boys and girls were to be cared for, instructed and fitted to fill the humble stations that would thereafter be offered them. There was, however, a rather different idea working from the first, and which was reinforced by experience, viz., that the schools should be not only a training ground for future industry, but also in themselves should fill the place of children's workhouses. This was brought into prominence by the criticism to which the schools were subjected.

(d) *Criticism and Change of Policy.*—From an early period of the movement, some of the charity schools were also working schools or workshops. The Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge was scarcely formed before (March 1699-1700) it was requested to "consider of some methods for setting to work poor children in the charity schools," a policy that repeatedly fell to be debated in the following years.<sup>2</sup> The nature of the employment is of two kinds: on the one hand educational, or on the other commercial; according as the intention was to give a useful manual training, or to derive a profit from the undertaking. And although the two motives frequently intermingled, we are able in some cases to see the distinction. Thus at White-chapel the aim is clearly of an educational kind. Girls were admitted at the age of six; they were taught to knit and sew; the mistress was not to make a profit from the sale of the work, but the material after it was worked up was to be divided among the children. The opposite policy prevailed at Lambeth, where the school was supported in part by subscriptions and in part by "sale of wool worked by the boys."<sup>3</sup>

Several influences were converging to curb the educational efficiency of the schools, and make them more and more

<sup>1</sup> "List of several Charity Schools," and Rept. Char. Com., iii., 521.

<sup>2</sup> "Chapter of English Church History," p. 56; cf. pp. 165, 196, and 199.

<sup>3</sup> "Rep. Char. Com.," London, i., 731-732, 767, iv., 528.



charitable workshops carried on for a profit.<sup>1</sup> In the first place the schools, or some of them, always laboured under a financial difficulty. Large funds were not required, for the accommodation, "in ruinous buildings" or otherwise, and the teaching staff were alike regulated by the strictest economy. But to secure year after year even the minimum of support was not easy. At St. Botolph, where some poor boys had been maintained by subscriptions for several years, it had not been possible to build a schoolhouse until 1709, when Sir John Cass left a bequest for the purpose.<sup>2</sup> A period of five years (1708-13) was required for the collection of the subscriptions needed to start a school near Blackfriars.<sup>3</sup> A girls' school was commenced at Lewisham in 1699; by 1711 most of the subscriptions had ceased, and it became necessary to devote two-thirds of the offertory money for their support; in 1727 Dean Stanhope left a legacy of £150 for the school; and his widow supplemented this with a further £50, adding the proviso that if the subscriptions failed, and the school was closed, her money should be used for the sick, in providing medicine or otherwise.<sup>4</sup> A further indication of the financial strain is found in the institution of the annual charity school sermons. On these occasions the children from the various schools were brought in procession to the church, in order that their appearance might point the eloquence of the preacher and augment the liberality of the congregation. Such facts as these are illustrative of the pressure of events towards finding in the work of the children part of the means of carrying on the schools.

Pressure in the same direction was exerted by the hostile criticism to which the schools were subjected. This was twofold, proceeding from the parents or from employers of labour. The parents grudged the time spent at school. In

<sup>1</sup> Not a profit to the managers which was not earned or desired. There is no trace of this. Perhaps "profit" is an inaccurate term "for the gain of a monetary return"; but the latter phrase is cumbersome.

<sup>2</sup> Rep., i., 358, cf. 408. Possibly there had been a previous schoolhouse, though no mention is made of it. Probably the school was small and held in a hired room.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, ii., 62.

<sup>4</sup> "Rep. Char. Com.," ii., 440.



one instance it was found necessary, in order to meet this difficulty, to make the school into an evening school in order that the children might remain at work during the day. In another school the children were allowed to go to "servile labour every other day for their parents," and we are told, but perhaps with undue optimism, that this was no prejudice to their progress in learning.<sup>1</sup> Or again we find the instruction so unpopular that the children could hardly be brought into the school unless their parents were chargeable to the parish.<sup>2</sup> The parental objection would obviously be removed if the children were set to work and took home even a small wage.

Criticism also proceeded from the employers. It was argued (1) that the charity schools caused a dearth of servants in husbandry by their policy of apprenticing the children to trades; (2) that the children grew up in pride and idleness; (3) that they were nurseries of disaffection and that learning predisposes the pupils to "run to tumults," while even the masters employed were persons disaffected to the Government. It could not be denied that there was some foundation for this last charge; but the masters had been "rigorously animadverted upon" and the mischief remedied. The Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge did dispute the validity of the first two arguments, but they were not without their effect on future policy.<sup>3</sup>

In the year 1712 the society had considered the need of inuring the children to labour and industry. In 1719 they urged their correspondents to find employment in husbandry for children and to employ them while they were at school. "The spinning of coarse wool flax or hemp is advised as best, but where this is impracticable the children should be employed in some other way." The managers of the schools further point out that it had been their particular desire that true humility should be taught, lest the children might "put

<sup>1</sup> "An Account of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge" (1734); "A Chapter in English Church History," p. 68.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 356.

<sup>3</sup> "An Account . . ." (1734).



too great a value upon themselves," and that they had instructed them "very carefully in the duties of servants and submission to superiors."<sup>1</sup>

Yet a further influence tending to draw the schools from their first aim is to be found in the spread of the workhouse movement, where, as in Firmin's experiment, child labour was primary and education a subsidiary interest.

#### 4. THE WORKHOUSES.<sup>2</sup>

A great impetus was given to the erection of workhouses by the Act of 1723 enabling parishes to form themselves into unions for this purpose. But the general Act was largely a recognition of accomplished facts, inasmuch as there had been numerous private Acts, beginning with the Bristol Act of 1696, by which several parishes had secured power of common action. The case of Bristol is a typical one, although it started under better auspices than many, inasmuch as the policy was directed by Cary, the well-known merchant and commercial writer. Poverty was great and must be alleviated; disorder was considerable and must be checked. Workhouses were erected especially for children. The girls were put under a schoolmistress to teach them to read, tutoresses to teach them to spin. But it was not possible to keep them on the wages given for their work; the children, Cary tells us, could not get half so much as was expended on their provisions.<sup>3</sup> A second house was started for boys, who settled well to their work and every day mended their hands. In spite of the fact that the parents, "having lost the sweetness

<sup>1</sup> Accounts of Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge for 1734 and 1737, where extracts are printed from the earlier reports.

<sup>2</sup> We are concerned with the workhouses in this section only so far as regards their child population. My information is largely drawn from "An Account of Several Workhouses" (1st. ed., 1725; 2nd ed., 1732). It is an anonymous publication, but is the work of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, probably drawn up by the Committee from information supplied by the country correspondents.

<sup>3</sup> "An Account of Proceedings of the Corporation of Bristol," J. Cary (1700). This experiment convinced Cary that the real cause of distress was to be found in the inadequacy of wages, p. 13.



of their pay," were bitterly opposed to this scheme for employment of the children, Cary regarded it as a success and trusted that it would be widely imitated.<sup>1</sup> But it could not retain even the appearance of success for long. By 1714 the corporation had incurred very heavy expense and laid aside the project.<sup>2</sup> It was not found possible to make children self-supporting wage earners during the time when they were acquiring the arts of reading and writing with the addition of arithmetic in the case of boys.

The Bristol plan was, however, largely followed during the early part of the eighteenth century, and especially during some years from 1720 on. The inmates were chiefly decrepit old people or children, some of them too young to work.<sup>3</sup> Among other occupations we find those of weaving, spinning, knitting, carding, stocking making, lace making, straw plaiting, hop picking, the manufacture of jockey whips and hop bags. At one workhouse<sup>4</sup> children attended school at three and began to work at five years old. The early hopes were not fulfilled, for "what great gains can be hoped for from old infirm people, who are past labour, or young inexperienced children who have everything to learn?"<sup>5</sup> They could not maintain themselves, but for a time, at any rate, the treatment of the children was considerate, and, to judge from the dietaries, they were not ill fed, according to the standard of the time.<sup>6</sup>

That the workhouse did something to provide children with an elementary education cannot be denied. We should not, however, at the present time speak of the poor law schools as a philanthropic enterprise. But in the eighteenth century the distinction between law and charity was still much less sharply drawn. These workhouse schools were due very largely to private action; the parochial officers

<sup>1</sup> Pp. 19—21.

<sup>2</sup> "Account of Several Workhouses" (1732), pp. 159-161.

<sup>3</sup> *E.g.*, at Harborough, out of seventeen inmates only three boys were able to earn.

<sup>4</sup> St. Giles's in the Fields.

<sup>5</sup> "Account of Several . . ." (1725), p. iv.

<sup>6</sup> See Mr. Bailey's "Better Employment . . ." (1758), for a mode bill of fare for every meal.



were in close touch with the philanthropists; the funds for the support of the policy were drawn indiscriminatingly from the rates or from freewill gifts. Here a workhouse is founded or supported from a bequest, there a subscription is raised for the purpose, or charity sermons are preached and collections are taken.

There is reason to think that this workhouse movement to some extent took the place of the increase of charity schools, that it was indeed an alternative policy, and it was very largely forwarded by the same people who were responsible for the charity schools. The distinction between them is that whereas the schools were mainly intended for teaching the catechism the workhouses were mainly industrial. Some education there was; especially did the philanthropists endeavour to obtain an adequate religious knowledge; while reading to the extent of being able to peruse "The Whole Duty of Man" was felt to be very desirable. The educational aim of the charity schools themselves had not been high, and was of a strictly utilitarian character. It was only in a modified degree that this educational aim was carried over into the workhouses.

## 5. FAILURE OF THE SCHOOLS.

The latter half of the eighteenth century affords only a dreary record of failure in the province of elementary education. The charity school movement had ceased to expand by about 1750, and from that time became more and more ineffective. The numbers, it is true, remained about the same. An accurate writer, who manifests some impatience at the complacency with which the schools were regarded, and who, although he did not wish to depreciate these institutions, yet points out how inadequate they were, estimates the number of pupils in 1795 at 30,000.<sup>1</sup> Sir T. Bernard also expresses the opinion that there was less cause for exultation at the number of children in the schools than for

<sup>1</sup> "Case of Labourers in Husbandry," D. Davies, p. 95-96.



deep regret at the far greater number who received no education at all. He admits that the annual display of children at the charity sermon is impressive, but only for those who were ignorant how small was the provision in comparison with the need.<sup>1</sup> The educational ideal may not be lower, but it is expressed more boldly than in earlier years. At the Orphan Working School, Hoxton, the aim was to teach the children "so much reading as every Christian who values his Bible would wish them to have: and no more writing than would be useful in the meanest station."<sup>2</sup> Even this minimum of learning was more than was always allowed. A charity school at Bristol had been started to teach twenty-four girls to read and sew. "But that plan having been found not to answer the desired end, another is now (1775) adopted, viz., a mistress is employed to teach them to spin hemp for the sail cloth and sack makers. She has 1*d.* out of every 1*s.* earned by the girls."<sup>3</sup> The purposes for which the schools were supposed to be kept open were sadly neglected. Indeed, the abuses, maladministration, and ignorant management of the schools among other forms of endowed charities led to the appointment of the Charity Commissioners in the year 1818. One school had for several years previous to 1790 fallen into complete decay and almost ceased to exist; in another, the mistress is described as infirm and not capable of giving the children much instruction. Bernard asserts that there were many instances in which a single scholar formed the whole population of a well-endowed charity school.<sup>4</sup> Quite at the close of the period several new schools were started in connection with the free church-sittings movement. In one of these, at St. Giles's, there were 240 children, a master and two

<sup>1</sup> "Reports Society for Bettering Condition of the Poor," iv., 36.

<sup>2</sup> See "A Plan of the Charity" (1760); The Charity Sermon, by Pickard, p. 10.

<sup>3</sup> "An Account of Hospitals, Almshouses and Public Schools in Bristol" (1775), p. 38.

<sup>4</sup> "Reports Charity Commissioners," London, i., 706; ii., 387. "Reports of the Society for Bettering the Conditions of the Poor," iv., 35.



mistresses, but it is added the rooms were not "sufficiently commodious for so large a number of scholars." Another school was conducted by a master aged eighteen, with the assistance of a boy of fourteen as usher, while in a third the tuition was almost entirely conducted by boys. These instances are adduced as showing how a general national system of education for the poor might be adopted at a very trifling expense.<sup>1</sup>

## 6. THE SUNDAY SCHOOLS.

The common tradition, repeating opinions of late eighteenth-century philanthropists, who claimed for their own age the credit of this new instrument of benevolence, has ennobled Robert Raikes with the title of "founder of Sunday schools," and in doing so is not essentially inaccurate, for although we find several instances of isolated schools in an earlier age, it was only with the establishment, about the year 1780, of the schools at Gloucester, that this device took its place as one of the general and permanent institutions of the country. Perhaps the first Sunday school in England was that one related in a previous chapter set up by the Ferrar girls at Little Gidding.<sup>2</sup> Others followed, as at Taunton, where, between the years 1654 and 1662, the Rev. Joseph Alleine assembled the children of the town for Sabbath instruction, or at Flaxley Abbey, where Mrs. Catherine Bovey carried on one of the "pleasantest Sunday schools on record"<sup>3</sup> These early tentative experiments, in their policy as well as chronologically, belong to the older philanthropic method, inasmuch as they both owed their initiative to private and personal circumstances, and were liable to interruption by death or whatever mischance might befall the individuals responsible for them. One, indeed, of the pioneer schools survived its

<sup>1</sup> "Reports of the Society for Bettering the Conditions of the Poor," iii., 259-260; iv. 42-43, 229.

<sup>2</sup> Earlier at least than any of those mentioned by A. Gregory, in "Robert Raikes, Journalist and Philanthropist," to which I am much indebted for this section.

<sup>3</sup> Gregory, pp. 45-48.



founder, and continuing until the present time, has a longer history than any other Sunday school in the country. Miss Hannah Ball, who spent the greatest part of her life at the little town of High Wycombe, was attracted to Methodism by the preaching of John Wesley and others of his followers on their visits to the town, and in 1768 she established her first Sunday school. After her death in 1792 the work was continued by her sister. Two things occur in explanation of this. Her school was not entirely a private venture, but invoked the interest of a religious community, and the modern movement inseparably connected with the name of Raikes had acquired considerable momentum.

Robert Raikes was clearly not in any strict sense the founder of Sunday schools. Even in the matter of the Gloucester schools the title has been claimed for his fellow worker, the Rev. Thomas Stock. It is to these two<sup>1</sup> working in common and not as rivals, the man of the pulpit and the man of the press, that the institutions in and near their city are due. The work of tuition was at first paid work, but voluntary assistants or colleagues were not wanting. Miss Sophia Cooke, a young Methodist lady, and niece of Alderman Weaver, owner of the pin factory, the scandalous and neglected lives of the juvenile workers in which had first attracted Raikes' attention, conducted a school for her uncle's employees; the teacher in another school, at the village of Sheepscombe, five miles distant, was a poor man named John Twining. The phenomenon presented by the Gloucester schools possesses elements of permanency lacking in earlier experiments. But Raikes' claim to distinction, which is of a high order, while it does not rest on the ground of his being the first in an enterprise that numbers several pioneers, does not any the more consist in any particular novelty or invention introduced by him into the schools which he established. But, as has been well said, the

<sup>1</sup> The question is discussed in D. N. B., article "Raikes," and by A. Gregory, and as it has no bearing on the development it need not detain us here. The evidence seems conclusive in favour of the journalist.



movement, which had been "hitherto unheard of save in a few provincial towns and villages, was by him brought into the light of day. . . . He found the practice local: he made it national."<sup>1</sup> In brief, the modern Sunday school movement received its decisive impetus from the editor's office of the *Gloucester Journal*. The newspaper, established by Raikes' father in 1722, enjoyed a large circulation far beyond the county boundaries. Robert was at once printer, publisher, and editor, and he used the large influence which he was thus in a position to wield, on behalf of the philanthropic undertaking in which some of his countrymen were engaged. His profession brought him necessarily into contact with the different aspects of life in the city, with pleasant episodes and degrading conditions. One of the causes which first quickened his humane ardour was the state of the prisons. His zeal is recognised by Howard, and finds expression in the columns of the *Journal*. The matter of the prisons will engage us presently, thus it is sufficient in this place to notice how, when his own sympathies were kindled, the editor appealed to the public to endorse his sentiments, thus discovering and giving early illustration of the power exerted by the press as an ally of popular ideals, schemes and labours.<sup>2</sup> Another cause which gained his advocacy is the anti-slave trade movement. When Clarkson, on his first impetuous campaign, visited Gloucester he had intercourse with Raikes, and mentions that among the papers first gained over was the *Gloucester Journal*.<sup>3</sup>

The columns of his paper are thus found always open to the spread of humane ideas and agitations. The prisons and the slaves belonged to others, and the work of Raikes was subsidiary. The Sunday schools were his own. The value of the newspaper advocacy does not seem to have occurred to him immediately, for while his schools date from 1780, the press notices only begin towards the close of 1783. But after that the recognition was rapid, and from the spring

<sup>1</sup> Gregory, p. 45.

<sup>2</sup> Gregory, p. 27, *et pass.*

<sup>3</sup> Clarkson's "History of the Abolition of the Slave Trade," p. 219.



of 1784 onwards the paper "teems with notices of new schools and testimonies to their value."<sup>1</sup> A knowledge of the new movement was rapidly carried into all parts of the country, the paragraphs in the *Gloucester Journal* being largely copied into other papers. The leading magazines of the day were also utilised for propaganda purposes.<sup>2</sup> In these ways Raikes availed himself of what he felt to be a powerful instrument. The road for his success had been prepared by the gradual formation during the century of the philanthropic doctrine that what could be achieved anywhere could easily be imitated everywhere.

The Sunday School idea rapidly caught on with the religious public. Schools sprang up in the great manufacturing towns and in country villages. Some were the result of individual activity, some were connected with particular churches or chapels, some, as the London society, were under the control of committees composed equally of members of the Church of England and Protestant Dissenters.<sup>3</sup> For a time the movement did to a large extent maintain an undenominational character, and increased in spite of the tepid approval of some of the bishops; but the tendency was from the first in the direction of what shortly became the general system of treating the school as an appanage of a denominational church. The extra-ecclesiastical, and independent origin of the movement may in some measure account for the rather chilly attitude which was long maintained by many churches to what was barely recognised as an integral part of their work. So early as 1785 there were said to be as many as a quarter of a million children in the schools; this number had increased by a fifth four years later.<sup>4</sup> The London society alone assisted 1,012 schools with 65,000 children in 1795.<sup>5</sup> In 1801 the numbers are officially given as 1,516 schools and 156,490 children.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Gregory, pp. 79-80.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 84.

<sup>3</sup> Lettsom, "Hints Designed to Promote Beneficence," iii., 126-136.

<sup>4</sup> Gregory, p. 90.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 105.

<sup>6</sup> Printed in Lettsom's "Hints," iii., p. 136.



The anniversaries were from the first, as they long continued to be, the leading occasion for evoking interest in, and obtaining income for the schools.<sup>1</sup> The matter of funds was a serious one, for although the temper of the age is a guarantee of economy, the cost of even the most tenuous stipend to the teachers of so large a crowd of children could not be slight; the London society, *e.g.*, spent £4,000 in fifteen years on teachers' salaries.<sup>2</sup> In Gloucester, whence the impetus first sprang, an early flagging was experienced from this difficulty of finance and for some years the schools almost entirely ceased.<sup>3</sup> The financial strain is no doubt one cause of the gradual change from paid to voluntary teaching, although it cannot be regarded as the only one. A service which seemed to lie within the capacity of mediocre talents could not fail to call forth the enthusiastic service of young people who had been prepared by the stronger religious life of the time to seek for occasions of Christian usefulness and self sacrifice. The Methodist school at Bolton was one of the first to adopt, in 1785, the plan of having voluntary teachers, and from that time the growth of gratuitous instruction was regular and rapid.<sup>4</sup> The revival at Gloucester was due to "six young men" who, resolving themselves to take up the work without payment, succeeded in re-establishing the schools of the city on the voluntary principle.

The educational value of the Sunday schools was slight. The graphic descriptions of ignorance and vice before the schools were established may be too highly coloured. Be this as it may, there is unhappily no room for doubting that the judgments expressed as to the value of the work done are affected by the sanguine faith that evil cannot resist the passionate assaults of philanthropy. Of course many children were taught something. Not a few men who looked back to the untoward beginning of an honourable life could

<sup>1</sup> Descriptions of early anniversaries are given in Gregory, pp. 168 f, 172 f. The annual dinner, or "ordinary," at a tavern was a usual adjunct.

<sup>2</sup> Gregory, p. 107.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 108.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 99; cf. 110.



trace to the Sunday school the origin of their success in life. Some schools and some teachers did work of a high quality. But when we turn to the larger question of the broad social effect of the movement we are met with the fact that it was in part children who had been in the Sunday schools who supplied the alarming instances of depraved ignorance, relied on by the supporters of Joseph Lancaster and his rival Dr. Bell. In the same way when the industrial schools were being founded the same arguments were used, and many children held up as awful examples of ignorance had passed through British or National school. The Sunday schools were not entirely without educational value, but they were unable and could not be expected to cope with a national want. They held the children for a few hours once a week, children who were prevented from attending school in the week, even if schools had existed for them to attend, by the long hours and vile conditions of those factories and other work places where their lives were being so ruthlessly sacrificed. The rescue of the child life of the nation was too serious a gage to win on such feeble challenge as the Sunday schools could offer. Education, for which the people did not greatly care, had failed in its various phases : meanwhile the employment of children to produce profit greedily delighted in had grown to yet more widespreading and destructive proportions.



## CHAPTER VI.

## HOSPITALS IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY.

THE spirit of associated philanthropy, so far as we have hitherto traced its expression, has either taken a form that is immediately religious, as in the Religious Societies, or proceeds from a preponderatingly theological motive, as in the Charity Schools. This is only natural, for the years before and after the beginning of the eighteenth century were marked by much zeal and energy on the part of the Established Church. But the advent of the Hanoverian kings was shortly followed by a change of temper, and the country "settled into the most cool indifference with regard to religious matters that is to be found in any nation of the world."<sup>1</sup> Yet the falling away of dogmatic interest was not accompanied by a decline in philanthropic activity. It would probably be too much to affirm that men then found refuge in deeds of charity from unrest and uncertainty in matters of faith as is said to be the case in the present time, because it is doubtful if the well balanced mind of the eighteenth century permitted itself to feel any such distress. Nor would it be correct to suggest that men became more free for philanthropic because less occupied with dogmatic claims. But the fact remains that a period of "religious languor" was also the period in which first the hospitals, and a little later those other charitable institutions with which our own age is so familiar, began to multiply in London and then as a very rapid sequel in the chief provincial towns.

The provision for the sick arose not so much from any striking increase in the humane sentiments, as from an

<sup>1</sup> Hume, quoted by Lecky, *Hist. i.*, 315.



increasing recognition, which seems to indicate a growth of intelligence and the power of observing social facts which had indeed long been obvious, but had now become more clamorous and widespread. London was becoming more populous, and especially was this the case in the poorer districts where hospital accommodation was most needed. The metropolis was the one town where it had not been possible to introduce the assessment of wages by the justices, where wages both on that account and for other reasons were highest, and where as a result an influx of workers was constantly replenishing the ranks of the unemployed. There is also evidence to show that in London the Act of Settlement was to a great extent a dead letter. Poverty and the needs of able-bodied adults will be considered in a later chapter in connection with the poor law. But one aspect of poor law administration needs to be mentioned here. We are told that "there are many workhouses in various parts of the country where medicines are dispensed: But they are generally given *without* the advice of physicians." A large proportion of the poor had not even this resource, but were dependent on such means of healing as they could themselves command. Another reason, therefore, for hospitals was to save the poor from quacks who drained them of their money and often ruined their health.<sup>1</sup> It is clear that such a system left much to be desired, and this fact is assigned as one of the causes that led to the building of hospitals.

## I. CONDITIONS AT THE BEGINNING OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY.

Hospital accommodation scarcely existed at the beginning of the eighteenth century except in London, where it was of the most inadequate description. Of general hospitals there were the two ancient houses of St. Bartholomew and St. Thomas, refounded in the 16th century: hospitals for special diseases were represented by Bethlehem. The work done in these

<sup>1</sup> A collection of papers relating to the County Hospital at Winchester (1737), p. 5.



hospitals had, it is true largely increased. The number of patients annually discharged from St. Bartholomew's in the middle of the seventeenth century was rather more, and from St. Thomas' rather less than 1,000; by the beginning of the eighteenth century the numbers respectively were, 2,443 and 3,260.<sup>1</sup> St. Thomas had gone ahead more rapidly than St. Bartholomew's, while if we add the totals we find the increase in half a century a ratio of rather more than five to two. The Bethlehem figures correspond:—in 1655 there were fifty-one patients; in 1696, one hundred and twenty. To this scanty record must be added some private efforts such as Barwick's;<sup>2</sup> and the public dispensaries of the College of Physicians and the Society of Apothecaries.<sup>3</sup> But when everything is considered the provision for the sick was very meagre, and the pressure on the existing hospitals was extreme.

## 2. GUY'S HOSPITAL.

Guy's Hospital (founded in 1724), was built hard by St. Thomas for the express purpose of relieving the overcrowding, and affording a refuge to the many patients who could not be received into the older foundation. There are one or two reasons, beyond the fact that it began as a supplement, or almost as an annex of St. Thomas, for mentioning the hospital of Thomas Guy first among the eighteenth century foundations, although it was not the earliest in point of time. The other hospitals of the period are the result of a common impulse of associated philanthropy, and will therefore be most conveniently studied in one sequence. The case of Guy's, on the other hand, is peculiar. As it is the only general hospital in London to bear the personal name of its founder, so it is the last to derive its origin from the munificent endowment of an individual bequest. This fact that it was the gift of a dead man has been made matter of unfair reflection on Guy's character, for he had been far

<sup>1</sup> Spittal sermon (1702) by John Hough, Bishop of Lichfield and Coventry.

<sup>2</sup> *Ante*, p. 83.

<sup>3</sup> *Post*, sect. 4.



from illiberal in his charities during his lifetime. Another charge, from which it may not be possible so completely to exonerate him, is that the fortune expended on the hospital had been amassed in the course of his trade as a bookbinder by his employing "turnovers," or men who "would work at under rates." He may have been a hard master, but it was not in trade that he gained his great wealth. This came from speculation. Guy was one of the fortunate men who bought and sold South Sea Stock at the right time. To the great epoch of finance that enriched a few, many attributed their poverty and destitution. It can only be regarded as fitting that some of the gains should return to the poor in the form of relief of disease. It has been worth while to mention these particulars about the tradesman, not at all to lower the character of the hospital founder, but because the tract from which we draw them seems to indicate a change in opinion as to the merit of bequests. The author uses the proverb, which we have already met with in Stow, about men making their hands their executors, and their eyes their overseers. The motive of the book was, no doubt, to be found, as Guy's biographer holds, in a personal spite; but the form of the charges was affected by the state of opinion. It was not worth while, even if true, to condemn a course of conduct that was not regarded as at least dubious by the public.<sup>1</sup> I find, therefore, indications of a shifting of sentiment from admiration of a great bequest to approval of the use of their means in active benevolence during the lifetime of the donors. Guy's bequest gave occasion to the expression of this change. In any case, this foundation is to be very distinctly separated from those we have next to glance at.

### 3. EARLY ASSOCIATIONS.

(a) *Westminster*.—Five years before the founding of Guy's Hospital in the year 1719 "the late Mr. Henry Hoare and several other well-disposed gentlemen, desirous to lay the

<sup>1</sup> "An essay on death-bed charity exemplify'd in the life of Mr. Th. Guy." See, too, D. N. B., and "Biographical History of Guy's Hospital" (Wilks and Bettany); also "The Case and Proposals for Journeymen Printers" (1666).



foundation of a most beneficent and extensive charity, viz., that of providing for such sick and needy persons as were destitute of proper assistance, and oftentimes of common necessities," formed themselves into a society in order to give relief to such as appeared to be "proper objects of charity." This was the beginning of the Westminster Hospital, the first of those that depended for their establishment and support entirely on a private subscription.<sup>1</sup> The feeling that led to the formation of the society is more fully described in the Preamble to the subscription roll ("Account . . .," 1734). This passage is more particularly worth quoting because in a scarcely altered form it was transferred to the reports of numerous hospitals in different parts of the country, a fact which goes to show how widespread in its influence was the act of Mr. Henry Hoare and his friends: "Whereas great numbers of sick persons in this city languish for want of necessities, and too often die miserably, who are not entitled to a parochial relief: And whereas amongst those who do receive relief . . . many suffer extremely, and are sometimes lost, partly for want of accommodation and proper medicines in their own houses or lodgings, the closeness and unwholesomeness of which is too often one great cause of their sickness, partly by the imprudent laying out of what is allowed," and so on.

A house was taken for the purpose of the hospital, which shortly proved inadequate, for the number of subscribers rapidly increased, and the patients were sufficient to tax the enlarged income. In the course of a few years' experience it was discovered that more thorough methods would have to be adopted, and that especially for sake of cleanliness and good order it would be necessary to clothe the poor while they were in the hospital, and to make some provision for incurable patients. Benefactions having been given for both of these purposes, we read in the account of 1736 that a small number of incurables was allowed to remain, and that clothes were provided. This matter of the incurables was a

<sup>1</sup> See "An Account of Proceedings of the Charitable Society . . . in Westminster" (1734, 1736, 1738).



very urgent one. Indeed, the lack of accommodation for them at St. Thomas' was one of the reasons that led Guy to found his hospital, and at Bethlem incurable lunatics began to be received in 1738.<sup>1</sup> But before the enlarged policy of the Westminster Hospital could take effect it was necessary to select a new site with increased accommodation. And this proved the occasion of a dispute which led to a secession from the society.

(b) *St. George's Hospital*.<sup>2</sup>—The subscribers to the Westminster Hospital were for the most part men of comparatively small means, with a smaller number of wealthy people and leading members of the medical profession. Between these two sections a misunderstanding, or rather series of disputes arose some time previous to 1733, and came to a head in that year. This led to the establishment of St. George's Hospital. Many of the members of the Westminster Society were greatly hurt by the action of the rich subscribers, and for a time it was feared that the result would be unfavourable to their hospital. The fears, however, were quickly found to be unnecessary, for the "subscriptions and benefactions augmented" rather than diminished. This difference amongst the individuals (at first dreaded as hurtful to the charity), proved "good to the whole," and "the sick poor have two places of relief instead of one."<sup>3</sup> This is not the only occasion on which rivalry among philanthropists has proved beneficial to the poor. It is pleasant to know that in this case the dispute left no ill-feeling on either side.

The immediate occasion of the dispute was over the question of a new site for the hospital; but on other grounds also there were grave differences of opinion. There had been abuses in the drug department. The physicians were dissatisfied, and probably this was the explanation of many medical men joining the new hospital at Lanesborough House. But the real grievance lay deeper, and was a social

<sup>1</sup> "A letter from a subscriber to York Lunatic Asylum" (1788).

<sup>2</sup> See "A Defence of the Majority of the Infirmary at Westminster" (1733); "An Account of . . . Hospital at Lanesborough House" (1733, 1737).

<sup>3</sup> "An Account of . . . Infirmary in Westminster" (1734).



one. At the final meeting one hundred and forty-six or one hundred and forty-seven subscribers took part. We are told that the minority which formed the secession had given "above half" the subscriptions. They were outvoted by the small subscribers, for in the Westminster Society all donors were governors. The original members of St. George's Hospital resented this democratic constitution, and by their rules provided for a more plutocratic government. Determined not again to be outvoted by a poor majority, they resolved that only subscribers of £5 should be governors. Their first roll contains no less than one hundred and fifty of these £5 governors, among them numerous persons of quality and title. This decision is an important one in the history of hospital policy, inasmuch as it was generally followed, and the minimum subscription fixed which would entitle the subscriber to a vote.

(c) *London Hospital*.—Seven years later, in 1740, the London Hospital was founded "for the relief of all sick or diseased persons, and in particular manufacturers, seamen in the merchant service, and their wives and children." The governors, who must subscribe £5, were entitled to send in-patients; the smaller subscribers might recommend out-patients, and accidents were received without a letter. No charges were made to patients at this hospital, and in this respect it was unlike Westminster, where security had to be given for burial, and St. George's, where the society buried the dead, but required the inmates to bring with them two shirts or smocks.

(d) *Middlesex*.—This, the last of the eighteenth century general hospitals,<sup>1</sup> was founded in 1746 for smallpox patients and inoculation. It hardly deserves to be called a philanthropic institution, and I find an implied criticism of its policy in a later report of the Nottingham Hospital. The first report of the Middlesex Hospital gives a terrible

<sup>1</sup> It may fairly be so described when we remember how very prevalent and almost universal was the small-pox at that time. But it might with as much reason have been treated in a later section as an example of the law of variation.



picture of the condition of smallpox patients in the metropolis. A great number of servants were brought up from the country by wealthy and noble families. They were seized with this disease; their employers incontinently obliged them to "quit their servitude." They had neither friends to whom they could go, nor money to support them. No hospital would receive them, and they were fortunate if they could find a lodging in which, bereft of proper care, death must be expected shortly to ensue; and even if they should recover they were left destitute and in debt. The rule of the Nottingham Hospital which bears on this point is to the effect that domestic servants were not excluded, but that each case should be decided on its merits; it was significantly added that it was reasonable to suppose that no master in affluent circumstances would wish to have his servant treated at the public expense.<sup>1</sup> This, though it be unreasonable to suppose it, was the particular object of the Middlesex Hospital, and it would seem that it was regarded as an abuse of charity. The intentions of the promoters of the hospital are sufficiently indicated by the order of preference accorded to applicants for admission: In the first place were those who came from the house of a noble; secondly, those recommended by a great subscriber; thirdly, those who brought letters from other subscribers who had not sent a case for six months. It is added, surely in irony, that in the fourth place patients might be received without a letter if there were room for them.

#### 4. DISPENSARIES.

Hitherto we have been concerned with what may be called the Law of Imitation—the tendency to do again what has been done once. Some years' experience of hospital work revealed the necessity for a further development in two directions: the one a movement of more specialised aid for difficult cases, the other an attempt to provide a more summary

<sup>1</sup> Report of General Hospital, Nottingham (1781).



and cheaper remedy for the less serious cases of sickness, to an extent that was not possible in the overcrowded out-departments of the existing institutions. This two-fold development may be described under the Law of Variation.

We find a precedent for the adoption of a cheaper remedy in the earlier dispensaries of the College of Physicians and the Society of Apothecaries. In the year 1687 it was resolved by a unanimous vote "that all members of the College, whether fellows, candidates, or licentiates, shou'd give their advice gratis to all their sick neighbouring poor, when desir'd, within the City of London, or seven miles round."<sup>1</sup> Among the leading advocates of this policy were Millington, Gibson, and Garth, the author of the poem "The Dispensary." Some members of the College did start a shop in Warwick Lane for the purpose of giving free prescriptions to the poor. This was a new departure, and a momentous one for the history of medical charities. Twenty years before, at the time of the plague, exactly as eighty years before, in the time of the earlier epidemic, it was not expected of a doctor who lived, as it was expressed, "by what he could get," that he should attend the poor, or any other patients gratuitously. This resolution of 1687 may therefore be regarded as the first official and conscious adoption of that theory of professional obligation which has alone made the modern hospital movement a possibility, and which has resulted in the immense amount of unpaid service rendered by medical men to many classes of the community, a phenomenon so striking that Ruskin was able to draw the distinction between the man who pursues commerce for the sake of the profit, and the man who professes medicine, not for the sake of his fee.

The historical importance of this resolution cannot easily be over-estimated, nor should it be doubted that a philanthropic motive gave rise to it. But the motive is at least obscured in relation to the immediate crisis that called it forth. The determination to give gratuitous medical advice to the poor was part of a rather complicated dispute between the Physicians and the Society of Apothecaries. The facts

<sup>1</sup> "A brief account of the Dispensary for . . . Sick Poor."



are as follows:—For a considerable time the apothecaries had been encroaching on the privileges of the physicians—at least in the opinion of the latter. The apothecaries had no right to dispense, but they had, on their own admission, “sometimes in ordinary instances, and in the cases of poor persons, children, and servants,” given physic “without calling in a physician.”<sup>1</sup> This they justified as a charitable practice adopted solely to save their patients from unnecessary expense. And if this had been all we might have heard no more of the matter. But the physicians charged their rivals with introducing absurd and expensive drugs into their prescriptions. It is obvious that this would not be done for poor people; but all the answer was to declare at great length, and with some acrimony, that the physicians were as bad.<sup>2</sup> One further fact and my inference will seem clear. It was stated that “persons of the first quality” expected to be treated with the “most ceremony and attendance,”<sup>3</sup> *i.e.*, as I understand, with ample and strange prescriptions. The apothecaries, that is to say, had trenched on this lucrative branch of the profession, as, indeed, the physicians affirm; they had drawn away patients, if not of first quality, yet of considerable wealth, by the extravagance of the remedies they had given.<sup>4</sup> I believe, then, that one reason for starting this dispensary was to strengthen the physicians in their struggle to retain their rich patients by removing what was plausible in the case of their rivals, and that for this, among other reasons, they resolved to give gratuitous advice to the poor. The apothecaries did not yield without resistance. The innumerable pamphlets published are one evidence of this; another is found in the establishment of a “hospital in Bishopsgate, where the whole charge of the sick was defrayed by the company of apothecaries.”<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> “Reasons humbly offered against continuing of the Act for better viewing . . . drugs.”

<sup>2</sup> “The Censor Censur’d” (1704), *passim*.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 35.

<sup>4</sup> See p. 29 for samples of prescriptions.

<sup>5</sup> “Censor Censur’d” (not I think a hospital in the modern sense).



If all this be approximately correct, it adds weight to the argument, strong also on other grounds, that these early dispensaries had no obvious or direct influence on the later movement. An indirect influence of the deepest character we have already seen that they did exert. Even if the College of Physicians started their first dispensary with mingled motives, yet while the first experiment passed away the philanthropic implication became more and more clear in progress of time.

The great period of the founding of dispensaries was from 1777, in which year the Royal Dispensary was founded, to 1790, no less than ten being started during those years. But an attempt had been made as much earlier as 1740, and the proposals then put forward indicate precisely the occasion for this first development out of the hospital charities. It was premised that humane England had outdone other countries in the way of hospitals, but that the sick were still unrelieved, and several "worthy gentlemen" proposed a remedy. This was to hire a house, having raised a sum of £210, where 1,000 paupers could be treated with everything except nourishment and lodging, which could not be afforded. They base their appeal for funds on the assertion that "the wealthy and superior part of the community owe their happiness, ease, and affluence to the indigent, but industrious, part of it."<sup>1</sup> The spread of dispensaries was rapid; the need is seen to have been pressing from the numbers who thronged to them. Within a few years the large annual total of 50,000 was reached. A writer of the period is not more impressed with the amount than with the economy of the dispensaries, for he tells us that the cost was as low as 2s. a head. He does not inquire, though we may have some misgivings on the point, what was the precise health-value of an average 2s. a head.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "Proposals for raising an Infirmary . . . for the more immediate relieving the sick and diseased poor" (1740).

<sup>2</sup> Highmore, "Pietas Lond.," i., 334.



## 5. SPECIAL HOSPITALS.

The second development under the Law of Variation is in the direction of greater specialisation. If we consider the multiplicity of institutions that have sprung up in the nineteenth century, the hospitals that are to be mentioned in this section will appear strangely unequal to the many forms of disease that claimed relief. Nevertheless, the policy of division of function was not neglected. The first special hospital was the Lock Hospital near Hyde Park Corner, founded in 1746 by Martin Madan, who became its first chaplain.<sup>1</sup> The need for such a hospital is urged on many grounds, amongst others, that the "county hospitals" would not receive this class of patients; and that in many cases the sufferers were not themselves culpable, in proof of which it is stated that many children and infants had been admitted, some of them almost naked, penniless and starving.<sup>2</sup> In the course of three years nearly 700 patients were received.

The first lying-in hospital was established in the year 1749,<sup>3</sup> and this was immediately followed, in 1750, by the City of London Lying-In Hospital, which became the subject of facetious satires;<sup>4</sup> while several others, including that named after Queen Charlotte, in 1752, were rapidly added to the number. These hospitals were submitted to adverse criticism on the score that they encouraged immorality.<sup>5</sup> It may have been partly to avoid this risk that another plan was adopted in 1757, that of attending women in their own homes. This is not, however, among the reasons assigned by the society for their policy. These are four: that it helps many who cannot be helped by a hospital; that the woman is looked after as long as the need lasts, although if the

<sup>1</sup> For the anecdote of his conversion under John Wesley, see Stoughton's "Religion in England, vi., 253.

<sup>2</sup> "An Account of the proceedings of the Lock Hospital . . ." (1749).

<sup>3</sup> British Lying-in Hospital, "Charities Digest and Register." Where no other authority is given, I am frequently indebted to this invaluable publication of the C. O. S. for chronological particulars.

<sup>4</sup> *E.g.*, "Joyful News to Bachelors and Maids, being a Song."

<sup>5</sup> A question that must be looked at in connection with the Foundling Hospital, *infra*.



woman is careful she can often manage her usual business in the course of ten days or a fortnight ; that it strengthens the ties of affection by keeping the woman at home ; and lastly, that it has trained many midwives, and so helped to obviate the mischief of unskilled attendance. This is the only instance we shall meet with at present of a recognition of the need for skilled nurses as well as doctors.<sup>1</sup>

A further advantage claimed at a later date for this form of charity is its comparative cheapness. Women who went to the hospital were kept for a month at a cost of £5 5s. ; on the home system the expense was as little as 12s. per head ; while the patients were capable in a few days of managing and directing their own families.<sup>2</sup> Cheapness has often had a fatal attraction for philanthropists ; it is doubtful whether that attraction has ever been yielded to with worse results. To encourage a practice which, considering its effects in ruining the health of women, and often spoiling or destroying the lives of children, might properly be treated as a crime, and to do this in the name of charity is surely to provoke that prevailing irony which turns the best intentioned actions to disastrous ends, that age-enduring protest of nature against an undiscerning goodness. This particular charge against the lying-in hospitals has ceased to have any application, since the patients are now only admitted at the extreme moment and are discharged at the earliest time compatible with an appearance of immediate safety. But this assimilation of the hospital period to the ideal ten days' limit did not take place within the period of the present volume.<sup>3</sup>

An inconvenience occasioned by these hospitals to the poor law authorities and the ratepayers called for legislative remedy. The parishes in which the hospitals were situated had become charged with the maintenance of a large number of bastards, who had gained settlement by the accident of

<sup>1</sup> "A plain account of the advantages of the lying-in charity for delivering poor married women at their own habitations" (1767).

<sup>2</sup> "Report of the Society for Bettering the Condition of the Poor" (1803), iv., p. 55.

<sup>3</sup> As late as 1817 the Report of the Lying-in Charity complains of the long detention of women in the hospitals.



their birthplace. In future, therefore, these institutions were to bear an inscription in large letters over the doors denoting the purpose for which they were used; bastards born in them were not to gain parish settlement. Women before admission were to be examined by a magistrate, and on oath, as to whether they were single or married; and the cases were to be notified to the overseers four days before discharge.<sup>1</sup>

A third form of special hospital is found at St. Luke's, for the reception of lunatics. This institution was set on foot in 1751 by a few benevolent persons, for the following reasons: The existing hospitals were insufficient; by the delay in their admission many useful members were lost to society, either because the disorder had gained too great a strength, or because they fell into the hands of persons who were either ignorant or neglected them for the advantage which they found in doing so; many in no mean circumstances had been brought to poverty; no legal provision had been made for lunatics; workhouses were not fit places for their reception; and, last, by this means, more gentlemen of the faculty would be able to study one of the most important branches of physic.<sup>2</sup> The new hospital at St. Luke's was seen to supply a deficiency, for the older institution, the familiar Bethlem, was not only rather antiquated in its methods, but was entirely inadequate in accommodation. By an early date in the nineteenth century, St. Luke's had discharged as cured, 4,826 persons, and had adopted the policy of receiving or keeping incurable patients, as a considerable number of this class appear on the books and paid for their maintenance 7s. a week.

The only other kind of special hospital attributable to the eighteenth century is one for the cure of cancer. This hospital, indeed, was not founded, but a society was in contemplation in the closing years of the century, and the

<sup>1</sup> 13 Geo. III. c. 82.

<sup>2</sup> "Reasons for Establishing St. Luke's" (1817). We shall have an opportunity of considering the significance of the emergence of this scientific interest in connection with the Royal Humane and other Societies in the following chapter.



institution was established in 1801.<sup>1</sup> In this case also, one of the objects proposed was the acquisition of more accurate knowledge and more efficacious treatment. Indeed, a special feature is made of this. The hospital was not to be regarded merely as an asylum for distress, but also as a school for experiment and research. We shall have other opportunities of noticing the emergence of this scientific motive, which was to become much more important at a later period.

## 6. PROVINCIAL HOSPITALS.

The first hospital to be established outside London was the one at Winchester in 1736, intended, as its title, a county hospital, indicates, to serve a large district. The influence of foreign example, enforced by the more recent experiments in London, prompted the well-disposed members of society in the south, after consultation with some of the most judicious persons at several of the existing hospitals, to imitate what was regarded as the best mode of helping the poor without the risk of any abuse of charity. The promoters, having first secured the alliance of two "excellent physicians," than which nothing contributed more to their success, opened a subscription list, which soon included a royal donation of £200. The hospital was at the outset supplied with fifty beds, a number which it was found necessary to increase to sixty within two years.<sup>2</sup> The movement thus inaugurated spread rapidly to Bristol (1737), York (1740), Exeter (1741), and within a few years to several other places, while before the close of the century hospitals were to be found in most, if not all, the principal towns of the country.<sup>3</sup> In addition to hospitals, the eighteenth century witnessed the establishment of several provincial

<sup>1</sup> "Report of the Society for Bettering the Conditions of the Poor," iii., 353-63.

<sup>2</sup> "A Collection of Papers relating to the County Hospital at Winchester" (1737), p. viii.; "An Account of the Establishment of the County Hospital at Winchester" (1737 and 1738).

<sup>3</sup> Annual Account of the Bristol Infirmary (1744); for other dates see entries in Burdett's "Hospitals and Charities."



dispensaries; at Plymouth, indeed, where a dispensary was founded in 1798, there was not yet a hospital, but this was an inversion of the usual order.

The comprehensive policy held in common by most of the provincial hospitals is shown by a note to the rules of the Liverpool Infirmary (1749): "This charity is not confined to the County of Lancaster, nor even the kingdom of Great Britain; but is designed to extend to all real objects from any part of the world." We are here introduced to one of the leading uses of the hospitals in the seaport towns. They largely existed, as was specially stated to be the case in the London Hospital, for the reception of sick or injured sailors, and at some ports for the cure of the crews of a particular class of vessels. At Bristol, for example, "the greatest number of seamen, at almost all times, who were there, were from the slave-vessels. These, too, were usually there on account of disease, whereas those from other ships were usually there on account of accidents."<sup>1</sup> We are told that at Liverpool also, the chief seat of the trade, sick seamen from the slave ships made a conspicuous figure in the infirmary. No doubt the owners of the slave ships were liberal supporters of the charities.

The maintenance of a general hospital, perhaps also of a dispensary, taxed the charitable resources of most towns. But in some we find also institutions of a more specialised character. The lying-in charities are the most frequent, the first of these being founded at Newcastle in 1765. At Norwich there was a Roman Catholic sick club in 1782, which consisted of honorary members ("benefactors") and ordinary members, paying 1s. a month in the case of men or 6d. in the case of women. In return they received certain benefits when certified by their priest to be sick. This charity seems to anticipate the ideas of the next

<sup>1</sup> Clarkson's "History of the Abolition of the Slave Trade," p. 210. In view of the fact that Bristol had but eighteen slave ships we should be inclined to question the proportion. But the statement is made on the authority of a Mr. Falconbridge, who had spent twelve months as a pupil in the Infirmary.



century, or at least of the closing years of the eighteenth. Provision of a more special kind was made at Manchester in the founding of a Fever Hospital. This was the first of its kind, and a result of the sanitary campaign connected with the name of Dr. Percival. It possesses interest also as being a case in which the country set the example to London, thus reversing what was the usual order of things during the period.

In another respect, that of the care and cure of lunatics, a forward movement, which was to have far-reaching consequences, is recorded from the provinces. The honour of the first attempt to treat this class of patient by a humane method belongs to the city of York and the Society of Friends. This was the so famous Retreat founded in 1791. But this was not the first charity for lunatics in York. Thirteen years earlier, in 1778, an asylum which possesses some interesting features was established. This asylum was due to the persuasion that there was no existing provision for lunatics (apart from the workhouses, where they could hope for neither cure nor attendance) outside of the Metropolis. The distance from Yorkshire to London was prohibitive of sending patients to Bethlem or St. Luke's, and the necessity was urged for accommodating the afflicted of the north in their own country.<sup>1</sup> Accordingly a private subscription was raised and a house was built for the reception of both pauper and paying patients. The costs of the paupers were to be defrayed by their parishes, for with the building of the house the responsibilities of the founders ceased.<sup>2</sup> Experience soon discovered a large number of people who, although not chargeable to any parish, were unable to defray the cost of 8s. a week which was necessary for their care and maintenance. A plan was devised for obviating the difficulty. The well-to-do

<sup>1</sup> The country was not so entirely unprovided for. D. H. Tuke's "History of the Insane," p. 514, gives a list of asylums in existence in 1778, including those at Bristol, Norwich, and Manchester. He does not give particulars, and probably their influence is negligible.

<sup>2</sup> The house originally contained fifty-six beds, but a wing was added the following year for the accommodation of other twenty-four patients.



patients were charged various sums, in proportion to their ability, up to 24s. a week, and by help of the surplus so acquired it was found possible to receive the poorer sort for payments as small in some cases as 4s.<sup>1</sup>

The treatment at the York Asylum was the recognised treatment of the period, even at so modern and improved a hospital as St. Luke's. It included chains and violence, lent itself to abuse and the most shocking neglect and damage of the patients. Such an instance of ill-treatment accompanying the death of a female Quaker patient led to the establishment of the York Retreat in 1791. This was the achievement of William Tuke, tea and coffee merchant, Quaker, philanthropist and pioneer. His new principle, developing independently in France under the guidance of Pinel, was so unheard-of a departure from accepted practice as to rouse the forebodings of his neighbours, and even from the York meeting of his society he had rather a frigid reception. But when there was a thing to be done, Tuke's training had taught him to do it. The Retreat was established in a house outside the city; but its windows had no bars, its walls enclosed no hidden chambers, and echoed to no clank of chain. For physical restraint the watchfulness of attendants was substituted; in place of violence, kindness was used. The unoccupied and featureless hours, by which the disease had been aggravated, were relieved by the interest of suitable occupation, while a large garden gave opportunity for pleasant recreation. The patients responded, and in not a few cases relations of affection were established between the superintendent and his charges. The Retreat was under professional management, but Tuke himself continued to be a frequent visitor and to give closest attention to the carrying out of his humane design. Many years were to elapse before this example was imitated, but ultimately the reform of British asylums would be undertaken, and would owe its origin to this courageous experiment.

<sup>1</sup> "Letter from a subscriber to the York Lunatic Asylum" (1778); "Earnest application to the humane public" (1777).



## 7. ADMINISTRATION.

A comparison of the annual reports of various hospitals, and especially of the rules which they adopted, is sufficient to indicate that, notwithstanding local peculiarities, there was a powerful tendency towards a general similarity of policy. When a new institution was to be started, it was usual to obtain information, whether printed matter or oral communication, from those responsible for the management of existing hospitals. The treatment of patients, whether in the matter of nursing or diet, was no doubt rather rudimentary, yet all the evidence goes to show that considerable thought was given to make the condition of the inmates as comfortable as possible; that, indeed, the evidence of the man found in the Uxbridge Road, as to the proper care and kindness he had experienced, may be regarded as a general truth.<sup>1</sup> Some particulars may be added to what has incidentally been given in previous sections with a view of illustrating the prevalent ideas of internal administration. Howard, whose frequent and extended journeys afforded very large material for comparison, although his special object was to inspect the prisons, never overlooked hospital practice. The difference of eighteenth and nineteenth century theories obtains striking illustration when we look into the arrangements as to diet. At the earlier period tea was the suspected drink; beer, everywhere, the proper refreshment for sick persons. And this attitude is still reflected in the regulations of some modern hospitals, which refuse official sanction to the use of the former beverage. In some of the eighteenth century hospitals its use was not allowed; in others, as at Norwich, where little coppers for tea water were placed in the wards, patients were permitted to enjoy the new-fangled drink when visitors supplied them with it.

<sup>1</sup> The repeated issue of manuals of hospital practice must have largely assisted the movement towards one common type. See *infra*, p. 147.



The authorised dietaries of various hospitals show a considerable similarity, and approximate not a little to the standard adopted in contemporary workhouses. In the course of the century we notice a modification, in the way of greater plenty, and of adaptability. Take by way of illustration the dietary at St. Thomas in 1710, and that of Nottingham in 1781. I give the ordinary diet for the latter; there are also three special diets, low, milk and dry. In addition to the daily menu each patient had an allowance at St. Thomas's of twelve ounces of bread and three pints of beer; at Nottingham, fourteen ounces of bread and two or three pints of beer, according to the season.<sup>1</sup>

ST. THOMAS (1710).		NOTTINGHAM (1781).		
	Breakfast, Dinner, Supper (per diem).	Breakfast.	Dinner.	Supper.
Sunday ...	8 oz. boiled beef without bones; 1 qt. or 3 pts. of broth.	1 pt. water gruel or milk pottage.	8 oz. roast or boiled beef, mutton or veal, with roots or greens.	1 pt. broth.
Monday ...	As Sunday.	„	1 pt. rice milk or 12 oz. baked pudding.	2 oz. cheese or 1 oz. butter.
Tuesday ...	8 oz. mutton; broth as Sunday.	1 pt. panada or milk pottage.	1 pt. broth, 4 oz. boiled mutton or beef, 8 oz. roots or greens.	1 pt. broth.
Wednesday	4 oz. cheese, 1 oz. butter; 1 pt. milk pottage.	As Sunday.	baked pudding or 12 oz. boiled roots.	1 pt. broth or milk pottage.
Thursday...	As Sunday.		As Sunday.	
Friday ...	As Sunday, or 1 qt. milk pottage and 2d. in money.	1 pt. water gruel.	baked pudding or 1 pt. rice milk.	2 oz. cheese or 1 oz. butter.
Saturday ...	4 oz. cheese, 2 oz. butter, 1 pt. rice milk.		As Tuesday.	

<sup>1</sup> An abstract of the order of St. Thomas's Hospital; Statutes of the General Hospital near Nottingham; The Modern Practice of the



By about the middle of the century the dietaries of the London hospitals had become considerably more varied, and approximated to the standard reached at Nottingham in 1781. The bread ration had been increased to fourteen ounces; moreover, the quantities were specified for each meal and not roughly for the day. In addition to the full diet, others are given for special classes of patients, and include, with those just mentioned for Nottingham, a raisin diet.

Scope was afforded for a good deal of extravagance if Bernard was rightly informed about the "very respectable hospital" where the cook had the dripping and her husband the cinders as perquisites. It would certainly seem, under these circumstances, impossible for the governors to introduce any system of economy.<sup>1</sup>

The inmates of a hospital were naturally mainly drawn from the locality; but were also recruited from people from all parts of the kingdom and from distant lands; and many patients, including Lascars, were sent to hospital on the arrival of ships from foreign countries.<sup>2</sup> This promiscuous population seems to have been considerably addicted to begging in the streets around the hospitals.<sup>3</sup>

London Hospitals (1764). This little work reached a third edition in 1770 (Brit. Mus. Catalogue), and contains dietaries and detailed prescriptions as used at St. Bart's, St. Thomas's, St. George's, and Guy's.

<sup>1</sup> "Report," Society for Bettering the Condition of the Poor, iii., 23 n. Abuses of a grave but unspecified nature are mentioned by Wilberforce, who was "much shocked" at the account. The following entry appears in the diary: "A meeting at St. Bartholomew's in the morning. We find it will be easy to have new rules, but that it would be hard to punish delinquents." "Life," by his sons, ii., 180. Bernard's very respectable hospital may be the same. Travers Buxton (William Wilberforce), referring to this incident, writes of "the London Hospitals and their Abuses."

<sup>2</sup> References given above; and A. Highmore, "A Letter to William Wilberforce."

<sup>3</sup> This is a little hypothetical. One of the regulations of the Norwich Hospital is an unusual one, to the effect that no patient presume to loiter about the hospital or places adjacent, or to beg any where in or near Norwich. This rule (91) was adopted for a special purpose, the nuisance must have been acute. The rule was almost a dead letter, since the penalty was only inflicted twenty-four times in ten years. The absence of the rule in other places may indicate that it was



The prime object of hospital administration was, by "advice, medicine, and every necessary" to restore the sick poor to health, but there was a subsidiary motive, and one that is very characteristic of the regard in which the well-to-do held those whom they frankly spoke of as inferiors. It was greatly in the interests of charity that the objects should show themselves grateful and respectful, as in that case giving is a pleasure; mingled with this, but not disentangled from it, is the anticipation that the opportunities of religious instruction would be beneficial to the moral habits of the poor. "For," as it is expressed, "we can never hope to secure their Affections, soften their Passions, reform their Manners, and possess them with a sense of their Duty to God and their *Superiors* so effectually as" in the hospital during their time of ill health and weakness.<sup>1</sup>

The worst features of hospital administration resulted from defective buildings and over-crowding. We are indebted to Howard, who, although his immediate task was confined to the state of the prisons, always had his eyes open for such suggestions as charitable institutions might afford, for a graphic account of a model hospital. He describes the building erected in 1771 at Norwich as "one of the best of our county hospitals," and continues:—"The wards are lofty; there is only one floor upstairs: the bedsteads are iron, and they are not crowded. The beds are straw; the furniture linen, and there are no testers. The wards are kept clean by frequent washing, and airy by the opposite windows being generally open. There are Dutch stoves in the wards in summer, and little coppers for tea water, with which the patients are sometimes *properly* indulged. There is a fine area enclosed, in which the

unnecessary, but more probably that it was felt to be useless. Again the Norwich rule may refer only to out-patients, but it should be remembered that the control of in-patients was rather lax, and the rules against leaving the hospitals without leave rather indicate that patients were in and out a good deal.

<sup>1</sup> Alcock's "Observations" (1752), p. 16. An Account of the Establishment of the County Hospital at Winchester (1737). The italics are in the report.



patients walk. There is no washing, brewing nor baking in this house.”<sup>1</sup> There is little doubt that Howard in describing Norwich has his eye on other hospitals where the conveniences mentioned are lacking. He thinks not only of what exists in one place, but of what is wanting in many.<sup>2</sup>

The medical criticism of the hospitals is represented by Aikin and Percival. The former, in his “Thoughts on Hospitals,” writes with appreciation of their dietetic, nursing, and medical arrangements, but condemns the air as never salubrious and frequently poisonous, as a result of the patients being kept “in a room just large enough to hold their beds.” Such crowding is necessary for “the œconomical plan,” which approved itself to the charitable public, and moves his indignation, but it results in a disease, akin to gaol fever, which “in some measure prevails in every hospital.” Foul atmosphere is especially bad for lying-in cases. The criticism concludes with the remark that the author refers only to actual hospitals, and does not doubt that others afterwards to be built on an improved plan might be made a comfort and free from danger.<sup>3</sup> Dr. Percival reflects quite in the same tone:—“It is a melancholy consideration, that these charitable institutions, which are intended for the health and preservation of mankind, may too often be ranked amongst the causes of sickness and mortality.”<sup>4</sup> Both writers insist on the value of ventilation, the importance of which seems to have been undreamed of when the first hospitals were erected.

<sup>1</sup> “State of Prisons,” p. 294.

<sup>2</sup> At the same time it should be remembered that conveniences lacking at Norwich were provided in other places, *e.g.*, baths were built at York and some other hospitals, a thing of the greatest value, while yet public baths were unthought of. The charge at York for bathing, sweating, cupping and attendance, was the moderate one of 4*d.*

<sup>3</sup> Pp. 9-19.

<sup>4</sup> “Essay on the Internal Regulations of Hospitals” (1771) Works, vol. iv., p. 170. Percival gives the comparative mortality in several hospitals:—Hôtel Dieu (Paris), 2 in 9; St. Bartholomew and St. Thomas (London), 1 in 13; Northampton, 1 in 19; Manchester, 1 in 22 patients.



## 8. CONVALESCENTS.

It is an interesting feature in the psychology of philanthropy, and one to which we shall frequently return, that good people commonly imagine the ends of beneficence to be easily attained, until in the course of experience they discover that the path is beset with unsuspected difficulties. The philanthropist is like the ingenuous youth who does not recognise the distance immensely stretching between purpose and achievement. The philanthropic movement is a striking illustration of this tendency, apart from which it is doubtful whether the movement we are reviewing could have been initiated. To provide medical charity seemed so simple and cheap an enterprise that it might be undertaken in a light-hearted manner. This inclination to take no thought for the future is a valuable asset in the hands of practical benevolence, inducing it to launch forth into tasks which if fully represented at first might seem to be impossible. But this, like most things, is attended by a drawback, viz., the correlative inclination to fancy the task is accomplished before it is well begun. It was not until nearly the close of the eighteenth century that this latter feeling began to be broken down. Hospitals and dispensaries were numerous. They were contemplated with a large satisfaction by their supporters. The munificence of these institutions was everywhere magnified. Gradually a sense of dissatisfaction began to prevail. Here were hospitals for the sick, yet for all that distress was not relieved.<sup>1</sup> Accordingly, in 1791, we meet with "*An Address concerning various circumstances of distress not within the provisions of public hospitals, with the regulations of the Samaritan Society*," which has the very pertinent motto: *Nil actum reputans, si quid superesse-agendum*. The object of the Samaritan Society was to help the patients discharged from the London Hospital. As is so frequently the case this further development of care for the diseased owes its origin to a particular case of hardship. It happened that one day in 1791 a gentleman met in the Uxbridge Road a man of decent

<sup>1</sup> Highmore, in "*Pietas Lond.*"



appearance sitting on the bank with a pair of crutches by his side. The cripple, in response to enquiries, gave this account of himself: "That he was a Gloucestershire manufacturer; that he had been a short time in London, where he had the misfortune to break his leg, and had been admitted a patient into an hospital; that his leg had been very well set, and all proper care had been taken of him; and, upon his discharge that morning, some gentleman had kindly given him a shilling." Oh, useless shillings! He could not ride into Gloucestershire. What remained, reflects the narrator, but to beg, to steal, or to perish. This story was not related in vain.<sup>1</sup> The Samaritan Society was formed in connection with the London Hospital, and the reasons are set forth in the official report.<sup>2</sup> The patients, discharged perhaps only in a state of convalescence, had often no friends to go to; before their admission they had spent or pawned all their wealth, and were, therefore, unable to secure situations after their recovery. Especially hard was the case of country patients discharged in a low, lame, blind, or incurable condition. Yet many of these might be saved by the opportune benefit of country air, sea bathing, or mineral waters. It was, therefore, urged upon the friends of every hospital to establish a similar society. Such is the origin of the modern convalescent homes which assume so large an importance in relation to the hospital charities of the nineteenth century. The scheme was an admirable one, but it was long before it became anything more than a mere sketch of work that might advantageously be undertaken. So late as 1824 the average amount expended on each patient during convalescence was only 5s. 6d.<sup>3</sup> One other institution should be mentioned here. The Royal Sea Bathing Hospital was founded in 1796. The inmates were required to pay 5s. a week for their board. In the first year there were sixteen patients, and in 1800 the number had increased to eighty-six. The site had been selected at Margate in order that the poor might have

<sup>1</sup> Rev. Dr. Glasse in R. S. B. P., ii., 99.

<sup>2</sup> "An address concerning . . . Samaritan Society" (1824).

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, accounts for year.



the advantage of a cheap conveyance by ship down the Thames.<sup>1</sup> What was done for convalescents at this time was little enough. It is interesting as a beginning, as a recognition of further and more complex needs which would have to be supplied in the future.

### 9. FEVER HOSPITALS.

The first fever hospitals also date from the closing years of the eighteenth century, although their development belongs chiefly to the nineteenth. In another and more considerable respect they reflect the policy of a later age. Hospitals for infectious diseases are no longer left to the uncertain care of private associations, but are compulsory as a public charge. The country has resolved to protect itself from the risks attending an inadequate accommodation for fever and small pox patients, and since it cares to have this work done thoroughly it assumes the responsibility for doing it.

Yet the earliest fever hospitals were due to private philanthropy and in this matter the usual order of development was reversed. In place of London being a model for imitation in the country, the metropolis had to learn from the provinces, grudgingly and imperfectly. A fever hospital was established at Manchester by private subscription in 1796, with excellent results on the health of the town.<sup>2</sup> The Society for Bettering the Condition of the Poor published a report with a view of stimulating the charitable public in London, and a similar House of Recovery, as it was called, was established in Gray's Inn Lane. But only a very inadequate support was forthcoming, even Leeds had raised more than twice as much as London would give. Sir T. Bernard, with a sturdy resolve that the scheme should not fall through, arranged for a petition to be presented to the House of Commons. In 1804 the House addressed the King, asking

<sup>1</sup> J. C. Lettsom, "Hints," iii., 235-252.

<sup>2</sup> R. S. B. P., i., 98-115. Special wards had been set apart for infectious cases in the Chester Infirmary by Dr. Haygarth in 1783. At Bury also special regulations had been adopted in 1790 "for the general prevention of fevers," and similar regulations at Ashton-under-Lyne date from 1795. R. S. B. P., ii., App., p. 94.



him to make a grant of £3,000, and this was assented to. Bernard had anticipated that the public would now be more ready with subscriptions, and was surprised to find that the opposite was the case.<sup>1</sup> The time was a time of distress in the country, the charitable fund was becoming rather exhausted, and we meet on the threshold of the nineteenth century with a first rather confused demand for some delimitation of the provinces of private philanthropy and state responsibility.

#### 10. HYGIENE.

The fever hospitals claim our attention also on another consideration, for they are a single illustration of the working of a new principle in social reform. Sanitary science, the laws of hygiene, these are modern discoveries, and what the eighteenth century achieved in these respects was not much. Even the small beginnings then made sprang perhaps less from a directly philanthropic impulse, than from an instinct of national self-preservation, sharpened by a sentiment of the social danger incurred from the filthy conditions of the new factory population—a dense mass of over-worked people, largely children, stunted and impaired in physique, amongst whom disease of all loathly kinds was endemic. In 1784 there was an outbreak of fever at the Radcliffe cotton works, and the justices of Lancashire were spurred by this “most effectual of reminders” to call for a report on the health of the district.<sup>2</sup> In response to this request Dr. Percival and other medical men carried out an investigation at Manchester. Attention being thus drawn to the subject, the well-to-do became aware of what had long been in the experimental knowledge of the poor that contagious disease was never absent from the town. The sense of insecurity thus awakened was utilised and heightened by the writings of Percival, who “admonished the better ranks to consult their

<sup>1</sup> R. S. B. P., v., 186-7, and Journals of House of Commons, Ap. 24; July 5th, 26th, 30th, 1804.

<sup>2</sup> “History of Factory Legislation,” by Miss B. L. Hutchins and Miss A. Harrison, p. 7.



own safety by remedying the disorders of the poor.”<sup>1</sup> As a result a Board of Health for Manchester was formed by several leading inhabitants, with Percival and other professional gentlemen at their head. The newly established Board, on receipt of alarming medical memorials, took steps for the isolation of fever patients, which issued in the opening of a special ward at the Infirmary, and soon afterwards of the House of Recovery mentioned in the last section. “So considerable were the benefits” resulting from this scheme, that it was “imitated in various parts, and everywhere attended with the happiest circumstances.”<sup>2</sup>

A generation earlier, experiments the most useful might have remained local, attracting but slight recognition elsewhere. The case was altered. The Society for Bettering the Condition of the Poor existed for the express purpose of spreading information and universalising schemes of utility, and Dr. Lettsom’s writing pad was in constant requisition for the same end. A section of his *Hints towards Promoting Benevolence* is devoted to hygiene.<sup>3</sup> In this he describes various methods of disinfecting, comparing them with the practice of Spain and France; under the heading of ventilation, the health value of fresh air is insisted on, and the fatal effects of the window-tax pointed out, while in respect of personal cleanliness the necessity for washing the body all over once a week is described.

Public attention, at least in philanthropic circles, was to some extent aroused, and although few undertakings of such magnitude as a fever hospital were possible, yet in one respect, which possessed the practical merit of extreme cheapness, numerous efforts were actually made both in towns and villages.<sup>4</sup> Some particulars of these will come under our notice in the account of the village charities. In

<sup>1</sup> “The Works of Thomas Percival, M.D., with Memoir,” by his son, E. Percival, i., p. cc.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. cci.

<sup>3</sup> “Hints,” i., 338–48.

<sup>4</sup> See *e.g.*, Report of “York Charitable Society” (1807): White-washing account: Expenditure last year, £2 13s. 9d.; balance, £9 4s. 3d.



general what was done rested on the discovery that most of the houses of the poor were extremely dirty, and the remedy proposed was to whitewash "them with quicklime in every part." £2 13s. 9d. for whitewashing a cathedral city speaks of no very high ideal, and accounts for no very vigorous practice. The gratuitous provision of a few pails of white-wash may seem an anti-climax to the medical charities of the century. Nevertheless, the most significant discovery made in the whole course of that development was implicit in this first dim recognition that the care of the sick remains idle until unnecessary causes of disease have been cut off. There is momentous consequence in the conviction that the repeal of a window-tax may count for more than the building of a hospital, that light and cleanliness, and fresh air, in short, the conditions of health, are a superior aim to the attempt to alleviate the sickness of those in whom an unhealthy environment has already engendered disease. The discovery of whitewash is the most hopeful fact in the philanthropic history of the century, just because it points to future methods of a constructive corporate organisation of health.



## CHAPTER VII.

## OTHER PHILANTHROPIC ASSOCIATIONS.

IN addition to the various developments of the medical charities for the sick, we have to consider the numerous other objects for which some provision was made during this same period. Some of these needs had long been recognised, and what is significant is the application of the new method of associated philanthropy to an old problem; other forms of distress, though they had indeed existed before, were only now beginning to make their appeal to the sentiment of the age. The philanthropists of the eighteenth century were quite sufficiently conscious of the importance of their deeds of benevolence, which do not appear very considerable when they are compared with the more numerous experiments of a later age. Yet, even though the magnificence of these charities was a little over-estimated by their founders, they have been excessively ignored by later historians.

The charitable associations that fall under our notice in this chapter did not succeed in overtaking the need to which they addressed themselves; some of the efforts were misplaced, others were mischievous, and most of them only received any considerable development in the nineteenth century. Nevertheless, small as they were in their beginnings, it is just then that they possess the greatest interest and significance for the history of philanthropy, which becomes instructive as we are able to discover, on the one hand, the order in which and the extent to which the philanthropic spirit discerns the new elements in its problem, and, on the other, the alternate relaxing or tightening of its grasp on the principles through which it can hope to arrive at a solution. During the greater part of the period under



review, ever new modes were being devised for making use of charitable sentiment in the interests of the afflicted. Private association was then the watchword, and although towards the end of the century the disconcerting reflection became prominent that subscription lists had their limit, and that charitable funds might be exhausted before the necessary expenditure had been provided; that indeed, valuable as this instrument of benevolence might have been on a small scale, it was doubtful whether it would not be necessary to supplement it by some new principle of social amelioration; yet during the greater part of the period we find a confident reliance on the perennial charity of the benevolent public, and a faith that the resources of the guinea subscribers would always prove equal to the fresh philanthropic claims that were constantly revealing themselves.

## 1. IMMIGRANTS.

But, before attempting to trace this development, we may glance at a piece of history, which, while it is rather apart from the main body of our philanthropy, has several connections with it. In the time of the Commonwealth the Jews, after an absence of three and a half centuries, began to return to England. If their re-admission was regarded with a good deal of disfavour,<sup>1</sup> the equally important influx of French Protestants was met with the most generous of welcomes. The charity briefs, which were granted again and again in the reigns of Charles II., James II., William III., and realised considerable sums, indicate,<sup>2</sup> especially at a time when the charity brief was ceasing to be of general efficacy, that the sympathy of the country had gone out to those refugees from Catholic persecution. A still larger provision for their wants was made when, in 1689, Queen Mary made

<sup>1</sup> Cunningham, "Growth of English Industry," ii., 178, 253.

<sup>2</sup> Briefs for French Refugees, produced in and after 1681, £14,000; 1685-7, £63,700; 1694, £11,800; "English Historical Review," Oct., 1894, pp. 662-83.



them a grant of £15,000 a year from her privy purse.<sup>1</sup> A different reception again was accorded to another body of immigrants a few years later. Burnet tells us that, in 1705, fifty Lutherans came over from the Palatinate and received 1s. a day for maintenance from the Queen, and that, finding themselves in such comfortable circumstances, they sent information to their fellow-countrymen. Accordingly, in 1709, some 10,000 or 12,000 of the Palatines came over. They were lodged in tents on Blackheath; money for their relief was voted by Parliament, while they were also helped from private charity and by the Queen. "This filled our own poor with great indignation; who thought those charities, to which they had a better right, were thus intercepted by strangers."<sup>2</sup> The changed attitude of the people may be sufficiently accounted for by the fact that the year following the immigration was a year of dearth. If further explanation is required, it may be found in the fact that the national hatred of Popery at the time of the Revolution had given place to a still deeper detestation of the Whigs in 1710, and Burnet suggests that the popular discontent was fanned by the Tories for party purposes. Moreover, this grudging reception was consonant with the national character: the city looked on Jews, Huguenots, Lutherans as dangerous rivals in trade; the Church regarded Protestants as potential Dissenters. This is not the place to speak of the benefits derived by our commerce and civilisation from the successive immigration of refugees into the country.<sup>3</sup> But we have already seen, and shall have occasion again to notice, the

<sup>1</sup> "The English Government and Protestant Refugees" ("English Historical Review," Oct., 1894, ix., 668).

<sup>2</sup> "History of his own Time," v., 425; vi., 33-5; "Social England," vol. iv., p. 581. Cf. the German immigrants of 1764 and the Adventurer Stumpell.

<sup>3</sup> See Lecky, i., 188-92, 261-2, and literature there referred to; also Cunningham, *passim*. Cf. the opposition to proposals to grant naturalisation on easy terms to the Protestants, or on any terms to Jews. The popular feeling is shown by the cheap pamphlets issued, see *e.g.*, "Bibliotheca Anglo-Judaica" (Jacobs and Wolf), p. 62, "A historical and law treatise against the Jews and Judaism; showing that . . . no Jew hath any right to live in England, nor to appear without yellow badges upon his or her upper garment" (1725), price 4d.



influence of foreign models in deciding the form that our own charities were to take. The presence of an important body of persons, influential alike from their character and industry, and well acquainted with the philanthropies of their native countries, cannot have been without effect on our own practice. We should find in the settlements of foreigners in this country, another source of information as to what was being done in Europe. Observation of what the immigrants were doing in London supplements knowledge gained by the not infrequent travels of numerous English philanthropists. The fact that the foreign communities quickly began to make provision for their own afflicted members, must have had its effect in stimulating opinion. Foreign examples when brought to our own doors could not be lost on the charitable at home.

Scarcely had the Jews begun to settle in England before they took up that part of the responsibility of a civilised community, which consists in provision for its unfortunate members. Jewish names take their place in the lists of charitable donors. Abraham Jacobs (d. 1683),<sup>1</sup> Benjamin Isaacs, Abraham Lopez Pereira, are a few of the many who, having prospered in their life, did not forget to leave some bequest for the poor after their death. But there are more important monuments. The first synagogue was opened in London in 1662<sup>2</sup>; two years later a Spanish and Portuguese Jews' School was founded, and this was followed by an Orphanage, also for the Jews from the Iberian Peninsula, in 1703; a charity for defraying the costs of circumcising the poor, and a hospital for the aged and sick and for lying-in women in 1747.

The French Protestants<sup>3</sup> had from an early period numerous congregations in London, which were themselves centres of beneficence towards the poorer members, and there was no long delay before the establishment of the

<sup>1</sup> Possibly the Abraham Jacob, merchant, of Hatton Garden, mentioned in "Bibliotheca Judaica," p. 60.

<sup>2</sup> Lecky, i., 262; a Spanish and Portuguese synagogue mentioned in "Bib. Jud.," cir. 1640.

<sup>3</sup> Southerden Burns, *passim*.



French Hospital. This took its origin from a bequest (1708) supplemented by voluntary contributions, and we are told that the contributors included many English.<sup>1</sup> It was a home for the aged, sick, and infirm, and chaplains, physicians, surgeon, and apothecary were attached to the institution. In one respect this establishment is unlike others: while for the most part the need is for increased accommodation, here on the other hand first one wing and then another were pulled down, as in course of time the Huguenot families died out or became lost in the general population through inter-marriage. In 1747 the École de Charité was established in connection with the chapel of the Savoy for the maintenance and training of children of necessitous French refugees.<sup>2</sup>

In the first instance these foreign immigrants were dependent on English hospitality, but they quickly began to organise their own charities for their own poor. Their efforts, which attracted the attention and received the support of native philanthropists, exercised in their turn a reciprocal influence through the stimulus they gave to the imitative faculty, and established the first model of one special form of hospital which was to play a considerable part in the social economy of the poor.<sup>3</sup>

## 2. ORPHANAGES.

The group of institutions which we have now to consider presents some features of resemblance to the charity schools. Like them they were for children, and they included some elementary education, but their chief concern was for the maintenance of those who would otherwise be destitute or

<sup>1</sup> "Charter . . . of the Hospital for Poor French," p. xv.

<sup>2</sup> "The Statutes and By-laws of the Corporation of . . . Poor French Protestants" (1761), pp. v.-viii. Beaufort's "Records of the French Protestant School Founded by Huguenot Refugees, 1747."

<sup>3</sup> Viz., the Jewish hospital for lying-in women. The early minute books being lost, there must be some uncertainty as to the class of cases received in the earliest years; but it is believed that from its foundation to the present time the hospital has met with very few changes (*Jewish Chronicle*, Feb. 25th, 1876). In all probability, therefore, the British Lying-in (1749) followed, and imitated the Jewish provision for women in child-birth.



neglected, whereas the charity schools, although they did sometimes supply food or clothing, did not chiefly exist for that purpose. Their policy was also a specialised one, being confined either to children who were orphans or to foundlings and illegitimate infants.<sup>1</sup> The principle that function precedes organisation receives an illustration in the resolve of the religious societies to take charge of the young children of that poor widow, whose death-bed had been darkened by the fear that her offspring would be brought up by Catholic relatives.<sup>2</sup> This was quickly followed by the founding in 1702 of the Royal Asylum of St. Anne, an outcome of High Church enterprise, due to the influence of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge and intended for children of parents who had been in superior circumstances. The more familiar type appears first at Edinburgh, where "from an earnest desire to rescue from ignorance, idleness and vice some children whose parents either were dead or from indigence unable to maintain and educate them, Mr. Andrew Gardner, merchant in Edinburgh, about the year 1727, exerted himself to obtain benefactions for maintaining and putting to school as many children of that description as it might be found practicable to provide for."<sup>3</sup> The special need of this unfortunate class of children was making itself felt in England also, and although in bulk what was done in the way of providing for them was very little, they are of interest as another example in which the eighteenth century anticipated the more vigorously recorded charity of the nineteenth. The standard set up was not a high one, and the training was regulated with a strict view to utility, without any misplaced or excessive generosity. Children might be admitted as young as six and were maintained until fourteen or fifteen. They were to be "used to such labour" as might be suitable;<sup>4</sup> the education was to be

<sup>1</sup> The restriction was not in practice observed with absolute strictness.

<sup>2</sup> Woodward, "Religious Societies," p. 92.

<sup>3</sup> "Statutes . . . of the Orphan Hospital" (1820?).

<sup>4</sup> "Orphan Working School"; "The Plan of the Charity" (1760).



no more than "would be useful in the meanest station"<sup>1</sup>; the training was with a view to domestic or other service, and was to be completed by a seven years' apprenticeship.<sup>2</sup> Yet the discipline was animated by a kindly feeling and we read in one institution, which is due to the proposal of Fielding, the magistrate and novelist, that both housekeeper and schoolmaster were to treat the children with "tenderness and humanity."<sup>3</sup>

The Westmoreland Society's School (1746) is interesting as an early example of another tendency towards specialisation; it was for children, for orphans, but for children of Westmoreland-born parents only. Of this policy of separating out from a special class, those who are further distinguished as coming from a restricted locality or descended from parents engaged in a common occupation, there are very numerous later instances, and it has its earlier analogues in the endowed bequests, the benefits of which were often confined to the members of the testator's town or guild.

### 3. THE FOUNDLING HOSPITAL.

The need for such a hospital in this country had been pointed out by Addison, in the *Guardian* as early as 1713;<sup>4</sup> their existence in Europe was well known, and it was only a few years later that Mr. Coram began the crusade which ultimately gained the approval of a Royal Charter in 1739. Thomas Coram is described concisely as a philanthropist, and during the years while he was pressing the necessity of illegitimate children he was also taking an active part in schemes for the assistance of the unemployed.<sup>5</sup> The condition of a large class of poor children was shocking in the

<sup>1</sup> "Orphan Working School"; "The Sermon" (1760), p. 10.

<sup>2</sup> See the bequests for girls who had been several years in one servitude.

<sup>3</sup> "An Account of the Institution of the Asylum situate on the Surrey side of Westminster Bridge" (1763), pp. 15, 16, 21.

<sup>4</sup> "An Account of the Foundling Hospital (1826), p. 8; cf. "A Sketch of the General Plan for . . . an Hospital for . . . Exposed and Deserted Children," (1740).

<sup>5</sup> D. N. B.; also see *infra*.



extreme, and Coram was led to devote his energies to this object by the sight, a frequent one when he went into the city, of infants exposed in the streets, often in a dying condition. The Royal Charter speaks of "great numbers of helpless infants daily exposed to destruction," and suggests that child murder was almost as frequent as illegitimate birth.<sup>1</sup> This must be regarded as (royal) rhetoric; the picture given in the ladies' memorial, which was the immediate occasion of the founding of the hospital, is truer, and points to a more frequent source of mischief in the character of the nurses into whose hands the children fall. The discovery of the utility of women in charitable work indicates that Coram understood his business, and is rather in contrast with the subordinate position which they usually occupy in the philanthropy of this period.

The hospital was conducted on a modest scale for several years. But a short experience sufficed to show that to attempt to bring up these infants in London was to invite an excessive mortality. There was no lack of care bestowed on them, but the quarters were confined. I suspect that it is to this fact rather than to the impurity of the surrounding air that the death of 75 per cent. of the children within a year is to be attributed. It was resolved to put them out to nurse in the country, and when this was done about 65 per cent. of them survived.<sup>2</sup>

The management was economical, but the funds proved insufficient, and this led to a policy unusual at the time, and of great significance for the later history. Application was made to Parliament for a grant. In 1756 £10,000 was voted, and this was followed by frequent subventions (reaching to as much as £40,000 at one time) in the next four years.<sup>3</sup> But the House of Commons coupled with its

<sup>1</sup> The Charter does not overstate the evil to be remedied. Its only fault is the frequent one of generalising an exception, and thus incidentally of missing the normal condition which is often more terrible in its prosaic persistence even though less picturesque.

<sup>2</sup> "An Account of the Hospital" (1749), p. ix.

<sup>3</sup> "Journals of House of Commons," vols. xxvii. to xxxiii., pass., specially xxvii., 592; xxviii., 123; xxxiii., 325-326.



aids a fatuous condition that went near to wreck the charity, worked incalculable harm to society, and incidentally saved it for a long term from any further applications. The House resolved that the hospital should receive all children who were offered. The numbers naturally began to assume immense proportions. In the eighteen months after this resolution was adopted 5,510 children were admitted, and even this rate was afterwards largely exceeded.<sup>1</sup> In order to meet this great influx it was found necessary to start country hospitals, first at Ackworth, then in Shropshire, Kent, and other counties. The work was rapidly becoming too vast for the control of any body of private philanthropists, even when they had the national purse to draw upon. In 1760 the plan of indiscriminate admissions was given up. The Parliamentary grants were confined to the support of those whom Parliament had already enticed into the hospital, and the numbers gradually fell, as infants died and children were put out as apprentices.<sup>2</sup>

The effect of the Parliamentary grants on the private subscriptions was precisely what we should now expect, but it proved perplexing at the time—the subscriptions fell off.<sup>3</sup> The supporting of philanthropic effort out of national funds had been tried with the worst result, but this is not necessarily to be attributed to the failure of the policy itself, since there is a special element of stupidity which sufficiently accounts for it. It is a policy that has often been adopted since, and that seems certain to be adopted more largely in the future. Such as it was, however, this first experiment was striking enough to prevent either Parliament or the philanthropists from again attempting it until after a long lapse of time.

The question of what influence was exerted by the Foundling Hospital was complicated by this curious outbreak of Parliamentary philanthropy, and it is not easy to decide exactly what effect the universalising of the scheme

<sup>1</sup> "Account . . ." (1826), p. 29.

<sup>2</sup> "Journal House of Commons," xxviii., 62, 753, 861, etc.; xxx., 175, 662; xxxiii., 179, 325.

<sup>3</sup> "An Account . . ." (1826), p. 35; cf. R. S. B. P. Bernard.



had in increasing the hostile criticism to which the institution was submitted. It has not been imitated in this country : it has become an integral part of the social economy of other lands. The conclusion seems to be suggested that we have to deal here with the enigmatic problems of racial psychology, and that there is some radical difference in, *e.g.*, the French and English characters to explain the popularity in one country of a charity that has been generally suspected in the other.

The criticisms are twofold ; in the first place, the hospital was believed to encourage immorality. Women went, it was said, to the City Road to be confined, then to the Foundling to be freed at once of their responsibility and their shame.<sup>1</sup> There was another objection, more serious because supposed to involve the material interests of the employers of industry. It has already been pointed out that a subsidiary cause of the failure of the charity schools was to be found in the jealousy of parents and employers. In this case the former did not appear, but the other grudge is voiced in a resolution of the House of Commons to the effect that the Foundling Hospital had a tendency to make children less fit for laborious occupation ; and that they should be apprenticed to husbandry, manufactures, or sea service when they were seven years old.<sup>2</sup> The charge is an unkind one, for there had not been any undue disposition to coddle the children, and as early as 1745 the boys were set to work out of doors, except in "extreme bad weather," in order to fit them for agriculture or the marine service, and the elder boys were expected to take their meals in the open air. The girls were to be employed in household work and the making of clothes. The food was to be good, but plain ; for drink, water, and the bread made indiscriminately of wheat, rye, barley, oats, or pease, in order that the children might be inured to these accidental changes, while a nurse who gave them strong liquor, opiate, tea or coffee was to be immediately discharged.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See *supra*, p. 135.

<sup>2</sup> "Journal" (1765), xxx., 335.

<sup>3</sup> "The Royal Charter . . . and Regulations" (1745).



In matters of small detail the administration of the Foundling Hospital is above reproach. The necessary account books were duly kept, the appropriate day for the ritual of admission was attentively studied. The bags, and multi-coloured balls for drawing lots, the lace to surround the infant necks, the pewter discs, stamped by "an engine," for establishing their identity were all kept in readiness, and these are illustrations of a thoroughly thought-out routine. It was not here that failure was to be feared, but rather in these larger questions of human concern which demand some higher qualities of imagination. And it is only fair to add that in making this reflection we are but drawing attention to one of the most persistent characteristics of associated philanthropy.<sup>1</sup>

#### 4. REFORMATORIES AND PENITENTIARIES.

Our next group of charities is intimately connected with the name of Jonas Hanway, Carlyle's "obsolete" philanthropist. He was a man of untiring energy, apprenticed at Lisbon, in partnership at St. Petersburg with Robert Dingley, with whom he afterwards co-operated in charitable works; he not only travelled widely, but gathered into the scope of his interests almost every form of contemporary philanthropy. In addition to all this he is said to have been the first man in London to use an umbrella. The originality of his personal habits has its counterpart in his social labours. He was one of the first to combat the indiscriminate admission into the Foundling Hospital, to advocate the sending of children into the country to nurse, to take up the case of workhouse children, to draw attention to their excessive mortality, both in institutions and in unhealthy homes.<sup>2</sup> Other enterprises of his will meet us in the sequel. Here we are concerned with his work in starting penitentiaries for girls and

<sup>1</sup> It is of some interest to remember that Handel was among the benefactors, that he presented the hospital with an organ, and also with the profits of his oratorio, "The Messiah," which before his death had amounted to £6,700. Hogarth also was a governor, and had given three pictures. See the "Account" (1826), pp. 22-24.

<sup>2</sup> See D. N. B.



reformatories for boys. We are told that one object of the Asylum for Orphan Girls was to preserve the friendless and deserted, not to reclaim the fallen, but to anticipate the evil.<sup>1</sup> But the amount of preventive work was small, and had it been much larger, would still not have appreciably affected the mischief which Hanway sought to cure. How serious this was will appear from the fact that out of one hundred girls in the Magdalen House a seventh part had not reached their fifteenth year, several were under fourteen, and a third of the whole had been betrayed before that age. The new path was eagerly followed, for the Magdalen House was started with from one hundred and forty to one hundred and fifty subscribers in the year (1758) in which Dingley first issued his proposals. Objections of an obvious kind were also promptly urged together with one that would now seem pointless, and was then ingenious; namely, that it was a methodistical scheme. But the preacher repels firmly the idea that they were in any sense moved by either of those two indelible marks of ill-breeding, methodism or enthusiasm. For the rest the objections were perhaps sufficiently met by the retort that girls would not fall into vice because they might afterwards find a refuge in a Magdalen House.<sup>2</sup>

The aim of this institution, a model for many later ones, was to render the inmates happy in themselves and useful to others. To this end the home, first opened in a house that had been the London Infirmary, was organised as a place of industry.<sup>3</sup> It was not to appear as a House of Correction, and the inmates were to be treated with all delicacy.<sup>4</sup> Wherever practicable they were to be put to service, restored to friends, or allowed to marry. Work began at six or seven o'clock, and was of various kinds, including flower making and "carpets after the Turkey manner," and particularly the making of clothes.<sup>5</sup> Work of this kind was bound to prove

<sup>1</sup> "An Account of the . . . Asylum . . . for . . . Orphan Girls" (1763), p. 3.

<sup>2</sup> Sermon by Wm. Dodd on Matt. ix., 12, 13, p. 13 n., p. vi.

<sup>3</sup> "The Rules of the Magdalen Ho." (1759).

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 18.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 17—20.



disappointing. Preference was given to the more innocent among the girls, chiefly to those who had suffered seduction, and might be saved from worse. Yet, as was natural, many of them were not amenable. It was felt that some power of compulsory detention was necessary, and this was just what, within the limits of private philanthropy, it was so difficult to secure. The device hit upon was to have an agreement signed on admission by which the girl would pay £10 for maintenance if she left within three years without the assent of the Committee; but there could have been no power of enforcing this in the case of destitute girls.<sup>1</sup>

An unexpected economic result of this and similar institutions became in no long time obvious and serious. The work done in them was cheap work which bore no relation to its cost of production. In any case the expenses had to be borne by charity; anything that the work could fetch, however small, would lighten this burden on the subscribers. It was more profitable to sell at less than not to sell at all. Cheap charity work became very popular. Books were published containing patterns and full instructions, by the aid of which the work might be accomplished by the most inexperienced. There was a large demand for clothes for giving away. It was a doubly good work to give to the poor and at the same time support other poor objects. But there were large numbers of women belonging to the monotonous middle rank who had earned their living by doing plain work. It was these women, too prosaic to excite sympathy, who felt the pressure of the cheap work supplied by the charities, and it was they who by way of impaired earnings supplied the difference between what the philanthropists expended and what they themselves paid for the support of charitable institutions.<sup>2</sup>

Even before Hanway began his work on behalf of friendless girls, he had essayed to do something for the boys. The Marine Society was intended firstly to recruit men and

<sup>1</sup> "Plan of the Magdalen House" (1758), p. 15.

<sup>2</sup> "Instructions for Cutting out Apparel for the Poor" (1789); Lett-som's "Hints," i., 265.



lads for the navy, secondly to rescue boys from the dangers of the streets, and to fit them for an industrial life.<sup>1</sup> Towards the end of the century, the Philanthropic Society was started, "rather on the principles of police than of charity," and thus at length provision was made for Robert Nelson's boys, "called the Black-guard." The further development of the Reformatory movement belongs to the nineteenth century. The same remark, it is true, has a partial application to the efforts made for fallen girls, and indeed to most of the charities here related. Their immense extension is later. But in the case of the Magdalen House, enough was done to serve as a type, and in a large degree to formulate the policy both of the few later institutions in the eighteenth and the multitude in the nineteenth century. It is more characteristic of the early period, though more widely spread in the later.

##### 5. DEAF, DUMB, BLIND, ROYAL HUMANE.

A group of philanthropic objects which came into prominence during the later decades of the century is especially worthy of notice as illustrating the fusion of the scientific interest with philanthropic efforts. The Royal Humane Society (1775), and the institutions for the blind or the deaf and dumb, are indeed the natural developments of the movement we have been tracing; each fresh enterprise, beyond what it may achieve for the immediate relief of distress, serves also to discover yet further instances of unrelieved want. At the same time, a glance at the early history of these institutions for the behalf of those apparently dead, or certainly bereft of a sense, will show that they owe their origin also to a tendency of quite another character. This tendency is the exact opposite of the case of the insane. There an increased preoccupation for the care of the afflicted had incidentally subserved a scientific interest. But in the case of the deaf and dumb their obvious utility for what may be called laboratory experiments in philology prepared the

<sup>1</sup> Hanway's "Three Letters" (1758).



way for the later charities. In the pursuit of a scientific end, the means of relief were incidentally discovered. Dr. John Wallis, Savilian Professor at Oxford in the time of the Commonwealth, has told us in his correspondence with Boyle that he was interested in the study of language. He had under his charge a man dumb from childhood and deaf. To the professor the task of teaching the dumb to speak presented itself as a relaxation from the severer task of teaching an opponent to understand reason, and in the course of a few months he had been able to teach his pupil to make many articulate sounds. This result was achieved by classifying the sounds, dental, labial or otherwise. The history of other experiments is collected in a German work published in 1759 and translated into English in 1770—a work which itself had considerable influence in directing attention at once to the science of sounds, and the needs of the speechless.<sup>1</sup> Wallis had had predecessors in Spain, and was followed by several investigators, including Sebastian Truchel, a Carmelite monk, who in 1718 invented an ingenious acoustic drum, which he presented to the Academy of Science at Paris.<sup>2</sup> Towards the end of the eighteenth century, there was considerable interest in spelling reform in this country, and in connection with this efforts were made to lead the deaf and dumb to speak.<sup>3</sup> Their claims, on the independent ground of humanity, for sympathy and assistance rose only gradually into recognition.

Sporadic bequests for the blind, or dumb, are found from an early period, but the necessities of this class are much more considered in the course of the eighteenth century.<sup>4</sup> A school was started in Liverpool in 1790 for the instruction

<sup>1</sup> "Method to Enable Deaf Persons to hear," A. E. Büchner (trans. 1770).

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 24.

<sup>3</sup> See, *e.g.*, "Cadmus; or, a Treatise on the Elements of Written Language," by W. Thornton, M.D. (1793).

<sup>4</sup> "Rep. Char. Com." (London) iv., 640; a rent charge of twenty shillings in 1675; also entries in "Charities Register": Hetherington for Blind, 1774; Cordwainers' Charity for Deaf and Dumb, 1782; *et al.* also Burdett's "Hosp. Ann.," York Immanuel 1782.



of the blind and for industrial training. The curriculum included music, basket-making, manufacture of window cord, tarred cloth, etc. One early pupil had become an organist, others teachers of music in schools. Similar institutions were established in other towns, including Bristol (1798) and London (1799).<sup>1</sup> A Deaf and Dumb Society was also founded in the metropolis about 1800; not for purposes of cure, because that had already been undertaken, but for instruction in manufacture. Lettsom, who records this experiment, evinces his scientific interest and medical training when he notes that a large proportion of the children had brothers, sisters or other relatives who were either deaf and dumb or mentally deficient.<sup>2</sup>

The Royal Humane Society illustrates this same blending of scientific and philanthropic interest. From the beginning of the century, medical men had noted and recorded instances of the resuscitation of persons seemingly dead.<sup>3</sup> The discovery that this was possible, concurring with the frequent falling of the Dutch into their numerous canals, led to the formation of a society in Holland for the care and restoration of the partially drowned. The policy was imitated in many great cities. The plan of the parent society was translated into various languages, e.g., Russian, and into English in 1773.<sup>4</sup> The translator, Dr. Cogan, and others<sup>5</sup> formed the Royal Humane Society. Similar means were soon found to be efficacious in cases of hanging, suffocation in wells and mines, or the must of fermenting liquors, as well as for those frozen or fallen in fits.<sup>6</sup>

The work of the society was hindered by the outcry against flying in the face of nature, and even more by popular scepticism and indifference. To meet these difficulties, the early reports of the society contain vast numbers

<sup>1</sup> "Report of Society for Bettering Condition of Poor," ii., 77-92; Highmore, "Pietas Lond.," ii., 610.

<sup>2</sup> "Hints," ii., 95-115.

<sup>3</sup> "Plan and Report of Royal Humane Society" (1775), p. 4.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 5.

<sup>5</sup> Including Fielding.

<sup>6</sup> "Plan and Report," p. 10.



of detailed cases of resuscitation. In this way it was thought to prove that the plan was possible; in order to show that it was worth while the system of rewards was instituted.<sup>1</sup> The reports also afford precise instructions as to how the restoration of life may be effected. Air was to be forced into the intestines by an ordinary bellows, or tobacco smoke blown in from a pipe. It is not surprising that this latter remedy proved too drastic a one for weak, delicate persons, women and children.<sup>2</sup>

## 6. UNIVERSAL GOOD WILL.

The Society of Universal Good Will, which in the magnificence of its aim recalls the "All men free and equal" of the American Declaration, or the "Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity" of the French Revolution, had nevertheless a very humble origin. The Scots who resided in and near Norwich were in the habit of celebrating the festival of St. Andrew "with some degree of cheerfulness and merriment." In the year 1774 it was found that, after paying all expenses, there remained a balance of 3s. 6*d.* The company being "in good humour," supplemented this by a collection of 10s., the money to be kept for helping any distressed Scot in the course of the year. This modest fund was the beginning of the Scots Society, and the Scots Society, founded in 1776, became in 1784 the Society of Universal Good Will. It had several imitators.<sup>3</sup> The aim of the Norwich fraternity embraced all such poor people in distress as were not entitled to parochial relief. Scots first, then foreigners from other parts of England, then natives of the world. A Turk was relieved in 1781, wanderers from Barbary and Denmark in 1783; and in the course of ten years above a thousand

<sup>1</sup> "Transactions of Royal Humane Society" (1794), p. 11. An interesting hint as to the origin of a system which does not now seem so pressingly needed, at least for the primary object of getting the work done. In fact the society medal is not now to be regarded as a bribe to save life, but as a social recognition of what is popularly approved.

<sup>2</sup> "Transactions" (1794), pp. iv., v., xi., xiii.

<sup>3</sup> *E.g.*, Poor and Strangers Friend Societies, at Hull, Halifax, etc.; see also Northampton Preservative, etc.



people from no less than eighteen countries.<sup>1</sup> On one occasion a number of Lascars left destitute in England served to punctuate the need for this universalising of schemes of charity.<sup>2</sup>

A new want, a new method of relief, a fresh opportunity of imposture, such is the monotonous repetition of history. The president of the Scots Society, it is true, made a popular point when he affirmed that people would not come here from abroad merely to avoid starvation in a foreign land. He carried his audience with him, but the reports of the society are sufficient evidence that what would not happen sometimes did happen;<sup>3</sup> or, at least, that if people did not seek in emigration relief from starvation at home they did find by immigration the means of livelihood in England from those who had no opportunity of checking a plausible tale of distress.

<sup>1</sup> "An Account of the Scots Society in Norwich," 1775-1784; "Account of the Society of Universal Good Will," 1787, p. 20.

<sup>2</sup> "Account of the Scots Society, 1784, p. 37.

<sup>3</sup> See the story of the adventurer Mackenzie, from Hungary, in "Account of the Society of Universal Good Will," 1787, p. 10-12; and cf. Acc. of Scots Soc. (1784), p. 89; also the case of Sieur Stumpell, who brought over four hundred Germans on pretence of settling them in the Colonies, and left them destitute in England, in "Proceedings of the Committee appointed for relieving poor Germans" (1764), pp. i., vi.



## CHAPTER VIII.

## THE PHILANTHROPIST AS AGITATOR.

THE philanthropic labours that will come under our notice in this chapter possess considerable features of resemblance in the object to which they are directed. The prisoners at home and the slaves abroad were manifestly incapable of helping themselves; for the promotion of commerce in one case, or for the security of society in the other, these classes had been deprived of their liberty and held their lives simply at the option of their captors. This similarity of the problem, however, is not sufficient to account for the identity of the means adopted. Prisoners had always been helpless; yet it was not until the period now under review that anything further than casual charity had been exerted on their behalf. Some efforts, indeed, put forth at this time for the help of the debtors are of a kind rendered familiar in preceding chapters. "Have a subscription," was the obvious and ready solution in the eighteenth century. But to a large degree both the movements for prison reform and for the abolition of the slave trade avoided the pitfall of the obvious. In the philanthropic enterprises that we have been considering the procedure was first to become conscious of an evil, then immediately to do something to alleviate it. In the movements which we are now to trace, two intermediate processes will be noticed. From discerning an evil proceed first to investigate its nature in order to discover just what should be done, then, secondly, take up the more arduous task of persuading or compelling the community to discharge the duty. Instead of a benevolence that endeavours to do an undefined something, we find a determination to force the nation to do a carefully specified thing which individuals,



acting as individuals, cannot accomplish. Even authors who regard agitation with suspicion are constrained to use the word when they write of the anti-slavery movement: the term may seem less applicable to the unemotional publications of a Howard. But Howard's writing was intended equally with Wilberforce's speeches to agitate or disturb the national complacency. It is this attempt to act mediately on social abuses, by acting directly on a social conscience, that gives a special interest to their labours, in addition to the actual importance of the ends for which they toiled.

## I. PRISON REFORM.

I. *From Firmin to Oglethorpe*.—We have seen<sup>1</sup> that an Act of the Commonwealth had extended some relief to poor debtors. After the Great Fire this statute was substantially re-enacted by Charles's Parliament.<sup>2</sup> The preamble, ignoring the fact that the law had been already adopted twenty years earlier, assigns as its cause the special impoverishment that resulted from the sad and dreadful Fire. It is quite possible that the aggravation of their lot caused by the conflagration may have had something to do with the prominence into which the imprisoned debtors—and consequently other prisoners—came in the thoughts of humane persons. In any case, it was in the period between the Restoration and the Revolution that the philanthropic survey began to take serious notice of their condition. At first there is little to distinguish these newer movements from the working of the old casual death-gifts, except that as the task was now undertaken by living men and not left to the neglect of executors, it was probably more zealously carried out. Thus Thomas Firmin, writing in 1681, informs us that he knew one man who, within a few years, by the charity of some worthy persons, had delivered many hundred poor people, either by discharging their small debts, or, in frequent cases in which they were only detained on account of their inability to pay the gaolers' fees, by

<sup>1</sup> *Ante*, Chap. iii.

<sup>2</sup> 22-3 Car. ii., c. 20.



paying those fees for them.<sup>1</sup> This man was Firmin himself. He began naïvely enough with the idea of finding a remedy for an ineffective law by providing relief for a few of its victims; but, since he began to work with an open mind, experience shortly taught him several lessons. What he learnt may be condensed into one proposition: The obvious in philanthropy is commonly not really serviceable to the poor. Firmin was not the only man engaged in the charitable occupation of enriching the creditors and gaolers. Yet he reflected that the Marshalsea, the Compter and the other prisons were still "very full of prisoners." This is the story of the Barbary slaves over again. He further discovered that in many cases no lasting assistance was given even to the individuals released, for he knew some cases, and had heard of many others, in which a man released for debt, being destitute and forced to steal, was shortly in again for felony. No doubt to be hanged for theft might often be preferable to being imprisoned for debt, but the gain was hardly equal to the philanthropic purpose. He urges, accordingly, that special care should be taken to release only those who have a trade to turn to.<sup>1</sup> But these funds for the release of poor prisoners were attended by a further inconvenience. It was found that people who might otherwise have been set free were often held up in prison till charity "comes thither,"<sup>2</sup> which, adds Firmin, "they very well know will come at certain times of the year."<sup>3</sup> Firmin was not long in finding out that rougher methods would be needful, and it is to this discovery that his credit is chiefly due. He found many instances in which the fees extorted by the gaolers were unlawful, fetched one of these "little tyrants" before the judges, and records with justifiable satisfaction that rather than face the court "the person made a rope and hanged himself."<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "Proposals for the Employment of the Poor," p. 39.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 44.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 40. Or the gaoler had confederates who lived in the prison. These were presented to the charitable as the most deserving of release, and their supposititious debts were cheerfully paid.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 41.



In this incident, thus baldly related, we place the beginning of agitation as an instrument of philanthropy. The transition from attempts to alleviate distress to attempts to remove its causes, is one the importance of which cannot easily be overrated. The policy of enforcing the law was, however, soon to reveal the inadequacy of the law itself, and the need to recast it in the interest of philanthropy.

But there was not at this time any very clear notion as to the direction in which the law should be amended. A tract of the year 1700, published on behalf of the prisoners,<sup>1</sup> argues that the cost of maintaining the debtor properly belonged to the creditor. That was the case in theory: further, if the creditor did not keep up the allowance the debtor was entitled to his release. But here comes in the peculiar hardship. Immediately a prisoner is received into prison he became debtor to the keeper for his fees, and was liable to be detained for years after the original debt was paid. Such proposals, therefore, offered no escape from the dilemma. In this uncertainty of opinion, particular interest attaches to certain proposals laid before the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge by one of its members.<sup>2</sup> Mr. Shute's essay is an early attempt to lay down the main lines on which reform of the prison system should proceed. A remedy for the lewdness of keepers could only be expected from legislation under which gaolers, even though they had bought their post, might be dismissed for misconduct. For the abolition of drunkenness it is proposed to prohibit the sale of wine and spirits in the prisons. A classification of prisoners is outlined to prevent the corruption of the young; this same end is to be attained by keeping the inmates to hard labour. The next proposition, and the most pregnant one in the essay, contains the germ of the indeterminate sentence and public provision for starting discharged

<sup>1</sup> "The most indigent poor prisoner's letter to a worthy Member of Parliament."

<sup>2</sup> "A Chapter in English Church History," p. 48—51. The essay is entered on the minutes for February 22nd, 1699—1700.



prisoners in industry, and its importance is not obscured by the rather ludicrous form of the method advised, namely, that the names of discharged prisoners with a good prison record should be publicly advertised to the end that the well-disposed may keep them in the means of livelihood.<sup>1</sup>

No further immediate result seems to have followed this essay than an increased attention to the state of the prisons. Nelson includes prison reform in his ways of doing good. Many members of the Anglican party visited the prisons; the pious booklets of the society were distributed; in 1727, the subject was brought under the notice of Bray by an acquaintance who had been visiting the Whitechapel prison. Bray was immensely impressed by what he heard, and applied himself to solicit benefactions for the relief of the prisoners. He soon had contributions sufficient to provide them with a quantity of bread, beef and broth on Sundays, and now and then on intermediate days.<sup>2</sup> With an equal concern for their spiritual wants he employed his missionaries to read and preach in the prison. This enterprise brought him into contact with General Oglethorpe, and with Oglethorpe the question enters on a new phase.

2. *General Oglethorpe.*—Oglethorpe was a member of Parliament. But for this circumstance he probably would not so readily have raised the question into one of national importance. He was, however, also a masterful

<sup>1</sup> The essay also reflects the brutal temper of the age in its suggestion that the habit of profane swearing might be discouraged if criminals were severely whipped before execution. The means were cruel, and do not seem to have much relation to the end.

<sup>2</sup> How utterly futile is this kind of provision, and how characteristic of philanthropy! There is no reason to suppose that Bray's bread, beef, and broth was sufficient while it lasted; indeed, a meal every Sunday with an occasional one during the week, seems clearly inadequate; though it was doubtless all that Bray could do with the contributions he received. And it soon ceased altogether. Howard's description of this prison at a later date sufficiently indicates that Bray's well-meant charity had no lasting effect. The gaoler paid to the Lady of the Manor a rent of twenty pounds for his post; and he kept a tap in the prison. Prisoners on the master's side paid two shillings and sixpence a week for lodging and slept two in a bed; on the common side the accommodation was not so good. There were no



man, and where his sympathies were enlisted was not easily daunted. It was, indeed, rather in the nature of an accident that he was led to take up the subject in the first instance, but having done so he succeeded in setting it along lines to be later pressed much further by Howard, and we should be disposed to accord to him the title given to his more famous successor of the father of prison reform, not because his labours bear any proportion in extent and severity to Howard, although he continued his efforts for over a quarter of a century, but because it is to Oglethorpe we owe firstly a systematic enquiry into the state of the prisons, and secondly a pertinacious resolve to remedy the abuses thus revealed by judicial and legislative activity.

In the year 1728, a celebrated architect, by name Castell, was imprisoned for debt in the Fleet. The gaoler was one Bambridge. According to the latter, Castell was a particular friend of his; according to the former, the gaoler was his murderer. Castell's account is that he paid Bambridge's extortionate charges as long as he could, until he saw clearly that his funds would be entirely exhausted. He then remembered the wants of his family and refused to pay any longer. It is not disputed that Bambridge owned several sponging houses. To one of these the unfortunate architect was sent, although, as he asserted, he told his captor that there was small-pox in the sponging house, that he had never had "them," that he certainly should die. To the sponging house he went, caught the disease and succumbed.<sup>1</sup> Castell was an acquaintance of Oglethorpe, who visited him in prison, was shocked to learn his fate and brought

food allowances, but those prisoners who had paid the keeper two shillings and sixpence for the privilege, were allowed to hang out an alms box which yielded a few pence a day, and Lady Townsend sent them a guinea twice a year to be distributed among them. "State of the Prisons" (1st ed.), 189-190.

<sup>1</sup> It is fair to mention that Bambridge was twice put on trial for this murder and acquitted. See "State Trials," vol. xvii., for these and other trials of gaolers for the murder and ill-usage of prisoners. It appears from the evidence for the defence that the small-pox was not taken much more seriously than a severe cold would be at present.



the matter before the House of Commons. A committee of enquiry was appointed of which Oglethorpe was chairman.<sup>1</sup> In the course of the investigation, and on the occasion of a visit to the Fleet, the attention of the committee was called to another prisoner, Sir William Rich, whom they found in irons; they ordered the irons to be taken off. Immediately on their departure he was chained up again. In this state he was discovered by Oglethorpe who paid a surprise visit the next day. This outrage was reported to the House, and the gaoler was committed to the custody of the Serjeant-at-arms.

The enquiry into the state of the Fleet, the Marshalsea and the King's Bench revealed a great many abuses. Perhaps the greatest of all, and what is in a sense the origin of the rest, was the condition on which the keeper of the prison held his post. Some years earlier John Huggins had obtained the keepership of the Fleet by a bribe of £5,000 to Lord Clarendon. Huggins grew old and tired of the business, and sold it for the same sum to Bambridge. The post was supposed to be worth £5,000 a year, and this sum had in one way or another to be squeezed out of the prisoners. From some instances given in the report much may be inferred. In one of the rooms a woman was confined who had the small-pox: in this same room two other healthy women were placed and paid the keeper 2s. 10d. a week for the accommodation. Money had also to be paid on admission, and these fees for the loss of his liberty amounted, in the case of Lieutenant Leyson, to over £5.<sup>2</sup> If the dues were not forthcoming the reluctance of the prisoner was overcome by threats of irons, or dungeon, or of being sent to the sponging house.<sup>3</sup>

The first result of these revelations was a Bill, introduced by Oglethorpe,<sup>4</sup> by which Bambridge was removed from his

<sup>1</sup> For the Reports of the Commission see "Journals," xxi., 274, 376, 513.

<sup>2</sup> "Journals," xxi., 274 f.

<sup>3</sup> "Journals," xxi., 376.

<sup>4</sup> 2 Geo. II., c. 32.



post for having allowed debtors to escape,<sup>1</sup> and for having unlawfully loaded others with irons, put them into dungeons and destroyed them. The effect of this Act may have been to render gaolers more careful, if not more humane. On the other hand its impression can hardly fail to have been weakened by the acquittal of the gaolers in every case in which they were put on their trial. The barbarity of the keepers was not the chief cause of the miserable conditions of the prisoners, which is rather to be explained as proceeding from habitual neglect, hunger, and insanitary buildings, faults ultimately due less to the character of individuals than to the defective state of the law. Nor was it probable that any effectual reform would be carried out so long as the state regarded its duty as discharged when it had deprived men of their liberty, and accepted no responsibility for their maintenance. Some small pieces of remedial legislation were entered on the statute book as a result of Oglethorpe's agitation. The Act 11 Geo. II., c. 20, was intended to render effective a duty that had lain lightly on the shoulders of the county treasurer since the reign of Elizabeth.<sup>2</sup> Even if the prisoners in the Marshalsea and the King's Bench had received the sums of 20s. yearly which each county was supposed to contribute for their charitable relief, they would not in the eighteenth century have been greatly the better for these scanty supplies. A sufficient proof that the moneys had not been remitted is found in the provision of the law of 1738, for penalties on the defaulting treasurers. An Act which remained for many years a dead letter affords a curious insight into the state of the prisons in the middle of the century. One considerable source of income for the keeper of a prison was derived from the sale of intoxicants to his prisoners and their visitors. The evil of the gin-drinking mania was, however, becoming evident, and in 1751 it was enacted that no licence should be granted for retailing spirituous liquors within any gaol, prison, house of correction, workhouse, or house of

<sup>1</sup> For a pecuniary consideration.

<sup>2</sup> 43 Eliz., c. 2, sec. 14.



entertainment for any parish poor. The justices might search such places, and copies of the prohibitory clauses were to be hung up.<sup>1</sup> Another pious intention of the legislature is the law of 1759, which directs that a table of fees chargeable to the prisoners shall be exhibited in the prisons.<sup>2</sup>

3. *James Neild and the Relief of Debtors.*—Such is the scanty record of reform achieved by the early workers in this cause. Perhaps the chief benefit to be discovered is the directing of attention to the nature of the abuses that needed to be remedied. Yet it should not be regarded as a trivial achievement to have indicated that practices respectable from age were in need of reform. The work of Oglethorpe found its fulfilment in the work of Howard. But before turning to consider this further development, something must be said of another early worker in the cause of prison reform. The appearance of James Neild in the movement suggests several interesting reflections. His first and main task was the relief and release of small debtors, and in this respect he but continues the tradition of an earlier age. He was not singular in finding a fellow apprentice in prison for debt, in visiting him, in being oppressed with the destitution he saw, or in endeavouring to alleviate it by gifts to the incarcerated, and reduce it by the payment of their debts. And there it might have ended a century before. But in Neild's time it had become almost an automatic action to found a society when one noted an abuse. Accordingly in 1773 he started the society for the relief and discharge of persons imprisoned for small debts, of which he himself became treasurer. The work of the first fifteen months resulted in the release of 986 persons at a cost of £2,900.<sup>3</sup> This work continued to engage the philanthropist for the rest of his life. It could have no permanent good

<sup>1</sup> 24 Geo. II., c. 40; section xiii.

<sup>2</sup> 32 Geo. II., c. 28. The pages of Howard sufficiently indicate that these Acts were generally ignored; *e.g.*, at Bury St. Edmund's, "I always found a number of persons drinking, as at a common ale house."

<sup>3</sup> D. N. B.



effects, and if this were all that Neild did, his society would not be distinguishable from a score of others. This was not all. Turning from the immediately practical, he proceeded to satisfy his curiosity by inspecting numerous prisons in his own country and in Europe. His book was not published until that of his more famous contemporary had passed through several editions; when it did appear it indicated, alike by its title and its arrangement, its dependence on Howard. Yet he was an independent worker in this field, and his volume will afford us an instructive comparative view of the improvements effected in prison management.<sup>1</sup>

4. *Howard*.—In 1773, when John Howard was appointed sheriff of Bedfordshire, it became his duty to superintend the prisons of the county. What is noteworthy in his case is that he took this obligation seriously. His first disconcerting discovery was that many prisoners who had long since paid the original debt for which they had been cast remained in durance still, because they could not pay the gaoler's fees. Howard proposed to his fellow magistrates that a salary should be given to the officer in order that these charges might be removed. The justices were not unwilling, but felt themselves unable to adopt so sensible a plan unless precedents could be found for doing so. Howard thereupon took a journey into the neighbouring counties in search of one. To his surprise none existed. In the course of this investigation he was struck with the "singularly deplorable" aspect of many of the prisoners. He resolved to extend his enquiries, and commenced his great investigation.<sup>2</sup> Then gradually, and in successive journeys, he included all the prisons of the country in his survey, and extended it to all the principal countries of Europe.<sup>3</sup> Visit followed visit, so that he was

<sup>1</sup> Howard "State of the Prisons" (1777 etc.); Neild "State of the Prisons" (1812).

<sup>2</sup> "State of the Prisons," p. 1. The references are to the fourth edition unless otherwise stated.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 44.



able to trace every improvement, and to note the more numerous cases in which the evils continued almost unabated. "Hearing the cry of the miserable," he writes, "I devoted my time to their relief. In order to procure it, I made it my business to collect materials, the authenticity of which could not be disputed." He would accept no hearsay evidence. If a gaoler assured him that it would not be convenient for him to penetrate into certain dungeons he became the more resolved to see them. He measured the cells, and noted down whatever he saw. His clothes became so impregnated with the gaol smell that he found it necessary to travel on horseback; his note books had to be treated by fire before he was able to use them. He was often overpowered by the nature of the effluvia, and had resort to a smelling bottle to sustain him. These enquiries were continued year after year, and we are not surprised to learn from Bentham that the gaolers had the fear of Howard before their eyes.

Howard's style does not lend itself to picturesque extracts. He tells us that a person of more ability, with his knowledge, would have written better. For all that there is a peculiar force in the cold unemotional method with which he records the data, that carries a conviction more than sensational. The effect of our reading is accumulative, a monotonous repetition of horrors, prosaically stated as though they were entirely commonplace and normal. And this impression is the exactly accurate one. They were normal and commonplace. There are "no drains" in a hundred prisons; in others the drains are "worse than useless."<sup>1</sup> Prisons are filthy, dark, close, ruinous. The gaol fever is prevalent; its victims are incredibly numerous; yet the victims of the first rank, those who died, must be counted fortunate in comparison with the survivors, who lingered on in an atmosphere as seldom changed as the water in a stagnant pond. No ventilation, no water; water available only for those who

<sup>1</sup> No drains with Howard means no provision for disposing of excreta.



paid for it—so the miserable record runs.<sup>1</sup> In some prisons there was a county allowance for clothing and for maintenance, but this was at once infrequent and insufficient. The prisoners were commonly cold, half-naked, underfed. It may be enough to cite the bald words in which Howard sums up their condition:—"The cause of this distress is that many prisons are scantily supplied, and some almost totally destitute of the necessities of life."

But what had become of those numerous charities for poor prisoners which were the outcome of a pious custom? Like all charities they are more magnificent when we contemplate them in themselves than when we compare them with the need they are supposed to relieve. The legacies for Newgate amounted to £52 5s. 8d. a year; that, when we work it out, is about a penny a week per head. In addition there were some trivial gifts of bread and meat, and by the terms of a charitable bequest the great bell of St. Sepulchre's was tolled at an execution.<sup>2</sup> The prisoners at Ludgate receive coals from the Lord Mayor once a year, and two barrels of small beer from Messrs. Calvert & Co. weekly.<sup>3</sup> Mr. Wild, a salesman at Smithfield, sent bread and meat twice a week to Clerkenwell;<sup>4</sup> Sidney College provided a shirt a year, and St. John's gave bread every Sunday to the prisoners at Cambridge.<sup>5</sup> The Yarmouth corporation sent out a begging-basket three times a week.<sup>6</sup> A gentleman had given thirty-six rugs and coverlets for the prisoners at Reading, but they were worn out.<sup>7</sup> Norwich was entitled to certain charities which were not paid.<sup>8</sup> A bequest for the release of Lincoln debtors, dating from 1715, is mentioned with the remark that the prisoners had had no benefit for many years

<sup>1</sup> There was no legal torture in English prisons as was the case in some few foreign towns; on the other hand Howard could find no clear evidence of the prevalence of the gaol fever except in England.

<sup>2</sup> "State of the Prisons," p. 214-215.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 222.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 234.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 288.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 299; see also p. 314, 322 for street collections at Leicester and Nottingham.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 338.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 294.



past.<sup>1</sup> An annuity of 13s. 4d. had been left by a lady for the gaol at Aylesbury, and the smallness of the amount may serve to show how little was the difference in some cases between those prisons which had, and those other numerous ones which had not, any charitable provision. It must also be borne in mind that the gaoler had to be satisfied before the prisoners could begin to benefit.

We have now seen the outlines of the case which Howard laid before the country, and supported by evidence "that could not be disputed." He had not aimed at rectifying abuses; a very short experience had convinced him that more was needed than he or the Bedford justices could do. He had determined to arouse the country to the sense of a duty which it alone could discharge, and to do this by an unsparing description of its terrible magnitude. This discovery that diagnosis must precede cure is the distinguishing mark of this philanthropist. His justification is found in the immediate success of his policy. The "State of the Prisons" was not published until 1777, but even before that Howard had been called before Parliament, and received the thanks of the House of Commons for the work that he had undertaken. He was not to live to see any complete reform of the prisons; the condition of the prisoners would still be intolerable when he died. But he initiated a movement which would not again entirely become stationary, and which at some period yet in the future may reach its goal. In his formal purpose, that of forcing the Government to become responsible for the state of the prisons, he did in a measure succeed.

5. *Theory of State Responsibility.*—Two Acts date from the year 1774. The first<sup>2</sup> dealt with the question of fees. It was quite tentative, and did not aim at their abolition. Parliament could not yet admit it as unreasonable that prisoners should owe a debt to their gaolers for incarcerating them. But it was enacted that when a person was acquitted he should be immediately discharged. Previously

<sup>1</sup> "State of the Prisons," p. 327.

<sup>2</sup> 14 Geo. III., c. 20.



a verdict of not guilty had meant, "go back to prison till you have paid your fees." The fee was still to be paid, but by the county or town fund, the prisoner being "enlarged in open court." The second Act was intended to secure the health of prisoners.<sup>1</sup> Prisons were to be whitewashed yearly, regularly washed, and ventilated; rooms were to be set apart for the sick, hot and cold water baths provided, and in cases of necessity clothes were to be lent to prisoners; surgeons and apothecaries were to be appointed. Finally, the prisoners were to be kept above ground if it could be managed "conveniently," and the expenses of the Act were charged on the counties.

Five years later,<sup>2</sup> a more far-reaching attempt was made. Firstly, salaries were to be paid to the keepers of the proposed new Penitentiaries, and to the officials of the Thames hulks. The prisoners were to be duly classified and kept separate as far as possible; the sexes were to be entirely apart from one another. Each prisoner was to have a cell and to be alone during the night. Labour of the hardest and most servile kind was prescribed; food was to be coarse and inferior;<sup>3</sup> the clothes, uniform, with a humiliating badge. Inspectors were appointed. The expense was to fall on the national funds. Bentham makes merry over the fact that these Penitentiary houses were not established, and carries the theory further. The Act provided for classification; the philosopher would have had absolute supervision and ceaseless espionage in his penal Utopia.<sup>4</sup> It was further enacted that their own clothes and some small money gratuities should be given to prisoners on their discharge. The gifts of £2 or £3 were quite inadequate, as Bentham very sensibly points out. They were intended to give the prisoner a chance of a new start, an enterprise not so cheap as eighteenth century legislators imagined. Bentham's own proposal, that no prisoner should be set free unless he could show means of subsistence, goes much further, and contains

<sup>1</sup> 14 Geo. III., c. 59.

<sup>2</sup> 19 Geo. III., c. 74.

<sup>3</sup> But to be a state provision.

<sup>4</sup> See "Panopticon," and cf. "A View of the Hard Labour Bill,"



the germ of the indeterminate sentence. We have in this Act, which is to be regarded as an essay on prison reform, and in the criticisms it called forth, suggestions of the leading problems of modern penology.

But this is to anticipate, and we must return to a remaining legislative provision of the eighteenth century. The Act 31 Geo. III., c. 46, aims at making general many of the important provisions of the earlier statute. Houses of correction or penitentiary houses were to be set up in the several counties, with salaried officers, and classification of prisoners. In these prisons the inmates were to be maintained. It was expected that the product of their labour would go far towards paying the expenses of the establishment. But, in any case, what was necessary in the way of warmth, lodging and food, was not to be left to the chance provision of charity or charitable-minded county officials. Many common gaols still remained, and in these a permissive power was given to the justices to provide food and raiment for such poor prisoners as could not support themselves.

6. *The Prisons in 1773, 1783, 1812.*—The legal position of prisoners at the close of the century is thus seen to be strikingly different from what it was, we will not say at the beginning, but even in the year 1773, when Howard began his work. With some reservations, the state had accepted the theory of its responsibility for those whom it deprived of power over their own lives. Even in legislation, less had been accomplished than remained over for a later period to do. And a new problem was emerging. Howard's legal aim had been in a large measure fulfilled. It was becoming evident that the difficulty was even more one of administration than of enactment. The reform of the prisons could not be carried very far until the reform of local government should be undertaken. At the same time, the considerable improvement which actually did take place in the condition of the prisons in the period under review, should not be overlooked. What happened is most conveniently illustrated by adducing some particulars from the works of Howard and



Neild, which give the position in 1773, in 1783, and in 1812 respectively.<sup>1</sup>

	1773.	1783.	1812.
Salaries :			
Newgate ... ..	£200.	£200.	£450.
Halstead, Essex ...	£32; no fees.	£32; no fees.	£40; no fees.
Dartford ... ..	£20.	£20.	£55.
Bury St. Edmunds	None.	None.	£300. <sup>2</sup>
Halifax ... ..	None.	None.	None. <sup>3</sup>
Allowances :			
Newgate ... ..	1d. loaf a day.	The same. <sup>4</sup>	14 oz. bread a day, meat once a week.
Hertford ... ..	Debtors none; felons 1lb. bread.	The same.	Debtors none; felons 1½ lb. bread.
Halstead ... ..	1½lb. bread and small beer.	The same.	The same.
State of Prison :			
Halstead ... ..	All out of repair; no water.	As 1773.	Gaol is clean; whitewashed every year; well ventilated.
Dartford ... ..	No chimneys; offensive sewers, rooms dirty.	Pumps and sewers; women had no bedding.	Women had wooden bedsteads; men, loose straw.
Cambridge ... ..	No water, small courtyard of no use to prisoners.	Some improvements; no water.	Water for all inmates; prison clean.
Bury St. Edmunds <sup>5</sup>	Felons chained to staples in the bedsteads.	Men still chained.	Washhouse, oven, copper, hot and cold bath.
Ely <sup>6</sup> ... ..	Offensive sewer; no water; no straw; no table of fees; spirit clauses not hung up. <sup>7</sup>	As in 1773.	Much improved. Praise due to visiting magistrates. Bath; water supply good; clean.

<sup>1</sup> For 1773, Howard's first edition; for 1783, fourth edition; for 1812, Neild's "State of the Prisons."

<sup>2</sup> Includes House of Correction.

<sup>3</sup> A private prison belonging to the Duke of Leeds; the gaoler paid him a rent of twenty-four pounds.

<sup>4</sup> Felons now had a 1½d. loaf.

<sup>5</sup> Property of Geo. Charles Danvers.

<sup>6</sup> Property of the Bishop.

<sup>7</sup> The Prison had been rebuilt about ten years before. Previously it



The chief material gain from the agitation of the prison question so far, is to be found in the growing practice of paying a salary to gaolers. Some improvements in structure and cleanliness are recorded, and for this the new faith in the efficacy of whitewash is in part responsible; some instances can be found of more adequate provision of food. The character of the gaoler, in the early years of the nineteenth century, is strikingly different to that of his predecessor. I have said little in these pages about the frequently brutal, and almost invariably negligent, treatment suffered by prisoners at the hands of their keepers. Terrible pages might be written, but it would be unjust to load these men with all the obloquy which is in greater measure due to the society than to them. Even after 1815, when Captain Le Breton took the governorship of a gaol, partly indeed to supplement his scanty half-pay, but less from mercenary motives than for the opportunity of useful service, the gaolers generally are described as of low origin, mean education, useful in their place, but not fit for their office.<sup>1</sup> But references are frequent at this period to the humanity of gaolers, and to improvements in particular prisons as being due to them. When a gaoler was paid a salary, it was easy for him to deal humanely with his prisoners; under the old system, the system denounced by Howard, and now, as the result of his labours, in process of destruction, the interests of the gaoler were directly contrary to those of his helpless prisoners. If he would live at all, he could only live at their expense. There can be little doubt that this single device of paying the keeper of a prison by fixed salary is the main cause of the change that followed, and is thus pointedly described by T. F. Buxton:—"None of the grievances represented are occasioned by the gaolers; that class of men are often subjected to undistinguishing abuse, my experience would

had been in ruins, and for security the prisoners had been chained to iron bars laid across the floor with an iron weight over their legs.

<sup>1</sup> Le Breton's "Thoughts on the Defective State of Prisons, pp. vi., ix., 38-39.



furnish me with very different language. Without any exception, I have had reason to approve, and sometimes to applaud their conduct.”<sup>1</sup>

## 2. THE SLAVE TRADE.

1. *Opinion at the Beginning of the Eighteenth Century.*—In the early part of the eighteenth century, English opinion accepted slavery with an unquestioning cordiality. The trade in negroes from Africa to the West Indies was supposed to be a source of strength to our marine, by keeping up the tonnage of our shipping and the numbers of our seamen. Although enquiries discovered that, so far from this being the case, the excessive mortality of the men engaged in this trade formed a serious drain upon our resources, yet there is no doubt that numerous shipowners and others in London, Bristol, Liverpool, and indeed in many parts, derived great gain from the traffic; and, where powerful individuals profit by a system, it is not easily believed that its total effects are bad. The reflection that the trade was an immoral one, was foreign to the prevalent modes of thinking; publicists and religious teachers alike regarded the lower orders, whether they were nominally free or enslaved, as conveniently provided by providence for their support and satisfaction. The policy of Government reflected the temper of the upper classes (that of the lower classes was at that period a mere impertinence) when it adopted measures to extend and protect the British rights in an infamous but lucrative traffic. The attitude of the mother country toward the plantations was a thoroughly selfish one,<sup>2</sup> and, when colonial interests were opposed to home prejudices, they were sacrificed without hesitation. It was universally accepted that the colony was for the country that had founded it. But when the profit of the colony could be advanced without injury, rather with concurrent advantage

<sup>1</sup> “An Enquiry whether Crime and Misery are Produced or Prevented by our present system of Prison Discipline (1818), p. vii.

<sup>2</sup> See Adam Smith’s “Wealth of Nations.”



to English capital, then the wishes of the colonists were strenuously furthered. The slave trade was an instance in point. The more slaves, the cheaper sugar, greater trade, larger treasure. Every encouragement, therefore, was extended to the exportation of negroes from Africa, in order that the sugar islands of the West Indies might become the more considerable customers for the manufactures of England.

2. *Jonathan Strong*.—The beginning of the long drawn-out struggle for the abolition of the slave trade, and, ultimately, of slavery itself, may be placed in the year 1765, when Granville Sharp happened to meet with Jonathan Strong, one of the many black slaves at that time to be found in London. The accounts are a little conflicting; but whether Sharp found the slave in the streets, or first met him at the surgery of his brother, William Sharp, it is clear that he was shocked and angered to see him destitute, diseased and deserted. His master had brought him to England, but had left him, when he fell ill, to take his chance. Under Sharp's care the man rapidly improved. Some time later his master fell in with him, saw that he was again fit for service, seized him, and threw him into the compter till a ship should be ready to export him. From the prison in the Poultry, Sharp with difficulty rescued him. This was not an isolated incident, but from it we may date the actual beginning of the legal crusade against slavery.<sup>1</sup>

3. *Montesquieu*.—The labours of Granville Sharp had another origin: in the world of ideas he derived his impulse from the *Esprit des Loix* of Montesquieu. "I could willingly transcribe, not only the succeeding part of this chapter, as being much to my purpose, but even the whole fifteen following chapters," he writes in his *Representation of the Injustice and dangerous tendency of Slavery, or of admitting the least claim of private property in the persons of men in England*. His citation is from the first chapter of the

<sup>1</sup> See D. N. B., G. Sharp. Sharp's "Representation . . .," p. 79, and Clarkson's "History of the Slave Trade," p. 66.



fifteenth book, and Sharp's "Representation" contains many echoes from Montesquieu's work. One of the chapters which the English writer would have found "much to his purpose" contains those pages of scorching laughter in which Montesquieu lays down the argument he would use if he found himself obliged to defend slavery. "We cannot suppose that these creatures are men, because, if we do, men will begin to think that we ourselves are not Christians." And so the chapter runs. In later years, and after the attack on the slave trade had become serious, one part of the slave owners' defence was that, except for "ideal liberty," the lot of the negro on the plantation was little, if any, worse than that of the labourer in England. To the validity of that argument we shall have to return. Here we only notice the exception—except for "ideal liberty." But it was just the worth of this, in and for itself, that was beginning to penetrate the consciousness of England. The feeling was strong in the mind of Sharp, and was handed on to some of his followers. It was kindled and continued from the more incisive logic of the great French revolutionists. The first faulty outlines of a doctrine of freedom enthusiastically proclaimed in France had an important influence also in this country, until an excess of protest there led to an orgy of reaction here.

4. *The Quakers*.—The motives that conditioned the anti-slavery movement are more usually found in the great evangelical revival. It is not necessary either to combat or to illustrate the truth of this. Sharp himself was deeply concerned in religious work, and was, among others, a founder of the British and Foreign Bible Society. Wesley was an ally of the Abolitionists, even if Whitefield had earlier been a supporter of slavery. There cannot be a question that the more enthusiastic religious faith of the closing decades of the century exerted a considerable influence in enhancing the pertinacity of the Abolitionists. Whether evangelicalism would have initiated the movement for freedom is more doubtful. But when we turn to another class, the small and despised sect, the Society of Friends,



for whose conversion the Anglicans had held so many committee meetings, we certainly do find a native impulse towards this effort of political philanthropy. As early as 1727, twenty-one years before Montesquieu's work appeared, a resolution had been passed at the yearly meeting in London: "It is the sense of this meeting," it runs, "that the importing of negroes from their native country and relations by Friends is not a commendable nor allowed practice."<sup>1</sup> In 1761 the resolution against the practice of the slave traders contains these further words, and "to disown them if they desist not therefrom." The children of the inward light were among the first to discern the humanity that was beneath a different coloured skin. It would carry us too far to consider the underlying affinities of the principles of the Quakers and the men of the "Encyclopédie." It is enough to have indicated the two-fold nature of the influences favourable to the agitation which began from the meeting of Granville Sharp and Jonathan Strong.

5. *Granville Sharp*.—The negro population in London was a considerable one; not less, it was supposed, than 14,000 or 15,000.<sup>2</sup> There had been a feeling of insecurity in this property in human beings. Lord Chief Justice Holt had long before pronounced that "as soon as a negro comes into England he becomes free."<sup>3</sup> A suspicion had also existed that the state of slavery was not compatible with the condition of a Christian, that in baptism a slave might by that act cease to be a slave. These doubts had been set at rest in 1726, when the dictates of self interest had been embodied in a legal opinion by the Attorney and Solicitor General of the day. According to this "opinion," slaves did not become free either by coming to England or by being baptised. Granville Sharp promptly resolved to bring the question to an authoritative judgment which

<sup>1</sup> Clarkson's "History of the Slave Trade," p. 89.

<sup>2</sup> These are the numbers given by counsel and accepted by Lord Mansfield in the case of *Sommersett v. Steuart*; see the reprint of trial by H. G. Tuke, 1876.

<sup>3</sup> Sharp's "Representation," p. 6.



would overthrow an opinion which his studies of history and law convinced him was entirely invalid. The result of his researches appeared in 1769.<sup>1</sup> He supported the dictum of Lord Holt, and endeavoured to prove that the only slavery recognised by English law was that of villenage,<sup>2</sup> and that these laws had become obsolete.<sup>3</sup> His argument took a wider range. If the slaves brought into England do not become free, then their offspring, and even the children of mixed marriages, are also slaves, and the child of an English woman may be a bondman on English soil. Thus by the law of imitation a foundation would be laid for a "most dangerous vassalage, in which the poorer sort, even of the original English themselves, might in time be involved, through their inability to oppose the unjust claims which some haughty land holders might once more think fit to assume."<sup>4</sup>

But the case of the negro was obviously not to be gained by literary efforts alone, and Sharp was not satisfied with proving in a book the illegality of slavery. He made persistent efforts to obtain a legal decision. The difficulties were two-fold: the slave owners had little confidence in their case and were not anxious to have it tried; a considerable property was at stake, and the judges were not anxious to imperil it. Several years elapsed, therefore, before he succeeded in bringing the question to an issue, and then (1771), after arguments extending over three terms, Lord Mansfield's judgment was decisive: the slave on landing in England became, in that instant, free. With this decision, the first stage in the anti-slavery campaign was brought to a close.

6. *The Abolition Society*.—The second phase of the movement has also an apparently accidental beginning, these

<sup>1</sup> In the "Representation."

<sup>2</sup> Prædial slavery was still in force in the Scotch mines, see Cunningham's "English Industry and Commerce," ii., 344.

<sup>3</sup> See, too, the argument of Mr. Hargreaves, counsel for the slave in *Sommersett v. Steuart*.

<sup>4</sup> "Representation," p. 110. See also p. 87 for advertisements of slaves for sale in London.



casual incidents only serving to show that the fit time had arrived. The individual instrument is discovered, as it were, by chance; but the chance, or another like it, was bound to happen. In 1784, Thomas Clarkson had gained the prize for the Latin essay at Cambridge. Etiquette required him to compete for the senior prize in 1785. In that year it fell to the Master of Magdalen College to propose the subject, and Dr. Peckard, who had previously preached on the slave trade before the University, was led to offer as a subject for the essay, *Anne liceat Invitos in Servitutem dare?* The subject was unfamiliar to Clarkson, but he hurriedly collected his material and gained the prize.<sup>1</sup> This was the crisis of his life. The horror of the slave trade possessed him. He put himself into communication with several members of the Society of Friends, translated the essay, and, at the urgent instance of Mr. Joseph Hancock, he published it.<sup>2</sup> In 1787, a committee of twelve persons, including Granville Sharp as president,—and, in addition to Clarkson, nine members of the Society of Friends,—was formed, and adopted the resolution, “that the slave trade was impolitic and unjust.”<sup>3</sup> The early pages of Clarkson’s “History” celebrate the names of the forerunners of the movement, and afford striking evidence of numerous independent centres of dissatisfaction with an enormity that was becoming repellent to the humane sentiment. The author of “Sandford and Merton,” James Ramsay, vicar of Teston, who has been named the proto-martyr of the cause, must be mentioned. Bishop Warburton had preached a sermon before the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel which had caused much offence.<sup>4</sup> At the very time when the London Committee for the Abolition of the Slave Trade was being formed, the vicar of the remote parish of Keignton Magna, in Dorsetshire, was writing letters to the county newspaper on the subject. Correspondence was comparatively slow, and the Rev. John

<sup>1</sup> “History of the Slave Trade,” p. 136.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 139.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 162.

<sup>4</sup> “A late publication, which out of respect I forbear to name,” is its description in “Three Tracts respecting . . . Slaves,” by Wm. Knox, p. 16.



Toogood had been acting without knowledge that the question was being agitated elsewhere.<sup>1</sup>

These scattered forces were gradually brought into line by the action of the Committee. Clarkson was commissioned to travel to the seaports in the collection of evidence.<sup>2</sup> The growth of the movement was rapid. The question was brought before Parliament in 1788. Petitions against the slave trade poured in in amazing numbers. Access was obtained to the columns of the London and provincial press. Sometimes the Committee paid for the insertion of letters and articles: in other cases, as in that of Mr. Crutwell's paper at Bath, it is specially remarked that no charge was made.<sup>3</sup> Among the earliest newspaper editors to admit the Abolition arguments into their papers, Raikes of Gloucester may be mentioned.<sup>4</sup> Such was the apparatus of the agitation:—The formation of committees, the collection and publication of evidence, especially those sensational instances which catch the public ear, though they are rarely adequate to illustrate the more aggravated evil of more commonplace hardship. To these must be added the carefully organised petitions of protest from those whose feelings have been engaged. It is all ordinary enough to our thinking. These are the general lines of every agitation, but at that date the plan was novel. This discovery of public opinion as an instrument of philanthropic reform is a distinguishing feature of the present movement. Something of its weakness as well as its impetuosity was to be revealed during the dark years through which the agitation was destined to pass.

It is unnecessary to insert particulars of the atrocities of the slave trade. The murder and rapine that prevailed in Africa; the treachery with which the slaver gained his victims; the horror of the middle passage; the rapidity with which the negroes died during the "seasoning" or process of becoming used to the lash and the climate of the sugar plantation; the cattle-like sale of slaves in the market; the

<sup>1</sup> "History of the Slave Trade," p. 248.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 326, *et pass.*

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 217; cf. p. 265, "the press was kept almost constantly going."

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 219.



enforced separation of mother and child; the cruel punishments and general neglect of all the human rights of the negroes; the continued sacrifice of the heathen blacks for the enrichment of whites who were not Christian; all these make up a more than twice-told tale, and are the outlines of the story which was burnt into the simple conscience of the community by the methods just described.

To what has been said one particular may be added. An expedient first suggested by the Committee at Plymouth and adopted by the society in London was to issue the plan and sections of a typical slave ship. This print was not published until after the anti-slave party had scored their initial legislative triumph. Sir William Dolbein had carried a bill limiting the number of slaves in accordance with the size of the ship. In drawing the plan of the sleeping compartments a space of 6 ft. by 1 ft. 4 in. was allowed for each man, with a depth of about 6 ft. more or less between the tiers. The recumbent figures *i.e.*, would touch side by side, with a few inches, except in the case of tall men, between the feet of one row and the heads of the next. This was the accommodation under the new Act: to have allowed more would have involved ruin to the merchants. But it was observed that a ship now limited to 454 slaves had previously carried 609. The plan shows the slaves after they have been packed for the voyage. It is not surprising to read that the print "seemed to make an instantaneous impression of horror upon all who saw it."<sup>1</sup>

The immense effect of the agitation in the country may be sufficiently represented by one or two incidents. Wedgwood, one of the early advocates of abolition, produced a cameo. The ground was white, and on it the black figure of a negro was seen kneeling in an attitude of supplication. These were distributed in large numbers. They were soon to be found throughout the country, and were used for the lids of snuff boxes, as hair pins and bracelets.<sup>2</sup> This fashion indicates a widely diffused feeling, yet since it was a fashion and the

<sup>1</sup> Clarkson, "History," 377-9, where the plan is reproduced.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 417.



cameos were probably worn by many in deference to custom, the incident may also serve to explain why it was that the real strength of the anti-slave party was less than appeared on the surface. The movement had attached to itself a great deal of unreasoned, unregulated, and evanescent sentiment. It was opposed by a sentiment at least equally strong and far better organised, that of commercial interest. The friends of humanity must be welded by a fierce struggle before they could begin to prevail. Their first considerable defeat was in 1791, and in face of it the committee proposed a policy of boycott, which, if it could have been thoroughly carried out, might have had considerable effects. The agitators advised their supporters to give up the use of slave-grown sugar. "Multitudes" did so, ten to fifty persons in a small town, two to five hundred in the larger ones. This action was so considerable that in some places grocers left off trading in the article.<sup>1</sup> A practical sacrifice of this sort indicates a strong popular feeling, although it did not become sufficiently general to exert any appreciable and immediate effect on the trade.

The original committee had decided that while its members individually desired the abolition of slavery, it would be necessary for tactical considerations to confine their present advocacy to the ending of the slave trade, thinking that thereby they would lessen the force of the opposition to their proposals. They found a gifted and indefatigable Parliamentary leader in William Wilberforce. He had the support in the house of Pitt, Fox, and Burke, and, indeed, of most of its leading members. It was Pitt himself who moved the first resolution in 1788 to the effect that the question should be taken into consideration in the next session. Wilberforce was absent through illness, and Pitt's motion was intended to reserve the question until his return in order that to him might belong the honour of its advocacy. The slave party did not dare at first to oppose the proposals directly. They contented themselves with suggesting inquiries, first in one house then in the other, hoping by dilatory tactics to postpone the question until enthusiasm

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 495.



had died down. In this they were abundantly successful. In 1791 Wilberforce's motion "that the trade carried on by British subjects for the purpose of obtaining slaves on the coast of Africa ought to be abolished," was defeated. In place of this resolution another, calculated with the subtlety of extreme malice, and proposed by Mr. Dundas, was adopted, that the abolition should be "gradual." The suggestion was admirably suited to the national character of doing right by halves. It was less heroic, and so much safer. Also it ensured, and was intended to secure, the indefinite postponement of the question. Enthusiasm had died away; fear had taken its place. Reaction was spreading; to advocate any sort of freedom for anybody was to lay oneself open to the suspicion of sedition. The Revolution in France was already striking into silence many friends of liberty in England. In fact, the delay gained was sufficient. Before the time for a "gradual" abolition arrived King Louis was dead, and war sufficed to withdraw attention and support from the cause of the abolitionists. It is true that Wilberforce never faltered; most of his friends deserted him, though a few, with Fox, remained true. Again and again did the member for Yorkshire bring forward his motion, only to see it rejected. He had set his hand to this plough, but it was not for several years that he would drive his furrow through. Clarkson on his part toiled unceasingly until the strain of the conflict broke him to pieces, and he was obliged to withdraw. "Gradual" had succeeded to perfection, and seemed to be equivalent to never.

The arguments of the slave owners resolve themselves into two; the rights of property were supreme; the slaves were very well off. The first is admirably expressed by the Earl of Westmoreland in the House of Lords. "With respect to the inhumanity of the trade, he would observe, that if their lordships . . . were to set their faces against everything which appeared to be inhuman, much of the security on which their lives and property depended might be shaken, if not totally destroyed."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Clarkson, p. 594. The "History" contains full reports of the early



The other argument cannot be so briefly dismissed, and this for two reasons. It is not easy to decide precisely what truth it contained, and the comparison raised between the slave and the British labourer brings into prominence an industrial situation in England, which goes far to explain the long delay and comparative failure of the movement for ameliorating the condition of the negroes. The anti-slave party naturally endeavoured to set the differences in high relief, and among their numerous publications is one, a penny sheet, entitled *The Contrast; or, the African Slave and the English Labourer*. The contrasts are six. One of them is absolute: the slave was liable to be flogged or branded, while in England these things were illegal. The slave was worked day and night, the English labourer only for 12 hours a day. The slave had food or lacked it at the convenience or caprice of his master, the English labourer took his wages and bought his own food. The slave was bought and sold, the labourer was free born. But in marking these contrasts the abolitionists overlooked several relevant facts. In England, even in the worst days of the factory system, children only were whipped, and that surreptitiously and infrequently, but the lot of the chimney boys was worse in this respect. The outrage was illegal, not unknown. Hours of work in England were in practice more than twelve, and the slaves could not be worked "day and night" in the natural sense of the phrase.<sup>1</sup> The English labourer certainly took his wages, but they were commonly insufficient for his proper subsistence. The humanitarians committed a serious tactical error in accepting the actual condition of the home poor as a standard of what was fit for the labourer here or in the plantations. The weakness I detect in the argument is not in the criticism of the condition of slave labour even at its best, for it was still almost unspeakably bad, but in the false assumption that the conditions of English labour were tolerable.

debates and of the final ones; but its treatment is too cursory for the period during which the author himself was laid aside.

<sup>1</sup> Sixteen hours is usually mentioned, or from 5 a.m. to 9 p.m., with two intervals for meals.



The slave owners were not slow to seize their argumentative advantage. They agreed with their opponents in making the lot of the home labourer a standard by which to try the situation on the sugar plantations. Even so, it was necessary to slur over some of the worst features of West Indian life, the cruel punishments, the outrages worse than scourging. Here again they were assisted by the faulty method of their adversaries. Not one word too much had been said in detestation of particular atrocities; leading cases are essential to popular propaganda. But against bad cases, which had fired the populace with indignation, good cases might be instanced which should provide a select legislature with excuses for inaction. This was the method adopted. The advocates of slavery were fond of relating what happened on "some estates."<sup>1</sup> The negroes, then, on some estates were said to be kindly treated. Charming descriptions were given of their cottages and gardens, their songs and cheerfulness. And, founding upon these, "an hereditary planter" might excusably observe that the slaves were in a condition little if at all inferior to the labouring classes in England.<sup>2</sup>

The conditions of the slaves differed materially on different estates. The owners were not all absentees, and some of them treated their property with a prudence that may have expressed itself as kindness to their slaves. Slaves, it is true they were. But even so, some part of the slave owners' argument must be conceded. On the whole so much food must have been supplied as sufficed to maintain the slave during the working period of life, and that minimum of leisure allowed without which labour could not be carried

<sup>1</sup> One of these model estates belonged to the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel. It is mentioned as a generous concession that a woman who had eight children was allowed Thursday as a holiday ("Considerations . . . Meliorations of Slavery" (1825), p. 27; "Report of a Com. of the Council of Barbadoes" (1824), pp. 23-5, 97). Of course, even a slave *must* have his periods of relaxation, and "the cool shade of the willows by some clear murmuring rivulet will make one forget one's slavery:" see a striking description of the recreative reaction of a crushed population in Ivan Vazoff's "Under the Yoke."

<sup>2</sup> "Observations upon the Oligarchy or Committee of *soi-disant* Saints" (1816), p. 37.



on.<sup>1</sup> And even in England, as is observed by Granville Sharp, one of the ablest supporters of abolition, "the labourer is not able, with hard work, to earn more than what will barely provide him his necessary food and coarse or ragged cloathing."<sup>2</sup> This is an accurate description; in fact there were very many cases in which wages did not suffice for the barest necessities. But a country where such conditions prevail is at a serious disadvantage in the pursuit of a philanthropic policy abroad.

It was left to a lonely and harsh critic, who stood aloof alike from the ordinary paths of philanthropy and of commerce, to draw the moral, neglected equally by the two parties to the controversy. The condition of the English labourer was not tolerable, but altogether and hopelessly intolerable. Such is the judgment of Charles Hall the physician. In one economic particular the slave had, as he points out, the advantage. Being property it was the interest of the owner to keep his slave alive. "But, in most places of Europe, the poor man does his work, and he receives his wages; but whether he lives an hour afterwards is a matter of little concern to his employer: the same wages will procure the work to be done by another."<sup>3</sup>

7. *Sierra Leone*.—During the period in which the terror of France paralysed every public effort after reform, and while Wilberforce was pursuing his forlorn hope, scarcely succeeding in keeping the question alive until brighter days should come, he and the other friends of the negro were not negligent of such schemes as they thought possible of present execution. As early as 1787 a number of gentlemen had opened a subscription for the purpose of restoring some of the negroes in England to a life of usefulness in Africa. After the Parliamentary defeat this plan was vigorously

<sup>1</sup> See "Observations on the project for abolishing the Slave Trade," by John Lord Sheffield (1791), who asserts that the slave has more leisure than the husbandman in England, p. 32.

<sup>2</sup> "Representation," p. 76; cf. "An Apology for Negro Slavery" (1786). This pamphlet contains the most glowing account of the advantages enjoyed by the slave in contrast with the "hardships and necessities of the poor labouring people in this country," p. 31.

<sup>3</sup> "The Effects of Civilisation," p. 97



pursued and a company was formed and incorporated for the colonisation of Sierra Leone.<sup>1</sup> The venture was complicated by unknown circumstances. The nature of the rainy season was not foreseen, and in the first year the mortality was very serious. Precautions were immediately taken which considerably reduced the death rate in the next wet season. The quality of the soil, again, and the amount of land available had been over-estimated, and when, in 1792, 1,100 free blacks were brought over from Nova Scotia, they were promised grants of 20 acres of land. The necessity for making a survey caused a delay; when the survey was made the twenty acres dwindled to four. This misunderstanding was the occasion of not unnatural discontent, which resulted ultimately in a rising of the blacks against the colonial government and the failure of the enterprise. The company was badly served by some of its servants, one of whom is accused of intoxication, idleness and irregularity.<sup>2</sup> The outbreak of the naval war increased the difficulties, and for a time Freetown was in the possession of the French. In 1800 the company found its government so unpopular and insecure that it became necessary to secure a further charter and to establish a military force.<sup>3</sup> The expense of the settlement proved to be much greater than had been anticipated, and more than the company was able to meet. It became dependent on Parliamentary grants for its continued existence,<sup>4</sup> and finally in 1808 it ceased as a philanthropic undertaking, the charters were resigned, and the colony was transferred to the government of the crown.

8. *A Negro School*.—Among the projects of the founders, education had been foremost, instruction in Africa and a school in England. It was hoped that a European education would fit the Africans to become themselves the makers of an African civilisation. Experience showed that many of

<sup>1</sup> See "Account of the Colony of Sierra Leone from . . . its first establishment in 1793"; Reports . . . of the Sierra Leone Company, for 1801, 1804, 1808.

<sup>2</sup> "An Account . . .," p. 11.

<sup>3</sup> "Report," 1801, p. 9.

<sup>4</sup> For particulars see "Report," 1804.



those who had been in England reverted to a savage state on their return to Sierra Leone. The remedy was to be found in a more thorough method of instruction, and in 1799 twenty-one boys and four girls were brought to London and lodged in a house at Clapham under the care of a schoolmaster and his wife. Here they came under the influence of a healthy home life and hence they were to return in due course to fill posts of responsibility in the government of the colony.<sup>1</sup>

This experiment was not quite like the ordinary undertakings of associated philanthropy having their end and aim in their immediate results. It had a connection with the larger movement against slavery, being intended to disprove the belief that the African was industrially worthless except as a slave. It was also expected that the evidence that profitable culture of the soil in Africa was possible, would indispose the chiefs to sell their subjects, that in fact they would discover that these subjects were more valuable as workers in Africa than when exported as slaves across the sea. In some small degree the experiment did favour these larger hopes. If it cannot be regarded as on the whole other than a failure, this is due in part to the particular circumstances of the time, but partly also to the serious disproportion between the smaller policy of the abolition of the slave trade and the larger aim of the abolition of slavery which was now to be discovered.

9. *The Act of Abolition*.—The early years of the nineteenth century found a society less in fear of revolution, and the prospects of Wilberforce's long and pertinacious parliamentary campaign became more hopeful, until, in 1807, the Act for the abolition of the slave trade was finally placed on the statute book. The penalties for infringement of the law were at first quite inadequate, and the British trade in slaves did not immediately cease, while British commerce long continued to derive indirect profit from the traffic as carried on in foreign ships. For the abolition of our trade did not involve any cessation of the exporting of the negroes from

<sup>1</sup> "Report, 1801," pp. 49-51.



Africa. On the contrary, this continued, and continued to increase.

The founders of the abolition, it will be remembered, were opponents not only of the slave trade, but of slavery. For tactical reasons they had isolated the two questions and concentrated attention on the first. Their action was probably sound; had they striven for both, they might have achieved neither. But in the course of the struggle, and with their minds fixed on the immediate and momentous achievement, there was a natural disposition to lose sight of its very partial character. When the success of the first crusade came in sight they were not slow in preparing for future action. Before the Act was passed, the African Institution was formed to watch the execution of the laws against the slave trade, and in all other ways to promote the happiness of the natives of Africa. But they were disposed to regard lightly the prospect of a continued Portuguese slave trade. They were shortly to discover that this went far to destroy their previous attainment, since while any flag was at the disposal of the slavers, there could be no lack of vessels of any or every nationality: they were driven to resume the second section of their original policy in an agitation for the abolition of slavery itself. That introduces us to a long and chequered history upon which we must not at present enter. We leave the movement arrived only at its first landing stage, but arrived there with at least the formal accomplishment of its immediate aims: the negro in England had been pronounced free, and the guilt of an approved traffic in slaves had been removed from our national record.



## CHAPTER IX.

## THE ADULT POOR IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY.

IN the preceding chapters we have been able to trace a growing sensibility for human suffering, and to watch the philanthropic spirit seeking constantly fresh methods of expression in multiplied deeds of benevolence: the objects have been pursued by individuals or more frequently by groups of persons formed into private associations either for rendering immediate assistance, or for securing by agitation some public and Parliamentary action. In the course of this movement of specialisation many kinds of distress, hitherto unregarded or neglected, have established their claim to recognition and sympathy.

But there was no corresponding advance in the consideration given to what, in an earlier period, had presented itself as the central problem of philanthropy—the hardship, which was the normal condition of a section of the labouring classes of the country, the destitution in which many of the poor were constantly existing. On the contrary, the insight gained into this central problem during the earlier part of the seventeenth century, and lost during the Civil War, was not again recovered. The existence of a class of genuine but workless poor was slurred over. The Privy Council had discovered a large fringe of what, in reference to the concerns of the capitalistic labour market, must be described as surplus labour power,<sup>1</sup> and measures had been taken to remedy the

<sup>1</sup> The term “surplus-labour-power” requires a word of explanation. It does not mean that there is more labour-power than it would be for the benefit of society to have employed; but simply that there is at a given time a larger or smaller number of people, by the employment of whom, at fair or even at unfair wages, no private employer sees his way to deriving a profit.



mischief by providing employment. Some isolated attempts were made in this direction during the period now under review. They were only isolated: they did not really arouse the philanthropic interest of the age. It may well be regarded as a necessary process, this breaking up of a complex problem into its diverse elements. But none the less, while this element, the essence of the whole problem, remained neglected the failure to deal with it acted as a vitiating influence in all works of special philanthropy. The condition of the poor was a worse one at the close of the century than at the beginning. For this there are many causes: political, as in the wars that were waged; industrial, as in the growth of the factory system. But in estimating the forces of degradation we must not overlook the misery resulting from unemployment. It was not until the close of the century that the philanthropists, acting in associations both in town and country, again brought into the range of their action, in however timid a manner, the problem, which in its wholeness had been so long overlooked, of the condition of the people. Some account of the efforts put forth on behalf of the adult poor will be given in later paragraphs of the present chapter. But before relating these it is necessary to enquire what the normal circumstances of poverty actually were.

## I. POVERTY.

The mass of poverty varies at different times and was slightly larger or smaller at different periods of the eighteenth century. Employment was more or less general, wages in relation to prices were less or more inadequate.<sup>1</sup> The variations in distress were seen by contemporary observers to coincide broadly with the rise or fall of corn prices. In such a general survey as is alone possible here it is advisable to omit all reference to particular years of plenty or scarcity. The broad features alone are needed. The closing years of the seventeenth century were seriously deficient, and the price

<sup>1</sup> From the point of view of the power to purchase the necessaries of life, the man who is underpaid, is, obviously, in the measure of his underpay, in the same case with the man who is not paid, *i.e.*, is not employed at all.



of bread was consequently high. During the first part of the eighteenth century prices were generally comparatively low, although even so the spending power of field wages was only from a half to two thirds what it had been in the sixteenth century. After 1760 corn prices rose, until, by the close of the century, they had assumed famine proportions. A comparison of the dates when complaints of the vice and idleness of the poor became most frequent, with the recorded prices of corn, tends to show that their character appeared most deplorable when the cost of their food was most exorbitant. In other words, as they became more hungry they became also more clamorous.<sup>1</sup>

The amount of distress varies with the ratio of wage to price.<sup>2</sup> At one time the regular labouring force of the country is able to gain a subsistence and is silent; at another, not even the man in regular employment can purchase his livelihood, and then there is discontent. But at every period there is a larger or smaller mass of surplus labour, and more or less labour unable to gain a subsistence wage. Now the existence of this class was the crux of the philanthropic problem exactly as of the socio-political problem. Little is gained by enquiring whether distress is more or less acute, for at its least acute stage such deprivation, if it exist at all, is universally regarded as misplaced. It presents only a simple study in mass. We only need to know whether it is larger or smaller in amount and what is being done to get rid of it. Unfortunately no eighteenth century Booth has supplied us with satisfactory material for answering the question as to what was the precise extent of destitution. Its existence as a grave and widespread peril no one doubts.

(a) *The cause found in the vice of the poor.*—The proposition that the poor are responsible for their own poverty always

<sup>1</sup> For particulars see Thorold Rogers' "History of Agriculture and Prices;" Tooke's "History of Prices;" Nicholls' "History of the English Poor Law," vol. ii.; cf. Howlett, "The insufficiency of the causes to which the increase of our poor . . . have been commonly ascribed," pp. 23-30, 56-76, especially pp. 65, 68, 75; and Davies' "Case of labourers in husbandry."

<sup>2</sup> Of course, in the case of the unemployed man, wage is a zero quantity.



gains an easy credence. It did so in the seventeenth century. There were many dissolute beggars in the metropolis to fortify the conclusion. A graphic description is given by Sir Josiah Child of one of the methods by which the ranks of London destitution were constantly being recruited. A poor idle person that will not work, or that no one will employ in the country, comes up to London, to set up the trade of begging.<sup>1</sup> It may be seven years or twenty-seven before some more than usually vigilant beadle takes notice of the vagrant. He will probably shift him a few doors down the street into the next parish, or may even bring him before a magistrate. If the beggar is a woman the magistrate, from pity or some other cause, will almost certainly refuse to whip and pass her. But supposing he does enforce the law on her, "no sooner doth the delinquent arrive at the place assign'd, but for shame, or idleness she presently deserts it, and wanders . . . back . . . hoping for better fortune, whilst the parish . . . is as willing to be rid of her, as she is to be gone from thence." Amongst other causes of idleness the existence of a numerous class of young fellows brought up to London as gentlemen's servants, is mentioned. The countryman who might, as Cary reflects, have been at the plough, is introduced to an employment which lends itself admirably to a dissolute life. If he retain his health he is likely to be smitten with the mania for gambling. But it is very probable that he will be taken with disease. In that case he loses his employment and is thrown on the hospitality of the streets without resources.<sup>2</sup> If he choose a dishonest course of life he may make a tolerable though uncertain income. But high earnings alternating with periods of want are calculated to complete his demoralization. If he should wish to turn to any reputable occupation his prospects are unpromising and altogether it is difficult to avoid sinking into the submerged class. A

<sup>1</sup> "A Method concerning the Relief and Employment of the Poor," pp. 7-8. The general condition of this class was extremely miserable, although it is probable that the average earnings were higher than in recognised trades.

<sup>2</sup> *Ante*, Chap. vi. ; section on the Middlesex Hospital.



third source from which the numbers of this class were supplied is to be found in the benevolent practice of buying the discharge of debtors and leaving them without the means of honest self-support.<sup>1</sup>

Neither Child, Cary, nor Firmin imagined that profligacy and idleness were the only causes of poverty, but the convenient deduction from the premises that many of the poor were vicious and idle, to the conclusion that only the vicious and idle were poor, was a very general one. The argument is expressed with considerable emphasis by the author of "The Art of Thriving."<sup>2</sup> "Though complaints of *poverty* and scarcity of money are unhappily become no less *general* than lamentable; so that wherever we go, our ears are assaulted with the sad *rhetoric* of *beggary*; and our eye with deplorable objects of pity: yet must it be acknowledged, that we rail *impertinently* at the hardness of the times, since 'tis ourselves that make them *such*; men generally by *sloth* or *vanity*, *negligence* or *extravagance* twisting those *chains* of necessity wherein they lie *entangled*; wherefore . . . let everyone wipe his *eyes*, and make use of his *head*, and his *hands* to preserve or recover himself out of the quagmire of want: It being certain that *still* every man in health and strength may forge himself out a *fortune* by *industry* and *frugality*, and obtain (though not a splendid yet) a comfortable subsistence."

A slightly different form of the same argument is presented by the Rev. Joseph Townsend, a well-wisher of mankind, as he describes himself on his title page, and best known as a fore-runner of Malthus. He regards idleness as the immediate occasion of poverty, but seems to find its real cause in the organised methods adopted to relieve it. To a voluntary and above all a casual charity he has no serious objection, although his faith is rather set on a stringent police, and an imitation of the Scotch custom of going bare-footed. Above all, he believes in accentuating the fear of hunger,<sup>3</sup> for it is only hunger that can goad the poor to

<sup>1</sup> Firmin, "Proposals," p. 44.

<sup>2</sup> I retain in this quotation all the italics of the original.

<sup>3</sup> Dissertation on the Poor Laws (1786), p. 85-7.



work. Yet it would be a misfortune if the poor quite ceased from improvidence, for then there would be no one left to fulfil the most servile, the most sordid, and the most ignoble offices of the community.<sup>1</sup> But the compulsory provision of relief produced more improvidence than was required for these purposes, and kept wages from falling as low as they were in Scotland.<sup>2</sup> He would, therefore, abolish legal aid for the poor. His doctrine is tersely expressed in two sentences. "There never was greater distress among the poor: there never was more money collected for their relief. But what is most perplexing is, that poverty and wretchedness have increased in exact proportion to the efforts which have been made for the comfortable subsistence of the poor."<sup>3</sup>

Mr. Townsend's pamphlet is chiefly of importance for the passage in which is set forth a doctrine of population drawn from the case of the goats and dogs on the island of Juan Fernandez, and illustrating the happy results of the struggle for existence; but it owes its interest in the present connection to the rejoinder it drew from another clergyman, the Rev. J. Howlett, who shows, and evinces a peculiar satisfaction in showing, that many of his colleague's figures and inferences are inaccurate. At the same time there are elements in his argument that deserve attention. He successfully raised the whole question of the limit of efficacy of charitable action. A poor law or private charity that is used as a substitute for an adequate payment of labour is of course mischievous. The remedy, however, would seem to lie not in making the relief less, but the wage more.

(b) *Intemperance*.—This reference of poverty as a fact to personal vice as its cause was justified in numerous instances in which destitution was seen to have for immediate antecedent an evil choice of a bad life. Or turning from individual cases to the broader consideration of the mass of poverty, it was found everywhere complicated by

<sup>1</sup> Dissertation on the Poor Laws (1786, p. 34).

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 11.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 7.



intemperance. The condition of the poor was aggravated by an enormous increase in the use of intoxicants. The consumption of beer was large, being equal to a thirty-six gallon barrel a year per head, which indicates a still larger thirst when we exclude children who, even though they drank, can hardly have drunk their quota of rather under a pint a day. But the use of beer was, for the most part, a legitimate use. It was the universal beverage, tea only beginning to take its place in common use during the eighteenth century.<sup>1</sup> The amount of spirit consumed was much more serious. In 1734, this reached the immense total of nearly 5,000,000 gallons, and was then still rapidly increasing, for eight years later the consumption amounted to 7,160,000 gallons.<sup>2</sup> The consequence was, that London and the country generally suffered from a surfeit of debauchery deliberately sanctioned in the interest of commerce. The purchasing power suggested by these figures would seem to indicate that the earnings of the people might have sufficed to keep them in comfort if they had not been thus squandered. In many instances this was so. Bread, the general diet of the working classes, was, on the whole, cheap. In some trades wages were also advancing. But before we generalise this statement and assert that the poor spent on gin what they might have spent on food, there are several reservations to be made. Gin was cheap. The taxes on its manufacture and sale had been abandoned, and, as every historian repeats, a man could be drunk for one penny, and dead drunk for twopence. Now a penny hardly sufficed for a meal. Then again, the money for drink was often obtained by theft, and even if the people had stolen for food this cannot be regarded as a satisfactory way of obtaining it. It must also be borne in mind that a large proportion of the drink bill was paid more or less directly by charity. To what extent this was the case

<sup>1</sup> Webb, "History of Licensing," p. 17; and *ante*, p. 143, consider the two or three pints allowed in hospitals.

<sup>2</sup> Webb, p. 27; *i.e.*,  $\frac{3}{4}$ -gall. per head per annum at the earlier date; over a gallon at the later.



cannot be determined. But if the proportion then was as large as it is now it was very considerable indeed. The fact that a large sum is expended in drink is not in itself criterion of what are the means of the poor for more legitimate expenditure; in order to gain that it is necessary to eliminate the sum that is available for drink and for nothing else. It was only a part, possibly not a very large part, of the spirit bill that was paid out of wages. This is a conclusion that is hardly likely to be disputed now, but which did not suggest itself to the writers in the eighteenth century.

(c) *An Economic Cause assigned.*—The first explanation offered for the destitution of the poor appeared to several enquirers to err from an over simplicity. But the common element found in their judgments does not consist of any denial of the existence of profligacy, or of its connection with poverty. This indeed was too clear to be controverted. The more penetrating thought proceeded from a recognition of the poor as composed of heterogeneous classes. There was no one homogeneous mass of poverty resulting from any single common cause. The occasions of distress were many and diverse. Some illustration of these opinions and arguments will have the additional value of serving to describe further what the conditions of the poor actually were. Sir Matthew Hale's insistent remark, "some times there are when the honestest workmen cannot get work" may seem somewhat of a truism, but was not the less necessary.<sup>1</sup> The obvious is also Firmin's text:—"Thanks be to God, there are still amongst us an honest sort of poor people, that are content to take any pains for a living;" and again, the poorest sort of people are those who "come least into sight, who fare hard, and work hard to get bread." His evidence is the more instructive because his intimate knowledge of London enabled him to draw a clear line between the different classes. He knew the beggars also, and, judging from their appearance in the streets of the city, he exclaims, "one would think they came from the suburbs of hell itself."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "Provision for the Poor," p. 74.

<sup>2</sup> "Proposals for the Employment of the Poor," pp. 20, 38.



Cary and his colleagues at Bristol were at first predisposed to attribute all the destitution of that city to the bad habits of the poor, but the experience gained in the workhouse scheme quickly convinced him "that the great cause of begging did proceed from the low wages for labour; for after about eight months' time our children could not get half so much as we expended in their provision;" and he hoped that the success and extension of their policy might lead to the wages of labour being advanced.<sup>1</sup> The later proceedings of the Bristol corporation are instructive as to the causes of destitution. After the workhouse plan had been abandoned as too costly, it was decided to farm out the poor to a malt and corn dealer, who was to bear all the costs and take all the profits of the sack-making business carried on by the city poor. He was to give each worker a small gratuity as he thought fit. The philanthropists of the day were delighted with the result, because sacks from this factory were sold better and cheaper than before. Thus the scheme initiated by Cary in the hope of raising wages was used to depress them.<sup>2</sup> This act of 'sweating' labour had its origin in the best intentions compatible with ignorance, but it was well known "how that some covetous masters, in hard times, if they are well-stocked and of abilities, will set on work many poor, but they must take such wages as they are not able to live upon."<sup>3</sup> A consideration of the unemployed shows that there was a mass of underpaid labour, the condition of which is hardly to be distinguished from that of those who did not work at all. It becomes clear that there must have been much truth in King's exaggerated estimate that the labouring class, as a whole, could not earn their living, and were a drain on the community.<sup>4</sup>

The condition of the poor, and the cause of their poverty receives a more systematic study at the hand of the Rev. J. Howlett, vicar of Great Dunmow. Howlett regards the

<sup>1</sup> "An Account of the Proceedings of the Corporation of Bristol," pp. 13, 21.

<sup>2</sup> "An Account of Several Workhouses" (1732), pp. 159-61.

<sup>3</sup> Hale, "Provision for the Poor," p. 54.

<sup>4</sup> See Rogers, v., 832; cf. 625.



increased proportion of the poor as the natural and necessary consequence of various changes that had led to the great prosperity of the country.<sup>1</sup> He puts aside, in an argument full of interest, all the commonly assigned causes of distress, as, *e.g.*, the existence of a poor law, the engrossing of farms, or the increase of public-houses. These last, he asserts, were rather becoming less numerous. He is moved to indignation by the suggestion that the poor are responsible for their own poverty. "There is, indeed, I cannot help thinking, something peculiarly ungenerous in our complaints of the burdensomeness of our poor. . . . Shall we grind their faces and squeeze them to death, and then have the cruel absurdity of ascribing their fate to their increasing vice and profligacy?"<sup>2</sup> The poor rate had certainly increased, yet its growth was not greater than that of the national revenue, and did not equal the increase in the cost of living. Howlett fixes on this as the essential fact; "the price of labour," he says, "has not advanced in proportion to the price of provisions."<sup>3</sup> And if it is to be objected that high wages are demoralising to the poor, he replies, that whatever pernicious influence they may have on a few, they are for the bulk of men the most powerful incitement to industry, inasmuch as they open to them the pleasing prospect of decent competence, and final repose from toil and fatigue. He instances Birmingham, where wages were high, and where, although some were profligate, yet the working classes generally were in a comfortable position.<sup>4</sup> In the country districts, however, the wages were not sufficient for the subsistence of the labourer's family. Unmarried men might prosper, and be free to go in search of higher wages, but even this rather mean object of ambition is denied to those over whom the bonds of Hymen have been thrown, they, like mere vegetables, are

"Fixed to a spot  
To draw nutrition, propagate, and rot."<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "The Insufficiency of the Causes to which the Increase of our Poor . . . have been commonly ascribed," p. 1.

<sup>2</sup> P. 75.

<sup>3</sup> Pp. 53-76; cf. Davis, "Case of Labourer in Industry," p. 46.

<sup>4</sup> P. 54.

<sup>5</sup> P. 115.



It will be seen that Howlett's argument takes a wide range, though it is constantly being checked by reference to actual facts, which the author takes a pleasure in stating with brutal directness.

The value of the "Case of Labourers in Husbandry," by David Davies (1795) lies almost entirely in its record of particulars. The rector of Barkham had no gift for abstruse thinking, but his narrative does not suffer on that account. The picture he gives of life in a country parish is one of appalling gloom. The labourer could not gain his livelihood by his labour. The budgets constantly reveal deficits of from £1 12s. 9d. to £8 16s. 9d. a year. These deficits vary with the size of the family, for nowhere is expenditure allowed except for the barest necessities. The following is the account for "an exceeding good workman, and a very industrious man," in a Dorset parish.<sup>1</sup> In recognition of his hard case he was allowed to work on piece wherever possible. He earned 7s. 6d. a week, or £19 10s. a year. The family consisted of a wife, and four children under six years. Provisions cost 8s. 3½d. a week, the bill including 1s. 3d. for bacon, and 3d. for tea and sugar; this expenditure, with £4 added for clothes, amounted to £25 11s. 2d., leaving a deficit of £6 1s. 2d.<sup>2</sup> Rent and fuel were paid for by the parish. This was in 1789. It did not matter how industrious, capable, sober, or thrifty a man might be, it was impossible for him to thrive.

There is one pregnant hint towards a true theory of distribution in this book. "The labourer," we are told, "must be enabled to subsist his family," accordingly, just as the landowner should not oppress the farmer so the farmer should not oppress the workman.<sup>3</sup> The underlying idea of the argument is that the labourer is essential to the community; and that being so it becomes the proper function

<sup>1</sup> P. 155.

<sup>2</sup> The use of tea formed one of the heads of the condemnation of the wickedness of the poor. Davies remarks, "Spring water just coloured with a few leaves of the lowest priced tea, and sweetened with the brownest sugar, is the luxury for which you reproach them," p. 39.

<sup>3</sup> P. 125-126.



of the community to maintain the labourer. This is perfectly sound. "The labourer" is essential. Unfortunately, any particular labourer is quite dispensable while there are others to take his place. This existence of surplus labour prevented the doctrine of "labour as essential" from coming into prominence in the eighteenth century. Labour was requisite, but the hunger of the labourer was an inconvenience only to himself, and might prove a useful goad in the hand of his employer.

We have now traced the recognition by several enquirers firstly of the existence of an unemployed class, a class that needed no compulsion but only an opportunity to work; and secondly of the need for an adequate wage for those who were employed.<sup>1</sup> We have noticed also that while the first class, that of the workless, was always present; the extent to which wages were below the subsistence level varied with the price of food. I do not find any disposition to raise the question whether the working classes were not entitled to something more than the mere minimum of physical efficiency: for this we shall have to turn presently to the early socialist writers. Even these two facts of an honest unemployed class, and of actual under-payment, *i.e.*, under nourishment, were frequently either ignored or controverted. This being so it is perhaps natural that little was done to remedy the evil, and we may find here also some explanation of the futilities of the eighteenth century workhouse.

## 2. THE WORKHOUSES: CHARITABLE CO-OPERATION.

The establishment of numerous workhouses in several parts of the country<sup>2</sup> is due to several independent causes. At Bristol the motive was found in the difficulty experienced

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Shillitoe's "Journal," ix., remarkable through a long course of years for his kindness to the poor, pleading for a just remuneration for their labours.

<sup>2</sup> Cunningham, in the new edition of his "English Industry and Commerce," points out that their early distribution was unequal in different counties. But we have accounts from twenty English counties,



by the corporation in their dealings with pauperism. The houses of the London Corporation of the Poor, had already become very similar to the workhouse of the eighteenth century because it was easier to make a pretence of finding work for vagabonds who could be punished, than to provide employment for respectable men who might require to be paid. A general impulse towards something benevolent induced the Anglican philanthropists to take up and popularise the scheme, and the founding of the workhouses provided occupation for the restless energy of Mr. Matthew Marryott of Olney, or Mr. Parfect, who found a great pleasure in watching decrepit men and babies industrious at their wheels or diligent at their books, or devoutly praising God for His signal mercies towards them.<sup>1</sup> The share taken by individuals or associated philanthropists in founding and managing the workhouses is very considerable. The action of several corporations, supported by the collections in the churches or subscriptions of private individuals, preceded and prepared the way for the more general policy adopted by the state. The workhouse was one of the most popular philanthropic expedients of the period.

The workhouses attempted to do almost everything for the poor except the one thing that had been regarded as necessary a century earlier. Dignified work for competent men under honourable conditions they did not provide. The case of Reading is instructive. There had been a workhouse here in the early part of the seventeenth century;<sup>2</sup> and a genuine dyeing and cloth making manufactory had been carried on successfully until the Civil War turned the workshop into a barrack. In 1725 this workhouse was re-established, with the ordinary spinning school for children, while the able bodied did the house work.<sup>3</sup> We have already noticed the general character of the workhouse population,<sup>4</sup> but some further particulars may be added as to the adult inmates.

<sup>1</sup> "An Account of several Workhouses;" see under Stroud and Greenwich, first edition, 1725. The reference to Mr. Marryott does not appear in the enlarged account of 1732.

<sup>2</sup> See pp. 61-3, 73, *ante*.

<sup>3</sup> "Account of several Workhouses," under Reading.

<sup>4</sup> *Ante*, p. 114.



In some houses only the impotent were admitted; in others the sick were excluded. Sometimes admission was by way of reward for a reputable character; or again the house was intended to be a terror to the idle. At Canterbury the workhouse was for this latter purpose and proved successful, for the vagrants all took refuge in the Precincts of the Church. Several of these discrepant objects might be served by one house, for the idea of classification was a later invention, and the temper of the age did not favour any squeamish disinclination of the honest poor to consort with vagabonds. A favourite occupation was picking "ockam;" but not infrequently men and women who were lodged in the house were allowed to work outside. In these cases the rate or the charitable income of the institution paid such part of the wages as the employer was indisposed to afford. This effect was recognised and apparently approved at Beverley, where the poor were "let out for hire as labourers, or to work at their respective trades for such wages as we can get, and for which they were too proud, or too lazy to work, before they were under our management." In various places women were allowed to go out charing, and men to the plough, presumably for such wages "as we can get." By degrees, however, workhouses became less and less centres for work, and became refuges where, as in Crabbe's description, broken down profligates lived over again the pleasures of past years. An Act of 1744<sup>1</sup> shows the confusion of thought as to the proper function of these institutions. When a rogue, vagabond, or incorrigible rogue had been passed to his parish, he was to be employed in work, or placed in some workhouse or almshouse until he betakes himself to some other employment. The distinction between work and workhouse was complete. The workhouse had become an alms-house for vagabonds.

There were not wanting schemes for their improvement. We have pamphlets on *The Better Employment and more comfortable support of the poor*<sup>2</sup> written with a view to securing

<sup>1</sup> 17 Geo. II., c. 5.

<sup>2</sup> By William Bailey (1758). Bailey's interest was not, however,



the health and happiness of the poor. Amongst other abuses to which this author drew attention were the cruelty and neglect with which the parish apprentices were frequently treated. More important work in this direction was done by umbrella Hanway. The condition of the workhouse population, especially of the children, gave one of the numerous occasions for his untiring zeal. His action in this matter anticipated the method of Howard, for he spent much time in inspecting the places where the poor were herded, including their own dwelling-houses, or rooms.<sup>1</sup> The infant mortality of the parish poor was terribly high, and Hanway's agitation of the matter led to the passing of two Acts for its remedy. The first<sup>2</sup> sets forth that the keeping regular uniform annual registers of all parish infants under four years of age within the bills of mortality may be a means of preserving their lives, and enacts that a register book is to be kept in each parish in which the names of all such children are to be entered. The schedule contains columns for the names and addresses of the nurses to whom any infants have been entrusted. A few years later a further step was taken.<sup>3</sup> The registers are to be enlarged so as to include all parish children until they are put out apprentice; and the Act further provides that infants under six are to be sent not less than three miles into the country, and prescribes the minimum payment to be made for their maintenance, viz., 2s. 6d. for those under six, and 2s. a week for those over that age. It may be, as Nicholls says, that these acts evince a humane and kindly feeling. The description would certainly be correct as applied to their initiator. But it is obvious that they are insufficient. Half a crown was not enough for the maintenance of a child, and the reduction of the allowance reminds us that this statute recognised as normal the evils of young child labour. Technical education must have been carried

entirely benevolent; one reason for writing was to urge the use of a machine washing-tub which he had invented. He gives drawings and prices.

<sup>1</sup> D. N. B.

<sup>2</sup> 2 Geo. III., c. 22.

<sup>3</sup> 7 Geo. III., c. 39.



so far in the earlier years that the boy or girl could be in a position to earn wages at six.

An indirect advantage probably followed from these measures. They drew attention to the state of affairs and threw the needed light of publicity on the administration. It was difficult to regard child mortality entirely apart from that of adults. Ultimately the policy thus begun would have important effects. At first, however, the result was unimportant and the workhouses remained a national scandal. For this the legislature was partly responsible. Under the operation of the window-tax many rooms in the workhouses had no light or fresh air. This was part of the price paid for a spirited foreign policy.<sup>1</sup> The system of making contracts for the maintenance of paupers also enhanced their suffering. Under 9 Geo. I., c. 7, a parish might contract with any person for the lodging and employment of the poor. The contractor was to bear all costs and take all profits. It is not surprising that great inconveniences resulted. 45 Geo. III. c. 54 does not abolish the system, but makes some tentative regulations whereby the contractor must reside in the parish and be a person of some substance. Rather earlier than this another effort to improve the condition of the workhouse had been made. It was in connection with the prisons that the need for a classification and separation of the inmates was first recognised. The benefits of extending this plan to the workhouses was not overlooked. Accordingly we find an experiment of the sort made at Birmingham in 1797 in order that the children might not be mixed with depraved characters.

The workhouses, however, continued to be repellent to all but the lowest class. The director of a house of industry near Norwich tells us that he had known many parents, who, rather than consent to their children being taken into the workhouse had "half starved themselves, and sometimes carried it so far, that, by reducing themselves too low, they have been at length obliged to leave their cottage, and to be

<sup>1</sup> Howard's "State of the Prisons," pp. 7-8.



carried altogether to the house of industry ; the man's spirit broken, and he himself (if he has stamina left to recover) becoming a burthen all his life."<sup>1</sup> The workhouse, however, was throughout the century the most popular device for the public relief of the poor : it retained a confused reminiscence of the seventeenth century doctrine that genuine work was the best remedy for poverty, and it received the enthusiastic support of the philanthropists of the time.

Towards the end of our period a supplementary system came into favour. This was the famous roundsman system, or plan of sending unemployed men round to the farmers and other local employers of labour. If they found it convenient to give him work they paid him something. The parish maintained him if he could not get a job, and supplemented his wage up to an agreed minimum if he could. He was sometimes found loafing in the lanes. It would be difficult to imagine a better devised scheme for manufacturing idlers, for the mischief extended to a far larger circle than that of the "roundsmen," as they were called. No labourer, however able or steady, could expect to earn more than a bare minimum of existence ; and less than this, he need not fear if he did not work at all. There must have been an extraordinary fund of sturdy character to enable him to resist, as successfully as he did, the various influences conspiring for his degradation.

It was in such plans as these for paying out of a public fund the wage bill of the employer that the poor-rate was squandered. And the people who did this were quick to complain that the poor were a burden on the country when, as a matter of fact, the country was the burden on the poor. The poor were supposed to consume the poor-rate, while the payers of the rate were in reality growing rich by using the underpaid labour of the poor. The burden of poor-relief was not rising in anything like the same ratio as the so-called poor-rate, which was largely a wages fund, and even if the amount devoted to the alleviation of distress had been greater

<sup>1</sup> Report of Society for Bettering the Condition of the Poor" (1797), vol. i., 33.



than it was, the criticisms passed on the system would have been beside the mark. The gravamen of the early charges of the economists against the old poor law was that it kept the profligate from starvation; the real evil was that the poor law supported a commercial system under which the industrious and competent barely escaped the same fate.

### 3. LABOUR COLONIES.

A confused reminiscence of the earlier principle of setting the poor on work lingered on in the workhouse movement. But the principle was the really operative one in two contemporary experiments in founding labour colonies across the seas in the plantations of America. General Oglethorpe was prepared for his scheme, both by his knowledge of the capability of the New World for supporting a thriving population, and by the experience of London destitution which he had gained in the course of his investigations into the prisons of the metropolis. He was convinced that many of the debtors were in confinement from misfortune, not from their own ill deserts. He recognised that the multitude of the poor was a source of weakness to the nation. Here were men who could not find employment; there, land which only required labourers. He obtained a Royal charter for a company which he had formed to develop part of the province of South Carolina under the new name of Georgia, and he himself went out to be the governor and maker of the colony. The emigrants were drawn from several classes. Firstly, there were the unfortunate members of reputable families, then those who, having neither income nor industry,<sup>1</sup> were a burden on the community; soldiers who had served long and well in the wars; young offenders, novices in iniquity, whose manners might be meliorated by life under healthier circumstances, not, Oglethorpe remarks forcibly,

<sup>1</sup> By "industry" here "occupation" must be meant. It was no part of Oglethorpe's scheme to take out lazy people. He got them in plenty, but he did not want them.



not the common run of Old Bailey transports; and, lastly, those poor Germans or Salsburghers, who had sought refuge here for the sake of the truth. These last proved the best colonists, and in the end almost the only emigrants sent out on the charity.<sup>1</sup> Oglethorpe had endeavoured to discriminate between the fit and the unfit. As was only natural in a new experiment, and at a time when the policy of discrimination was unfamiliar, he was not entirely successful. His warm temperament also may have facilitated the making of mistakes. The price of his errors had to be paid, as we shall see immediately. Yet, having regard to his material, his experiment cannot be looked on as a failure. "The persons sent from England on the Charity were of the Unfortunate, many of whom have by their industry proved that they deserved better, and have thriven; many also shewed they were brought into those misfortunes by their own faults; and when those who quitted their own country to avoid labour, saw labour stand before their eyes in Georgia, they were easily persuaded to live in Carolina by cunning rather than work."<sup>2</sup>

The original intention was to provide the expenses of emigration by subscription, and the donations for 1732-3 amounted to over £3,700, partly for capital expenditure. But voluntary offerings proved insufficient, and resort was had to Parliamentary grants. These, as in the case of the

<sup>1</sup> They would like some more Germans, we read in "A State of the Province of Georgia," p. 12; also English and Welsh servants used to hard labour and "strangers to London." The earliest emigrants—a party of 114—went out with Oglethorpe and a Piedmontese silk winder in 1732. The number for following years are:—

	British.	Foreign.
1733—4 .....	237	104
1734—5 .....	23	58
1735—6 .....	341	129
1736—7 .....	32	—
1737—8 .....	135	163
1738—9 .....	2	7
1739—40 .....	4	134

See "An Account shewing . . . the Progress of Georgia, by Order of the Trustees" (1742).

<sup>2</sup> "A State of the Province of Georgia" (1740), p. 11.



Foundling Hospital, were accompanied by a falling of the subscriptions after 1736.<sup>1</sup>

Oglethorpe was too busy a man to confine all his energies to the new colony. While he remained there things went well; when he left they fell into disorder. This inability of the philanthropist to concentrate must be added to the imperfect discrimination exercised in selecting the colonists, as a cause of the difficulties that ensued. But in part such failure as there was resulted from the fact that in two particulars he adopted a policy far too wise for his generation to accept. The importation of rum was prohibited; and the use of slaves was forbidden. The reason for these restrictions is not to be found in any theoretic objection to slavery or to alcohol, but in a recognition of the peculiar situation of this particular settlement. Georgia was for the English workers: Englishmen would not, it was believed, work side by side with negroes. The funds raised were to provide a new home for those who were ill off in their old one. The price of a slave would suffice to emigrate a white man and to support him until his first crops were harvested.<sup>2</sup> Drink had been a temptation to many of the colonists, and they would start their new venture with better prospects if the temptation was absent. The prohibitions were ineffectual. Complaints were raised that if rum was not imported, wood could not be exported. Spirits were introduced into the colony. An apothecary who had neglected his practice, and a planter who tired of the drudgery of plantation work, brought "almost all the town of Savannah" into their debt.<sup>3</sup> There were money lenders in the colony. It was to their interest that slaves should be obtainable, since in order to

<sup>1</sup> See "An Account" (1742).

	Parliamentary Grant.		Benefactions.	
1733—4	.....	£10,000	.....	£1,502
1736—7	.....	£10,000	.....	£3,627
1737—8	.....	£20,000	.....	£ 909
1738—9	.....	£ 8,000	.....	£ 473
1739—40	.....	£20,000	.....	£ 181

<sup>2</sup> "An Account . . . ." (1742), pp. 7-10.

<sup>3</sup> "An Account . . . ." (1742), p. 28.



purchase them, colonists were ready to mortgage their lands.<sup>1</sup>

The net results of this labour colony scheme were that a certain number of English, and a certain number of Germans, were given a new start in life of which they made good use, that England gained a new colony of some considerable military power against the Spaniards, and that alike in its success and its failure, it remains as a striking illustration, that while it is necessary to find work for the workless, the policy is attended with very great difficulties. A further remark may be added. The colony of Georgia was a great boon to those industrious people who emigrated thither, but these for the most part were men who, under proper conditions, would have prospered in England. Emigration is no ultimate remedy and may be a fresh obstacle if it attracts the most fit and draws away attention from the problem of the residuum.

A later experiment of a similar nature is connected with the name of Coram, founder of the Foundling Hospital. Nova Scotia was intended primarily for discharged soldiers and sailors, who were offered grants of fifty acres of land, with an additional ten acres for each member of their families. But the same conditions were offered to "carpenters, shipwrights, smiths, masons, joiners, brickmakers, bricklayers, and all other artificers, necessary in building or husbandry."<sup>2</sup> Thus the opportunity was enlarged for a number of individuals to exchange an intolerable life in England for a prosperous one in America.

<sup>1</sup> See "A True and Historical Narrative of the Colony of Georgia" (1741). This work contains a bitter attack on Oglethorpe and on John Wesley for encouraging unseasonable prayers. It gives the story, from the point of view of the malcontents, of the need for rum and slaves; and discovers certain abuses in the administration. These last may be due partly to Oglethorpe's lack of patience with uninteresting details, more largely to his absence from the colony at critical times.

<sup>2</sup> Account of Nova Scotia . . . to which is added His Majesty's Proposals, as an encouragement to those who are willing to settle there" (1750), p. 16.



## 4. THE ENDOWED CHARITIES.

In addition to the relief afforded by the poor law the most considerable provision made for alleviating without removing destitution as a normal state of existence is to be looked for in the endowed charities. These bequests are so numerous that there is a tendency to exaggerate their importance. But the majority of bequests were of small amount, and they were very partially distributed. In some districts there were not enough poor who answered to the requirements of the donors; more often the charitable fund was so small as to be of little use to anyone. Their natural operation was rather to beget expectation than to relieve want, and they were commonly cumbered with such conditions as to render them mischievous instead of helpful. Numerous and various as they were, almost the whole of them can be gathered into a few classes as being for churches, schools, pensions, almshouses, apprenticeship, or doles, these last forming the largest class. Besides these we find a good many bequests left generally for the use of the poor, and often to the distribution of the parish officers,<sup>1</sup> and these might, in the hands of a more intelligent set of people, have been of great service. In practice, however, a gift for the poor became almost always a dole—a loaf, a smock, or a small silver coin or copper coin. The scholastic charities were rarely of much service; the gifts in aid of pastoral stipend, or for the repair of churches fall outside my present range; the apprenticeship funds, liable always to great abuse, were becoming continually of less utility; of the doles nothing more needs to be said. The almshouses and pensions were undoubtedly in many cases of real value, and served to mollify the declining years of numerous poor people, although the selection of inmates was frequently unwise and not always honest.

I confine myself in the present section to pointing out some facts as to the administration of these charities.

<sup>1</sup> There are a few bequests of a very miscellaneous kind. The list given in the Statute of Charitable Uses supplies a clue.



Probably enough has been written in previous chapters to indicate their character and make it unwise to linger on that topic now, although in passing it over we miss some very curious information.<sup>1</sup> It was not unusual for charitable bequests to be intercepted in part or altogether by the executors, trustees, or other persons who might have the handling of the money. The trustees were often very remiss in looking after the affairs of a charity, and their number was frequently allowed to fall so low as to invite negligence or speculation. For this, the state of the law was in part responsible, since the expense of creating a new trustee when an old one died was exorbitant; and often, in the interests of the charity itself, honest trustees postponed the fresh appointment as long as possible and longer than was wise. Many of the charity estates had increased greatly in value. In the beginning the greater part of a bequest might have been left for specified uses with some small balance reserved for the trustees; this was specially the case when the management was given to a City Guild. The increase in value went entirely to this balance, and wealthy corporations engrossed money bequeathed to the poor. This, however immoral, was entirely legal. Or again, the funds were squandered in extravagant charges for feasts and refreshments. Estates were let to tenants at inadequate rents, not infrequently to friends of the managers of the charity, and these rents were allowed to fall into arrears.<sup>2</sup>

The almshouse was calculated to be the most healthy form of endowed charity, but it was subject to a particular drawback. In some instances no provision had been made by the testator for the repair of the buildings. In the course of time, and as a natural consequence, they fell into decay and became unfit for human habitation. Even when the

<sup>1</sup> I do not understand why so little use is made of these reports by historians of manners.

<sup>2</sup> A glance through the reports of a few parishes will support what has been said. See, *e.g.*, in the London volumes of the new reports of Charity Commissioners, i., pp. 3, 71, 74, 111, 158, 588, 589, 592; ii. 2-4; 8, 9; 121-6; 133-134, 137, 262.



charitable donor had left a fund for repairs it was sometimes by way of a charge on some estate, and the owners took a rather narrow view of the time when, and the amount to which, expenditure on the fabric was necessary. In such cases, however, energetic trustees might succeed in persuading the owner of property to keep the almshouse in tolerable repair. It is pleasant to remember that, in some cases, the expense of rebuilding houses that had become ruinous was undertaken by the parish authorities or by private subscribers.<sup>1</sup>

The instances mentioned of voluntary assistance being given to make a charity serviceable, or of parish funds being used for the purpose, suggest that the abuses were not universal, and this is certainly the case. But they were under such lax control as always to be liable to abuse, and the funds were so often ignorantly misapplied or fraudulently misappropriated as to detract from the value they might have had. The mischievous use of the funds was, moreover, very often the necessary result of the foolish conditions attached to the charities by the testators, and for this there was no remedy. Even the *cy-près* doctrine, that timid substitute for a straightforward social control, was not yet introduced. The movement for redressing some of the more palpable evils inherent in an exaggerated respect for the whims of dying men, which resulted in the investigations carried on for many years by the Charity Commissioners, and which were reported in some thirty-seven folio volumes, although it began in this century, was not carried far enough to have much effect until the following one.

## 5. MOUNTS OF PIETY.

The proceedings of the Charitable Corporation are interesting as illustrating the attempt to introduce into England the *monts de piété*, institutions that have been so familiar and within limits of such social value on the continent. The

<sup>1</sup> Vol. i., 161, 163, 593; ii., 121-122, 126.



corporation put forth a narrative in the form of a letter to hoped-for subscribers in 1719. From this it appears that a charter had been conferred by the late queen of pious memory. The early history is traced. In 1490 the Bishop of Padua had founded the earliest *mons pietatis* for the sake of giving advances upon pledges at interest that might support the fund without oppressing the poor. The example was copied by the Pope, and gradually spread to the north of Europe in spite of the scriptural objections raised to lending at usury.<sup>1</sup> The narrative explains that loans would be made to the poorest without interest, to another class at legal interest, *i.e.*, at 5 per cent., and to a third at this rate plus a sum to cover expenses. The action of the corporation is described as intended to do away with the exactions of the pawnbrokers, and render it easy instead of difficult for the poor to redeem their pledges. All this is very charitable. From another source we learn that the motives of the shareholders, however, were not regarded as entirely disinterested, and low criticisms were aimed at them as incorporated pawnbrokers and 10 per cent. philanthropists.<sup>2</sup> The price of money was low, and it was not easy to find a safe investment. The shareholders of the corporation were said to be of the class who cared rather for security than a large return on their capital; they were mostly widows, orphans, and foreigners.<sup>3</sup> The business was not started until 1725, when two depôts were opened, one for small pledges at Spring Gardens, and another for larger ones in the City of London. At first the public proved shy of borrowing at a public office, but this feeling wore off, and some business was done at Spring Gardens of a legitimate kind in accordance with the terms of the charter which provided for

<sup>1</sup> The objections were specially to lending at a low rate by good people; it was impossible to prevent loans in the way of business at a high rate of interest.

<sup>2</sup> "A Short History of the Charitable Corporation" (1732), pp. 6, 8, 25, 23. This tract was written by an infuriated shareholder after the crash, and contains a sketch of the proper duties and responsibilities of directors. It is interesting, therefore, in the history of joint-stock enterprise.

<sup>3</sup> The share list does contain numerous foreign names.



the relief of the industrious poor by assisting them with small sums upon pledges.<sup>1</sup> The other branch was in effect a great money lending undertaking, and quickly became a mere opportunity for fraud. The warehouseman and a director absconded apparently with nearly £500,000. An Act was passed inviting Geo. Robinson, Esquire, and John Thomson to return; the time was extended in the case of the latter, who ultimately appeared to give evidence before the Parliamentary committee, appointed to enquire into the matter, and to propose a method of relief for the unfortunate shareholders. To this end a lottery was arranged by the Bank of England which yielded some £79,000 to be divided among the sufferers.<sup>2</sup> It was stated that no poor person suffered a wrongful loss of his pledge during the existence of the corporation. But the circumstances under which it came to an end left a feeling of strong suspicion against this form of charity. The pawnbrokers' opposition to a business that might injure their own was fortified by this public distress. It was in accordance with the national temper to leave the trade in the province of private profits, but no doubt the circumstances just related had a great deal to do in preventing the naturalisation in England of the European institution, the *mont de piété*.

## 6. CASUAL CHARITY.

And now of that ever-present source of charity, the thoughtless givers who are ready to rectify the evil of society with a sovereign or a penny. On this subject little can be said; it has, in fact, no more history than the sea which ebbs and flows perpetually, ever confined to its bounds. That it continued is as certain as that it continues. That it often proceeded from an impulse of pity, and occasionally was of service to the recipient, need not be doubted. Already it was being subjected to criticism, as, indeed, had been

<sup>1</sup> 5 Geo. II., c. 3.

<sup>2</sup> Report of Com. of the House of Commons, 1723; 5 Geo. II., c. 3; 6 Geo. II., c. 2 and c. 35; 7 Geo. II., c. 11.



the case from a distant past. It was pointed out that it encouraged idleness; it was shown that oftentimes what was apparently given to the poor was in reality a mere donation to the rich. But donors of this class cannot be persuaded that what they give to the needy serves to enhance the landlord's rent, the merchant's prices, or to swell the publican's profits. They give because they have an impulse to do so, and with scant thoughts of the effect of their giving. On appropriate occasions, therefore, large sums were thus bestowed, and they must be added to the other provisions for the relief of poverty. "Upon a recovery from a fit of sickness, upon returning safe from a voyage, or a long journey, upon the birth of an heir, upon any signal success or blessing, the thankful never failed to . . . shew, by their regard to the Poor, their gratitude to God."<sup>1</sup>

But on the whole, the conclusion seems inevitable, that, in relation to the quality and the mass of normal poverty, the slender means adopted for its relief should be regarded as negligible in their meliorating influence.

<sup>1</sup> Davies's "Case of Labourers in Husbandry," p. 123; Alcock's "Observations . . .," p. 43.



## CHAPTER X.

## VILLAGE CHARITIES.

## I. DECAY OF OLD MODES OF CHARITY.

IN the closing years of the eighteenth century the kindly influence of associated philanthropy which had attained to considerable proportions in the metropolis, and had more recently been extended to the large provincial towns, began to be widely felt in the country districts also. But so far as charitable provision was concerned, the villages had during the greater part of the century been left in a most neglected condition. Some efforts of pity had been made: in one district or another men or women had had their hearts quickened to sympathy with their poorer neighbours, and many villages at many times must have felt their helpful if unrecorded charity. But these incidents were sporadic—dependent on many accidents of time, or place, or circumstance. We have seen reason for believing that the endowed charities, the only considerable and recognised continuous fund of private relief, were, with few exceptions, only of the most trivial utility. And during this period various old modes of charity were falling into disuse. The poor may not on that account have been in an appreciably worse condition. But to miss the accustomed gift, however unimportant in itself, yields always an aggravated sense of neglect. A voice from the west country echoes these complaints, “What are now become of the poor-boxes, and public gatherings, the usual and commendable methods heretofore of providing for the poor? So little is now given to poor-boxes, that many parishes will not be at the small expence of erecting or keeping them up. And collections,



whether for parish poor, or distant sufferers by Briefs are so much dwindled and discouraged, that the collectors are almost ashamed, and hardly think it worth their while to go about."<sup>1</sup>

Such a description must not be taken too literally. On the occasion of a great distress in some particular district, relief was still forthcoming from other parts of the country.<sup>2</sup> The charity briefs were still issued and occasionally yielded assistance to the sufferers; the costs of collection, however, were so large that they more regularly enriched the middleman. But after all qualifications have been made we can only think of the "deserted village" as characteristic of the era.

Many villages remained unhelped at the close of the century—a larger number untouched than touched by the new philanthropic spirit—and, although many are mentioned for the deeds of charity done in them, they are hardly more than sufficient to suggest a proposed solution for a problem that remained unsolved.

## 2. DIFFERENCES OF TOWN AND COUNTRY.

The village charity movement at the close of the century was, in part, the natural development of that earlier movement which we have already studied in the denser centres of population. These charities reflect many of the same ideas, and adopt similar methods with only such modifications as are suggested by the different condition of town and country, differences, whether in style of living, or caused by the more scattered population. The first of these receives a curious illustration in the erection of the charity windmill. The windmill is so distinctively of the country: if the artist loved to depict it in ruins, it often was in ruinous decay. At this time another influence threatened it. Up and down the country, mills first intended for the

<sup>1</sup> Alcock's "Defects of the Poor Laws" (1752), p. 12.

<sup>2</sup> See the account of the crisis in the Gloucestershire clothing trade in Townsend's "Dissertation," p. 96.



grinding of flour were being adapted for the more remunerative business of cotton spinning. This tendency armed the remaining corn millers with a mischievous monopoly. The country poor still in large measure made their own bread, and ground their grain or got it ground. In the town the fashion had changed: in the village it lingered. The poor experienced increasing difficulty in getting their corn ground at reasonable rate, or on any terms with proper despatch. Their custom was not very important and they suffered annoyance and delay. The situation suggested the remedy. Erect a charity windmill. In some few instances it was done.<sup>1</sup>

In another respect the condition of country life, with its scattered hamlets and small villages, is seen to have a more considerable influence on the form and manner of charity. The gentry knew the poor by sight almost as familiarly as the poor knew the gentry. The appearance of widow so-and-so was alluded to at vicarage or Hall, as the vision of Lord or Lady was related in the hovel. The more personal relation was not invariably of a kindly sort. Many magistrates knew the families of those who had poached their game or broken their hedges, had had a bastard child, been driven to claim parish relief, or made themselves unduly prominent in the trade of begging.<sup>2</sup> The wealthy would also have an eye on the poor at large, because they might be expected sooner or later to fall into one or several of these categories. The clergy, too, were commonly acquainted with the persons and in part the history of those whom they baptized, married and sometimes catechized. The upper classes generally had numerous relationships with the poor: they discharged the duties

<sup>1</sup> "Report of Society for Bettering the Condition of the Poor," i., 69-77, referred to in this chapter as R. S. B. P. It is interesting to observe another motive, and one characterising most of the village charities. The windmill at Barham Down would only grind the whole meal with the bran, and was expected to popularise this.

<sup>2</sup> We read of a charity for the cheap supply of faggots at Lower Winchenden, near Aylesbury, owing to the numerous cases of theft at the sessions, and because the poor could not buy wood; R. S. B. P., ii., 334-42.



of their station or the claims of neighbourhood with varying degrees of thoroughness, but in all cases they expected and with few exceptions they received those outward marks of reverence which were demanded less as due to their superior worth than as a fit acknowledgment of the invaluable constitutional principle of inequality. Now the spirit of patronage was not more vigorous in the country than in the town. The subscriber to a city hospital exercised a general patronage over "charitable objects:" from the individual he heard but once in a lifetime, on the occasion of the forced letter of thanks. The country counterpart of the letter of thanks was the frequent curtsey, which the charity school, whatever its other deficiencies, never failed to teach. The relationship of donor and recipient was more intimate in the village, if not necessarily more healthy. And it served to modify the forms of charity. The needs of the recipient were more obvious to the benefactor. But this leads us to another and by far the most important respect in which the village charities, at the close of the century, differed from the earlier institutional charities of the towns.

In London, it was easy to found a hospital with the scantest consideration of its adequacy, because the rich did not know how the poor lived, where they lived, how numerous they were. The metropolis was already too unwieldy a whole to be comprehended at a glance, and none of our statistical knowledge was then in existence. This ignorance was, perhaps, less complete in towns such as Nottingham or Norwich. But generally, while in the towns the rich knew poor streets, in the country they knew poor people. What was done for the poor in a village could not appear equal to the need until it embraced all the poor, or, at least, all such as were deserving. In the same way, a charity which only affected the poor on one rare crisis of life could not appear adequate to all its vicissitudes. In the nature of things therefore, there would be some attempt to co-ordinate the charities. And this, in fact, we find to be the case. The village charities illustrate the first tentative disposition to



take up the so long neglected central problem of philanthropy alluded to in the last chapter. They are based on a timid recognition of the intolerable lot of the poor not alone in some particular crisis of disease, but in the normal destitution that dogged their footsteps during their lifetime. I do not wish to claim too high an importance for this movement: its results were comparatively insignificant; its energy was evanescent and uncertain, containing no guarantee of permanence. When some charitable woman married into another parish, or an active clergyman was promoted to some richer dignity, their schemes were in danger of coming to an end, and such worth as they had possessed was lost.

One other remark of a general character may be offered before we look into the detail of a few of these village charities. They are not all dominated by a single idea, although as we shall notice in the sequel, they show a strong tendency to assimilate to a given type, and come under the control of a central organisation. But at first they proceeded not from any theory about an "abstract man," but from immediate perception of the wants of individuals. They were fostered by country gentlemen rather than by philosophers of the market, although in some cases by gentlemen who had read or heard of the "Wealth of Nations." It is not easy to decide how far the control of these village charities by the country party had a bearing on the closer connection of philanthropy with the Tories in the following century. Of the existence of this connection, so far at least as philanthropy did not meddle with constitutional changes, there can be no doubt. And if the village movement cannot be regarded as a cause it is yet interesting as an illustration of this.

### 3. TYPES OF CHARITIES.

By far the most considerable charitable provision in the towns was for the sick. With one exception the care of people who were ill attracted but slight thought until after the close of our present period. But I include an account of an



experiment in this direction, not begun indeed until 1818, and for two reasons. It is a continuance of the movement begun earlier, and may be regarded as an outcome of the philanthropic interest which was earlier turned on the country poor. It will serve also to remind us how much was still unattempted within the limits of the eighteenth century.

(a) *Charities for the Sick*.—As early as 1782, the Rev. Mr. Dolling, vicar of Aldenham, was concerned with the perils of maternity in a parish that had no midwife. He raised a subscription in order to send a woman for three months to a lying-in hospital at Store Street, in London. On her return she attended the labourers' wives at a charge of 2s. 6d., never had an accident, and saved the poor rate.<sup>1</sup> This method of assistance was adopted in numerous other villages, and the services of the nurse were supplemented in some instances by the provision of maternity bags. The garments were made by the children at the schools for the poor. We have already seen<sup>2</sup> how charity needlework acted as a mischievous competition to force down women's wages. Here we have rather to note how the new supply was in response to or created a new demand. Its remote effect on the labour market may have been bad, but in the first place this work was not for sale, and it was largely in addition to the previous manufactures of the village. We meet also with sick clubs for women, in which, for a payment of 1½d. a week, sick pay was given—3s. a week for three months, and then 1s.<sup>3</sup> The Rev. William Herringham's plan at Ongar was different. He provided for the use of the sick bed-linen, wrapping gowns, "a large easy wicker chair with a head to it," and a candlestick with a pannikin attached for heating liquid in.

But in by far the larger part of the country no such provision was made, and the sick poor were dependent on private doctors, whom they could seldom afford to employ, or the parish doctor, to whom their village was farmed out

<sup>1</sup> R. S. B. P., i., 126-8; cf. *ibid.*, i., 163-5; ii., 184; iv., 52-7.

<sup>2</sup> *Ante*, p. 165.

<sup>3</sup> R. S. B. P., ii., 106-7.



at a rate of pay that seemed to invite neglect. About the year 1818 Mr. Henry Lilley Smith, surgeon, of Southam, in Warwickshire, was induced, by his observation of the evils of the farming system, to propose an alternative method. He had studied under Saunders, the oculist, and his first notion was to found an eye and ear infirmary at Southam. The plan was enlarged into a general village dispensary. There were to be subscriptions from the wealthy, and contributions on the provident plan from the poor. Those who were too sick to attend the doctor might be visited at their own homes on the payment of an extra sum for riding charges if the doctor had to go more than three miles to see them. In 1825 there were three hundred and thirty-six paying members, and no less than two hundred and seventy persons received relief.<sup>1</sup>

The Southam dispensary is of more than local interest, and in two directions. It was rather extensively imitated in other districts, especially in the Midlands.<sup>2</sup> The credit for this was largely due to Smith himself, who seems to have been something of an enthusiast. We find him, in 1826, attending a meeting of medical men at Leicester to give an address on his scheme. The medical profession came to no hasty conclusion, but considered the plan "proposed by Mr. Smith as deserving the fullest consideration." I rather gather that there was a feeling of suspicion such as has been aroused by the salaried Friendly Society doctor in recent years. But the proposals were adopted and carried out without any long delay. The Southam dispensary possesses another element of general interest. The accounts contain subscriptions to the Leamington Baths, the Margate Sea-Bathing Infirmary, and several general hospitals. This co-ordination with other institutions was an essential part of Smith's plan. The village dispensary could only deal with the more ordinary cases of illness, but it might be an

<sup>1</sup> Second Annual Report of the Southam Dispensary. See also Smith's "Observations on the Prevailing Practice of Supplying Medical Assistance."

<sup>2</sup> Poor Law Report (1834), App. C., xxxvii., 23-38.



introduction to other hospitals for serious diseases, and might also serve a useful function in ensuring that the cases sent, *e.g.*, to Margate, should be really suitable ones. Smith has some sensible remarks on these points, which anticipate a later development of thought. His scheme would ensure that in the worst cases the "best care and advice in the kingdom" should be available for each individual, "without the sacrifice of independence included in begging an hospital ticket." The governors, and especially the medical officers, would value the tribute to the superior advantages of their institution, and their wards (if this sort of dispensary should become general) would be occupied with more suitable cases than those frequently sent by philanthropic individuals, not of the profession.<sup>1</sup>

(b) *Shops*.—The frequency with which shops for the sale of necessary articles of consumption were opened in the villages by charitable individuals throws some light on the social condition of the country, and, incidentally, on the prevalent ignorance of economic laws. At the present time a salary of 1s. a week for a shopkeeper in the smallest village would be regarded as undesirably low, and criticism would not be delayed by its being supplemented by parish pay. A century ago such an arrangement was regarded as one of the good features of charitable shopkeeping.<sup>2</sup>

One of the reasons for opening these shops was the impossibility experienced by the poor of obtaining such articles as coal and milk in any other way. Davies tells us that at Barkham the practice of suckling was so profitable, on account of the London demand for veal, that the poor could neither beg nor buy milk.<sup>3</sup> A milk supply was organised in many places. At Barton, in Staffordshire, where the poor were "destitute of all means of procuring milk," a dairy farm of nineteen acres was started, and milk sold at 1d. a quart in summer and 1½d. in winter. There was a loss of £5 on a sale of about £100, and in the report it is noted

<sup>1</sup> "Second Report," p. 11.

<sup>2</sup> R. S. B. P., i., 17-27.

<sup>3</sup> "Case of Labourers in Industry," p. 19.



that had the price been  $1\frac{1}{2}d$  and  $2d$ . there would have been a profit. It goes on to advise that extreme cheapness should not be aimed at, since "to be able daily to purchase milk, though at its full value, is a very important advantage."<sup>1</sup> At the same time it is to be remembered that the prices were commonly at "prime cost," while either no salary was allowed, or a very inadequate one. Thus, *e.g.*, at Hadham, flour was sold at cost price, not including labour;<sup>2</sup> and at Greenford Dr. Glasse laid in coal in the summer and sold it at under rates in the winter; no cost needed to be reckoned for haulage, as it was done by the vicarage carters.<sup>3</sup> In addition to the coal business the inhabitants of Greenford had the advantage of cheap bacon and cheese, but only on condition of attending church.<sup>4</sup>

The sale below cost price was not, however, entirely a yielding to the love of cheapness, for at Hanwell, where goods were sold for ready money or charity tickets, a difficulty was experienced from the reluctance of the poor to begin to pay anything for what they had been in the habit of receiving for nothing. Cheap sale was part of the scheme for weaning the people from the poor law relief.<sup>5</sup> The gift of charity tickets, accompanied by short homilies on domestic economy, was intended to form a transition to more straightforward modes of shopping, and probably did act in this way, whenever the poor were induced to feel that, as Emerson puts it, the highest price you can pay for a thing is to ask for it. Yet it is not possible to decide in what proportion the customers at the charity shop were drawn from the class who had formerly begged, or from those who had been accustomed to buy at a full price, and now transferred their custom to the cheaper market.

<sup>1</sup> R. S. B. P., vol. i., p. 181.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, i., 267-72.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, i., 78-80.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, iii., 60-65. The objection was raised that this kind of business was disastrous to the tradesman who had to earn his living: the clerical reply was two-fold, that it cannot injure the shopkeeper; that if it did, it was so good for the poor as not to matter; i., 61-2.

<sup>5</sup> R. S. B. P., iii., 104-11.



(c) *Bye-industries*.—Closely connected with the last group of charities, both in the attempt to improve the food supply and to withdraw the poor from reliance on the parish, are the experiments in providing the villagers with bye-industries whether for themselves or their children. We have had occasion to notice some desultory efforts made to find work for the unemployed. The experiments now to be described were intended rather to provide a supplement to regular labour. Thus the Earl of Winchilsea let allotment grounds to the labourers on his Rutland estate. These were taken by seventy or eighty of the men, who kept a cow, or in some cases two. The profit was estimated respectively at £5 or something more than £10. In other places we find mutual benefit societies for the purpose of buying the cows.<sup>1</sup> An exception to the general rule that enclosure Acts were used in utter disregard of the interests of the poor occurs at Dereham, in Norfolk, where the lord of the manor had a clause inserted reserving a parcel of land as a poor's estate. This was let out in small sections, and the rents were used to buy fuel for the poor. This was in 1794. Cottage farms, as they were called, are also found in Wilts. A private individual let out ground in quarter or half acre plots in 1811. The effect of this was highly beneficial, for many industrious individuals were enabled to relinquish the parish relief to which formerly they had been obliged to have recourse on account of their large families.<sup>2</sup> It is added that the conduct of the tenants was "altogether unimpeachable." In other places, as at Avebury, the women and children were charitably taught a trade, such as straw plaiting. The Avebury plait was bought by a dealer from Bath, and produced £80 a month. This extra sum acted as a powerful charm. The personal looks, dress, and appearance of the people quickly responded to the stimulus of a more adequate diet. The straw was gratuitously given by the farmers and the minister of the parish.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *E.g.*, Castle Eden; R. S. B. P., i., 1-16.

<sup>2</sup> *Com. on Poor Laws*, 1817, App. 165.

<sup>3</sup> R. S. B. P., iv., 90-111.



Encouragement was given to steady men to build their own houses. Joseph Austin, of Shelford, who started with a wife, four children, and 14s. capital, and lived in the cottage he had built by the highway, was for some time a stock example of the ease with which every man might be prosperous if he cared to take the trouble.<sup>1</sup>

The philanthropists had been acting under a curious delusion. They seem to have imagined a preference on the part of the poor for want and idleness over industry and the means of livelihood. The manner in which the villagers seized every opportunity offered them must have gone far to dispel the theory. A certain unnatural surprise, however, was expressed at the industrious habits and "unexceptionable behaviour" of the poor. And at the outset it had been felt necessary to offer them certain small bribes in the shape of rewards and prizes. A good deal of enjoyment resulted both for rich and poor from the annual festivals and prize givings at Callow Hill or elsewhere, and if they were unneeded for their original purpose they can have done little harm. The dairy competitions and the ploughing matches may have led incidentally to better butter and straighter furrows; they served more immediately as a social function for alleviating the hard monotony of existence. Skill in ditching, draining or thatching was pleasant to witness, also the champion potatoes, while the prizes to those who had "taken the greatest care of their gardens," probably helped to produce more beautiful villages.

Quite as much in accordance with the temper of the times were the rewards for well-kept cabins, well-behaved children, and length of farm or domestic service. A certain meddlesomeness of concern for the poor may be reflected in some of these, but it is entirely outdone by the institution of prizes for parents who had brought up four children to the age of fourteen without parish relief. Whether so small and hard earned bounty on a plentiful population had much effect may be doubted,

<sup>1</sup> R. S. B. P., iii., 174-85.



but the scheme reflects the age that preceded the "Essay on Population."<sup>1</sup>

(d) *Children's Dinners*.—It is not necessary to linger over the schools of industry for children, which were not unlike the earlier charity schools, but we must notice one offshoot from the system. An "ordinary" was provided, at Epping, at a charge of 6*d.* a week both for the little workers at the school and for other children, and small as the charge was, it yielded a profit. The communal meal served a further purpose, in that portions were sent home to sick children, by which means their convalescence was greatly assisted. We owe this account to Sir T. Bernard, who was present every day for four months while the experiment was being started. And he tells us that the effect of the dinner on the children who dined together was immediate and striking. His words are worth quoting; "Within one month after this dinner had been regularly provided at Epping, the appearance and manners of the poor children there were totally altered. Their sallow countenances had acquired a healthful complexion and tone, from the daily and regular supply of a plentiful meal, and their manners, by the habits of an orderly table were improved."<sup>2</sup> We find some, not very numerous, imitations of this early and interesting model of the later cheap schools dinners philanthropy.

(e) *Friendly Societies*.—The thrift idea, the promotion of deferred expenditure, may be traced in most of these various schemes. But there are other and numerous experiments in which the furtherance of thrift is the avowed and predominant motive. We meet with several friendly societies under that name, and other institutions quite similar in their aim, though under various titles. The friendly society, so far as it was a working-class movement, whether connected or unconnected with the trade unions, does not now concern us. The movement now to be related is alike in its origin, aims and effects, of another character. The charitable

<sup>1</sup> R. S. B. P., i., 197-204; ii., 68-76; iii., 112-21. As much as £150 was raised by fourteen parishes and private subscriptions at Epping.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, i., 261.



school bank, provident club, or friendly society was for the poor, but was not started or managed by them; it was under the control of the well-to-do. The philanthropic societies now under review afford no training school for the democracy; on the contrary the maintenance of the poor in a subordinate position was far from being an unimportant part of the aim of those who founded them. They sprang from no native impulse in the mind of the workers, but were imposed from without. Even when they attracted the approval of the poor they found in that approval no guarantee of permanence. They were liable to a double risk. The poor might grow tired of contributing or the rich of managing. They were due not to a popular will but to the understanding of some few individuals. And, from one reason or another, just as they sprang up sporadically so they exhausted their vitality and fell away rapidly.<sup>1</sup>

These Friendly Societies, in their various forms, showed themselves peculiarly adapted to the needs of village charities. The proportion of well-to-do families to the poor population was usually small. Frequently there would not be more than one or two families in a district possessed of both the ability and the disposition to help. The charities were conducted, as we are told, with the strictest regard to economy, but even the small sums required were sometimes not easily to be obtained. The pence subscribed by the poor served as a valuable supplement to the sixpences given by honorary members. To this fact the rather rapid adaptation of the thrift club to different forms of want in widely separated districts may be attributed.

The beginning of the movement may be traced back into the middle of the century, or, no doubt, even further back. About that time the wool combers of Tiverton had formed a common stock for the support of their decayed brethren.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See Committee on the Poor Laws (1817), p. 104, for breaking up many societies round Birmingham; and Poor Law Report (1834), App. A., xxviii., 731, for the case of Yorkshire.

<sup>2</sup> Alcock, "Observations . . ." p. 37; cf. B. & S. Webb, "History of Trade Unionism," chap. I.



But the first considerable impulse is found in the arena of politics. In the year 1773 a bill for compulsory old age pensions was thrown out in the House of Lords. The thrift idea, as it was then framing, is seen in the words of the preamble to this bill, "Whereas it often happens that persons engaged as journeymen in manufactures and handicraft trades, and, likewise, household servants, labourers, and divers other persons, get more money as the wages . . . of their service than is sufficient for their present maintenance, and might easily if they were so minded, lay by out of their said gettings a sufficient sum to provide for . . . their old age. And whereas it would be highly useful both to the said persons themselves and to the nation in general that they should endeavour to make such provision."<sup>1</sup> This is interesting as history of an idea, but had no practical consequence, and we hear no more of a national provision for old age until modern times. All that was done in the eighteenth century was entirely experimental and as a matter of private philanthropy.

The first philanthropic Friendly Society, of the type we have here to consider, dates from this same year, 1773. Whether the fact is accidental or whether there was any intercourse between the Parliamentary movers and the Vicar of Sunbury, I do not know. The Rev. James Cowe founded two such societies in his parish, this first one in 1773, and a second fourteen years later. He confidently expected the support, financial or moral, of the gentry and the farmers for a scheme which would effect a saving in the rates and which appealed to their interests in divers ways, and "for more cogent reasons than need be mentioned." The society counted forty-eight members immediately after its foundation, a number presently increased to sixty, and the rules indicate a considerable amount of care and forethought. The payments were by entrance fees and monthly contributions; the benefits included 7s. a week in sickness and £7 at death.<sup>2</sup> The Sunbury model was imitated, but

<sup>1</sup> Cited in Tidd Pratt's "History of Savings Banks," p. xviii.

<sup>2</sup> "Religious and Philanthropic Tracts" (1797), by James Cowe. It



not widely until the succeeding period. It seems to anticipate a good deal of the much more widely advertised Ruthwell scheme, the "parent society," as its author claims, of all minutely organised schemes. The Sunbury society was started by a clergyman for his parishioners. In other cases they are provided by a landlord for his tenants and labourers, and this with promise of much improvement to the estate.<sup>1</sup>

But the more usual type of thrift club arose in connection with the Sunday schools. They are to be found in great towns such as Birmingham, from which they spread by imitation into the surrounding country districts.<sup>2</sup> They spring up independently in villages, as at Empingham, Wendover, Tottenham, and the Charitable Bank at the latter place is extensively referred to as a model for similar clubs elsewhere.<sup>3</sup> These are largely to promote savings among the children, but in some cases were intended to serve as an inducement to their parents to attend Sunday readings, or to enable girls to lay by against the chances of marriage.

Another type of society aims not at deferred expenditure, but at increasing the purchasing power of present spending, and gives a hint of the future co-operative society. The Friendly Society at Rothley in Leicestershire was of this sort. A small capital was raised for the purchase of corn, which, after being ground into flour, was sold again to the members at cost price. The society also sold to outsiders at a price below that of the dealers, with the welcome result of forcing down the cost of bread in the district.<sup>4</sup>

We have now passed in review the principal types of village charity at the close of the eighteenth century. And so far it might appear that the action taken was entirely

is curious to observe that out of the monthly payment of 1s. 3d., 3d. is stipulated to be spent in beer.

<sup>1</sup> R. S. B. P., i., 1-16.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, iii., 329-36.

<sup>3</sup> "History of Savings Banks," pp. xvi.-xix.; cf. R. S. B. P., *passim*.

<sup>4</sup> R. S. B. P., ii., 60-67. This plan was extensively imitated in the surrounding country.



spontaneous and local, or with no centralising influence at work beyond the natural imitative tendency. This, however, was far from being the case.

#### 4. CHARITABLE GROUPS.

In the first place a geographical grouping may be observed. The charities are found scattered widely over the country, but they are chiefly found massed in certain districts: in the north and in Oxfordshire; in the eastern and the south-eastern counties; in Hertfordshire and Buckinghamshire; in Warwick and Gloucestershire; in parts of Hampshire and parts of Somerset. The work done in the northern counties and in Oxfordshire is under the influence of the Bishop of Durham, one of the prominent and untiring patrons of the cause. The little town of Kendal is noteworthy as possessing perhaps a more complete series of institutions than any in the country. In 1799 a school of industry was opened to supplement the older Blue Coat School and Sunday School; the same year witnessed the setting up of a soup kitchen and children's dinners after the Epping model; these were quickly followed by a blanket charity and a fund for the cheap sale of potatoes. In 1801 the cost of whitewashing eight hundred and twenty houses was undertaken, and at that time a benefit society was on the point of being started.<sup>1</sup> The extended influence of a single man is seen also in Hampshire. Gilpin was parson in the forest parish of Boldre, but was not content to confine his charities so narrowly, and we may think of him as riding or walking through the beautiful woodlands, in which he found his joy, to the town of Lymington, where he directed or assisted so many plans of beneficence. He loved the quiet of the woods, but also the cheerful bustle of the children's festival; was equally in his place at the head of the procession, marshalled by the patroness, when it wended to church for the charity sermon, or later in the day to the town hall, where the children were treated to "cake and wine."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> R. S. B. P., iii., 300-12.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, ii., 104-7.



Perhaps the best known and one of the most important charitable groups is the one formed by the sisters Hannah and Martha More, and assisted financially and in counsel by Wilberforce. The work was of a rudimentary kind—a Sunday school, and a school of industry usually. But these were begun and maintained in village after village to north and south of the Mendips, and even among the rough populations of the uplands. The anxiety to secure fitting teachers, the efforts to avert the hostile indifference, or gain the goodwill of the farmers, the frequent attempts to check such levities as dancing, the encouragements to well doing, the rebukes against misconduct—all these may be found in the vivacious narrative of Martha More.<sup>1</sup> Picnics were arranged for summer days: rewards were annually given too; and this business of prizes was a serious one, extending over several weeks, for the value of each gift was enhanced by an appropriate homily. Thus, for several years do these ladies support the part of representatives of providence in the country side, striving to bring home to an ignorant populace the advantages of virtue in a way that the less simple methods of nature had been unable to accomplish.

The influence of Mrs. Trimmer is not quite the same, but must not be overlooked. The works she furthered at Windsor or elsewhere are not her chief contribution; nor even the influence gained with ladies of the Court by her interviews with the Queen. Less distinguished it may be as an authoress than Hannah More, she is, yet more than her contemporary, the literary protagonist of this movement. By her “*Æconomy of Charity*” she inclined many ladies in many remote places to devote their leisure to teaching, clothing, or reproving the manners of the poor. She derives a higher claim from her tracts on teaching, from the school manuals which did something to improve the scholastic ideal, and more especially by her collections of pictures, the value of which for educational uses she was not slow to seize.

The independent efforts of isolated individuals must not be obscured. Many strands go to the making of this rope of

<sup>1</sup> “Mendip Annals . . . being the Journal of Martha More.”



charity. But the larger part of the work is due to a few workers, brought in one way or another into some loose relationship with each other, caught, as in the case of the Misses More, into the great world of philanthropy, by its most famous personage, the member for Yorkshire. Behind these, again, stands another figure, patiently collecting and publishing the innumerable reports. The centre of the activity of the time was the Society for Bettering the Condition of the Poor. The Bishop of Durham was one of its foremost supporters; the mainspring of its energy was Sir Thomas Bernard, whose important contribution to the theory of philanthropy will engage us in a subsequent chapter, but whose place in the working of the village charities must not wait without mention on the present page.



## CHAPTER XI.

## THE REVOLUTION : THRIFT AND SOUP.

THE promotion of thrift and the distribution of soup are commonly regarded as marking opposite poles of the philanthropic instinct. The two things are opposed to one another in modern thought, so that we should be equally startled to hear of the Charity Organisation Society opening a promiscuous food kitchen, or of a mission, where the distribution of bread at the close of a gospel service was usual, ordering a ream of "case papers." At first this discrepancy did not exist; thrift and soup were not symbols of competing principles; they were hardly even alternatives, but more properly merely complementary methods. To a large extent they have a common cause, and a common aim: they proceed from the same group of philanthropists.

The circumstance is a curious one, and requires some explanation. This is afforded when we glance at the strange state of nervousness engendered in this country by the outbreak of Revolution in France, and remember how life conditions here were aggravated by the famine prices which accompanied the Revolutionary wars.

The immediate effect of the political upheaval was seen in a serious panic of alarm, both among "persons of property" and the Government itself. The reaction made itself felt in a suspicion of philanthropic projects generally, and especially of anything that suggested in the mildest way the rights of man. Amongst the common people there was a partial, but not widespread, effect of another kind—a sensation of hope was aroused. The due subordination of the people seemed in danger. The directing mind of the Government was not



strong, and the nervous fear experienced was quite out of proportion to any real probability of violent change. At the same time something alarming to timid people must be allowed in such a squib as this :—" Behold ! O ! Britons. The wonderful love of our gracious Sovereign to his people ! For the death of Lewis of France the enemy of this country, George Geuilph showed the deepest sorrow ; abandoned his design of going to the play, and put on mourning ; but when fifteen of our countrymen were killed at the theatre . . . no such symptoms of sorrow appeared ; he enjoyed the performance as usual. What a proof of respect to a People who bestows on him £1,200,000 a year ! Who would not die for such a gracious King ! ! !" Pictorial representations of the guillotining of the King and similar subjects were also distributed, and, above all, papers were dispersed against property.<sup>1</sup> "Seditious" words—as No King, Liberty, Equality—were inscribed on the market crosses. The booksellers' shops teemed with "Patriotic Publications" by members of the National Convention of France. Feeling was not allayed by the parodies on these, as in advertisements of speeches by Mr. Praise God Barebones, Mr. Damned Barebones, Mr. Forlorn Tooke, and Mr. Oliver Cromwell, and "all sorts of seditious publications." And yet the popular excitement might have found a safe outlet in these ways. The coffee houses resounded with altercations : men in their cups toasted the Republic, and other like-minded men of opposite politics smashed their hats.<sup>2</sup> Responsible politicians went post haste to their constituencies to argue with their constituents. Thus in 1795 Wilberforce went down to York to deliver an oration against sedition ; Pitt had supplied him with a collection of "poisonous" literature for the occasion. This was not enough. The Minister sends after him an express with "further specimens." These reach him at Ferrybridge, and Wilberforce spends his time, he and his secretary, up to their knees in papers.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Wilberforce's "Life," ii., 113.

<sup>2</sup> See the "State Trials" for 1792-4.

<sup>3</sup> "Life," ii., 123.



There were deeds of affright, as well as words. Disturbances are related here and there. Some of these reflect the ferment of political thought, as when the excited crowd brandish in the face of cool-headed General Lambton the "little work" of Tom Paine.<sup>1</sup> Much more serious were the riots that sprang immediately from want, misery, unthinking rage. Machines were wrecked by hungry mechanics; warehouses were burnt at Birmingham. The Norfolk labourers resolve "that the labourer is worthy of his hire" and proceed to burn the ricks, moved it would seem by an obscure sense that the part is greater than the whole, or at least that their share of it might be larger. From east and west and south and north, men call out for bread, and the country is disturbed with reports of savage famine-stricken crowds.<sup>2</sup>

The State Trials of the period are full of instruction. They show how thoroughly the Government had been frightened. The perusal of Paine's "Rights of Man" hardly quickens our pulse to-day. It was different then. The Attorney-General, bowed down with a sense of responsibility, having perused the first part, refrains from arraigning it as a seditious libel, because he deems it will be confined to "judicious readers." But the offence of the second part is aggravated. It was published in a cheap 6*d.* edition, and the morals of the poor needed guarding. The sixpenny venture apparently hung fire, for the sheets were used in another than the original purpose: "even children's sweetmeats were wrapped up in its leaves." The peril of these sticky scraps of paper, with their detached sentences of sedition, determined to action. The combination of sweetmeats and sedition was intolerable, quite.<sup>3</sup> And the book was condemned.

The less well-known case of Duffin and Lloyd, debtors in the Fleet, is even more instructive. Paine was a serious controversialist, calling for a reply, even though a trial for libel may not have been a quite convincing refutation. But

<sup>1</sup> Wilberforce's "Life," ii., 2.

<sup>2</sup> Cunningham, "English Industry and Commerce," ii., 345, 497; Leslie Stephen, "English Utilitarians," i., 100.

<sup>3</sup> "State Trials," xxii., 381.



surely public agitation could not be allayed by dragging into prominence the wit of these recluses. "This house to let; peaceable possession will be given by the present tennants, on or before the 1st day of January, 1793, being the commencement of the first year of liberty in Great Britain."<sup>1</sup> A sound judgment would have left this in obscurity. To publish everywhere such output of a prisoner's idleness indicates a nervous instability which can no longer balance means and ends together. To assert, on the chapel door of the Fleet, "The Republic of France, having rooted out despotism, their glorious example and success against tyrants, render infamous bastilles no longer necessary in Europe," may have been reprehensible, and would certainly be regarded as an offence against prison discipline, had such a thing existed, but hardly rises to the dignity of a State Trial.

The benevolent theories of Godwin, the ingenious utterances of harmless Horne Tooke, do not suggest a force likely to subvert the "incomparable constitution." Even the Corresponding Societies and the Societies of Constitutional information, numbering, though they did, some men of inflammable disposition and a tremendous seriousness, did in effect claim nothing but the mildest political palliatives.<sup>2</sup> But it was no longer permissible to assert that man as an individual is entitled to liberty, or that it is the duty of individuals to keep watchful eye on the Government, or that representation is corrupt and unequal. Such sentiments drew men within the meshes of the law, as rather to be crushed than confuted.<sup>3</sup> One is led to wonder why Mr. Paley, judged "as loose in his politics as he is in his religion," or Bentham, regarded as "dangerous," escaped.<sup>4</sup>

Underneath all this a more drastic criticism was being formulated. The little book, throbbing with stern indignation, from which we choose to illustrate the sentiment, was not published until some years after the first panic, when the

<sup>1</sup> "State Trials," xxii., 321.

<sup>2</sup> Stephen, "English Utilitarians," i., 128.

<sup>3</sup> See Hardy's "Manifesto of the London Corresponding Society" (1792).

<sup>4</sup> Wilberforce, ii., 3; Stephen, "Utilitarians," i., 188.



epidemic of State Trials had rather abated. Neither from the law officers nor from anybody else does it seem to have attracted much notice. Its value lies in the terseness with which it expresses an adverse judgment, not on obvious abuses of the constitution such as provoked the eloquence of an Erskine, but on those principles of society which all parties accepted, and especially on those very virtues which the philanthropists fostered. Everybody accepted the division into rich and poor as at once providential and convenient; everyone, except Charles Hall, and it may be some others, mostly of those who do not set their thoughts in books. But this common-sense faith is to be challenged. "This false notion," we read, "viz., that the state of the poor is necessarily such as it is, has had ill effects. The wealthy, thus considering the matter, have thought themselves under no obligation to relieve the poor, but always imagine what little they do for them to be a work of supererogation, and for which they sufficiently applaud themselves; but if they see that the situation of the poor is occasioned by themselves, is the express act of theirs, and that they are the true cause of all their afflictions, they will then have a different idea of the claim the poor have on them."<sup>1</sup> The criticism is carried into more minute detail. One of the most fashionable expedients of philanthropists at the end of the century was the restriction placed by the rich on their own consumption of bread. The object was two-fold: to check the rise in price by lessening the consumption; and to prove to the poor the genuineness of their sympathy. How does the matter present itself to the lonely medical man, Charles Hall? "What were the articles in which the rich abridged themselves? none, I believe, were thought of but that of bread . . . There were very few even that pretended to do more . . . of bread little is used among the luxurious or their servants; of course, little can be saved from it. This, I fear, the rich made choice of, not because it was the most proper

<sup>1</sup> Charles Hall, "Effects of Civilisation on the People in European States," p. 110.



article, but because it was the least sacrifice, and required the least self-denial. A few ounces only of bread are eaten at a meal by the luxurious"; but in their soups, sauces, stews, etc., large quantities of animal food. A still greater saving might have been made by the rich in the oats given to their horses. "But this, though pointed out, was not put in practice—this would have reduced the condition and high order of their horses; and to have seen the horses in that state, would have given more pain than it did to see the thin, pale, squalid faces of the poor."<sup>1</sup>

There is no evidence of Hall's book having come under the eye of any of the philanthropists; nor did its arguments apparently exert any effect on public opinion. But this book is instructive for us here because it states what many, especially of the poor, must have felt. The last passage especially has every appearance of gathering up a popular complaint, a popular contempt. With such a sentiment the poor man would not be thankful, and we hear a good deal of the need to stimulate the gratitude of the poor for what was given them. A sullen dissatisfaction was rife even after the turmoil of hope and fear aroused by the events of 1792 had passed away. The country had regained its balance. The upper classes were no longer, at the close of the century, in an acute state of panic. But an impression had been made which did not entirely vanish. The dread of popular violence had come to sharpen the preoccupation which had previously existed for an amelioration of the conditions of the destitute. The country, including the philanthropists, stood consciously face to face with "their neglected fellow-creatures, *The Pagan Inhabitants*," recognised as calling at once for pity and fear.

This double sentiment is to be considered in its bearing on the rather strange double development of philanthropy. Whether the method chosen was the promotion of thrift or the distribution of soup, the effect hoped for was the same. Popular distress must be relieved: popular discontent must

<sup>1</sup> "Effects of Civilisation," pp. 187-9



be allayed. In the one case reliance was placed on the simple sedative of a warm meal, for "it is ill arguing with a hungry man." In the other case, the means adopted indicate a more subtle reflection, viz., on the influence likely to hold sway over the mind of the man who had left even a small deposit in the hands of a patron. But subtly or simply conceived, the aim was the same: while helping him over a difficulty, to rivet his sense of dependence and, if it might be so, of gratitude.

### I. THRIFT AND FEAR.

The promotion of thrift was one of the leading branches of work fostered by the Society for Bettering the Conditions of the Poor. It seems unnecessary to accumulate evidence beyond what is given in the last chapter. One general observation applies to all these undertakings. They were for the poor: they were under the control of the rich. The later movement, in which the whole business was managed by the workers, did not fail to arouse dismal forebodings, and would have seemed still more intolerable to a generation not yet recovered from the immediate fear of republicanism. Very frequently these early patronised thrift clubs were under the management of the minister of the parish; sometimes the rules provide that the club shall be governed by honorary, to the exclusion of ordinary or beneficiary members. This mingling of classes was expected to prevent any wild excess. The problem was, to improve the lot of the poor without placing in their hands what, in the absence of control, might prove a weapon of subversion. Even so stern a critic as Hall, while he called for remedy, argues that this remedy should be applied by the rich because the poor would be too violent in their action.<sup>1</sup>

This experimental inculcation of thrift was part of the educational aim of the society. The poor had been left too long in ignorance. And the thrift society was also a means

<sup>1</sup> "Effects of Civilisation," p. 173.



of instruction. The school also was to be a means of familiarising the poor with habits of forethought; and this was to assume the force of an "inveterate habit." The general argument is well illustrated by Sir Thomas Bernard: "amid the tremendous convulsions which have for some time agitated Europe, let us reflect how much of the evil is to be attributed to an improvident neglect in the education of the poor; a neglect which has left them a defenceless prey to the sophistry and delusion of the teachers of infidelity, and of the disseminators of sedition. Ignorant, unprincipled, incapable of giving a reason for their faith, or of explaining the reason of civil order and society, to what miseries have not the poor in many parts of Europe been exposed?"<sup>1</sup> The great principle of civil order at this time was self-help: this was the faith to be quickened and nurtured by school or thrift society. Self-help under suitable guidance and control.

This thrift movement, even thus carefully guarded, could not escape suspicion. It was the mark of a liberal mind to trust the poor even so far. All manner of social peril was seen lurking in any attempt to free them from the immediate bite of hunger. The movement was not entirely a party one dividing Whig from Tory, but among the old guard of Toryism, as among employers of labour, it excited bitter opposition. We read of one case in which the rector was unable to bank the few small sums he had succeeded in gathering, owing to the hostility of the district, and was obliged to make a journey of ten miles for the purpose. Chalmers, to whom we owe this incident, writes as though in his day the force of prejudice was failing, but there were still some of the aristocracy who eyed the savings banks with jealousy; and, as he tells us, "an apprehension has been felt, in certain quarters, lest savings banks should arm the mechanics and workmen of our land with a dangerous power."<sup>2</sup> On the contrary, as he reflected, a minute organisation of small districts by rich patrons served greatly to

<sup>1</sup> R. S. B. P., ii., 318.

<sup>2</sup> "Christian and Civic Economy," ii., 233 n.; iii., 112, 265.



divide and weaken the force of popular violence. Thus did the same fear of popular discontent lead on the one hand to the promotion, on the other to the angry criticism, of the principle of thrift.

## 2. SOUP KITCHENS.

Mrs. Trimmer was writing in special reference to the numerous cheap-food charities then springing up, but in general view of all efforts of the kind for the relief of the poor, whether by improving their diet or their manners, when she urged the necessity of a universal practice of charity among the professors of a holy religion; and these she argued, were more especially necessary "in times when attempts are continually making to destroy all subordination in society, and to overturn all institutions, human and divine." The motive of social defence was everywhere present at the close of the century. At the same time, it would be an entire mistake to regard it as the only motive for either branch of the charitable efforts. The soup kitchens sprang up as an immediate reply to a pressing want. The nation was threatened with famine and must be fed. But the movement, though it arose rapidly in response to an emergency was not due entirely to that. It had long been maturing: it was part of a national policy. As early as 1780, perhaps much earlier, we find what has since been so often used, the pictorial appeal: the interior of a room bare, dirty, destitute, with its almost uncovered fever-stricken human beings crowding the miserable bed. It was a challenge to the sentiment of the age not to be passed by. From such efforts as this to arouse pity we may trace the sight, often afterwards to be dwelt upon, of "gentlemen entering the hovel of the poor man, and ladies sympathising in the chambers of the poor woman."<sup>1</sup> The soup movement in its turn had much to do with the later visiting societies; but the less formal visitation of the poor

<sup>1</sup> Lettsom, "Hints," i., p. 5; p. 33.



by the rich had previously prepared the way for the food charities.

These were also conditioned by the national policy of finding cheap substitutes for wheaten bread at a time when the price of corn had become wellnigh prohibitive. Mr. Colquhoun, at the desire of the Lords of the Council, had drawn up suggestions for the founding of soup kitchens, and these papers had been distributed broadcast throughout the country. The Board of Agriculture had published recipes for boiling and steaming potatoes, the favourite substitute for bread; recipes also for a mash of potato and cabbage, for cabbage soup and barley broth. These had been gathered up and received the benediction of Lettsom's<sup>1</sup> industrious pen. These or similar proposals, as for ox-head stew, had been circulated even earlier by Sir Thomas Bernard.

The earliest actual experiment in popularising the use of these soups in London is by Count Rumford, the inventor of the improved oven and cooking range. This cookshop was hard by the Foundling Hospital, in Guilford Street. The room was small, only 15 feet by 11 feet, but it was capable, on the Count's plan, of providing meals for three hundred people—"good and wholesome food for the poor, at a very moderate price in money, or upon tickets given them by their opulent and charitable neighbours."<sup>2</sup> The scheme was extensively imitated. The details need not delay us, for soup—especially charity soup—may be judged by sample. Immense quantities were consumed, whether the 6,000 quarts a week at Birmingham, the 1,232,254 pints, the winter's sale at four London kitchens, or the smaller consumption of country villages.<sup>3</sup> Benevolent people were assured, whatever evils might attend other kinds of charity, that if they would divert their money into this channel they would prevent "the abuse

<sup>1</sup> "Hints," i., 58, 95, 143 f.

<sup>2</sup> "Account of the Kitchen fitted up at the Foundling Hospital, under the direction of His Excellency Count Rumford."

<sup>3</sup> R. S. B. P., i., 81; Lettsom's "Hints," vol. i., p. 101.



of it." So convinced is each philanthropist that his own scheme is innocuous.<sup>1</sup>

The method was simple. "When a soup house is in contemplation in any particular district of the metropolis, it has been the usual custom for a few of the most respectable inhabitants to invite (by means of a short address explanatory of the design) a general meeting of all the reputable housekeepers."<sup>2</sup> Occasionally the leisure of the committee permitted a house to house visitation of "all applicants for soup," and when this was possible it revealed a useful knowledge of the lives of the poor and assisted to a "proper discrimination" of cases.<sup>3</sup>

The soup kitchens were used as an inducement to the poor to attend the free churches then being opened. Sunday gifts were distributed entitling the attendants to receive their next Sunday dinner from the neighbouring "soup shop." But these were only given to people on the "orderly list." The plan was expected to bring people to the services. "Let us not," it is advised, "with too nice a scrutiny inquire into the *motives* which incline them," for their appearance at church will gradually win back the people alienated from their ministers by various seductions, especially when the difference is perceived between those who come not and those who for their coming are "noticed by their superiors and rewarded accordingly."<sup>4</sup>

The soup kitchens continued after the first emergency had passed, indeed, from time to time their number has been increased, for there is always a population from which the emergency of hunger never does pass away. But they led to a mode of relief of a slightly less casual sort. The visiting societies of the years 1798—1800 are the forerunner of the missions which became numerous a generation later, and their aims and methods are largely the same. To yield relief, to learn by visiting the normal poverty of the poor,

<sup>1</sup> "Account of Kitchen . . . Foundling Hospital," p. 3.

<sup>2</sup> "Hints," i., p. 102.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 116.

<sup>4</sup> Trimmer's "Æconomy of Charity," ii., 232, 238-239, 241-251.



and to endeavour by encouragement or reproof to promote cleanliness, thrift and other virtues—these ends are common to most of the societies late or early. Sometimes the society was minutely organised into its several committees. The visitors were to aid the visited families with advice, were to “discourage idleness,” and hold out rewards to industry, but were not themselves to give relief without the previous assent of the district meeting.<sup>1</sup> Another method, though with the same intention, was also adopted. One report informs us, with charming simplicity, that over 3,000 families had been visited on an average four times in the year; that the fund was but some £1,600, which means that “not more than 2s. 6d. can have been given at each visit.” This plan is so much simpler that one cannot but suspect that it was more frequently practised, and we find here the origin of the since so familiar half-crown visitor to the poor.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> R. S. B. P., ii., 343–362.

<sup>2</sup> “The Nature, Design, and Rules of the Benevolent, or Strangers’ Friend Society” (1806), p. 5.



## CHAPTER XII.

CHARACTERISTICS OF EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY  
PHILANTHROPY.

OUR account of the important series of movements for the alleviation of distress, which began in the reign of Charles II. and continued throughout the eighteenth century, is now complete, so far at least as the details of particular charities is concerned. But some general observations suggested by the narratives have been left over because they can be more conveniently considered now, after the particulars have been sorted into their proper classes. Such a rapid survey as is here intended will serve incidentally to bring into clearer prominence some of the large features common to several philanthropic groups or to numerous special forms of activity. In addition to this, we shall be enabled to watch the working of the philanthropic spirit in its own process of reflection on its own problems, and this should yield us some insight into the strength and weakness of philanthropy as an instrument of social amelioration.

The activities of the century fall into three separate divisions, each with its own specific object. The age was faced in the first place by what may be described as the normal or standard condition of poverty. At the close of the century this question came within the range of associated philanthropy. But for the most part the philanthropic provision for poverty uncomplicated by other circumstances of distress was either of a quite casual kind or was in connection with the endowed charities or the poor law. On this point nothing need be added to what has already been said.

The second division includes the attempts to humanise the



condition of two somewhat similar classes—the prisoners and the slaves. There were other movements, as on behalf of the chimney-climbing boys, obviously an almost equally helpless class, if the indenture did not technically constitute the child the slave of his master. In these instances a method was adopted, entirely original at that time in the history of philanthropy. The method of agitation has since become familiar, but it was and remained in a sense an exotic in the eighteenth century. It is a forethought of a later period. This point, equally with the first, does not seem to call for further notice at present.

There is a third group distinct alike in method and object from the first two. The method is that of private philanthropic association: the end aimed at, the relief of some special disability or kind of distress. The hospital charities may be regarded as typical of this third, and by far the most important class. If the treatment of poverty was unoriginal and for the most part stupid, and if the method chosen by the advocates of prison reform is, as I have suggested, characteristic rather of the nineteenth than the eighteenth century, there is yet left, as constituting the interest and the value of this period, the development of the possibilities inherent in private philanthropic associations. The movements of this type were far from coming to an end at or anywhere about the year 1800, but during the one hundred and twenty years preceding that arbitrary dividing line they formed an unbroken series, and they express as no other set of events does express, the benevolent intention of the age. It is the characteristic features of these associations which we propose to trace.

But on the threshold we are met by a difficulty. In speaking of the movement of the one hundred and twenty years or so that followed the early religious societies, or the first Quaker charity school, as forming a series, we are brought into conflict with an authority so justly respected as that of Mr. Lecky, and this makes it necessary to state with some fullness the grounds for holding an opinion contrary to his. Briefly, a comparison of dates convinces me that the view here taken is the correct one.



The eighteenth century, according to Mr. Lecky, falls, for purposes of a history of philanthropy, into three periods. There was first a time of active charity, chiefly of an ecclesiastical founding—the “clerical reaction” under Anne; this was followed by the years from 1714 to 1760 when all these enthusiasms had “gradually subsided, while the philanthropic and reforming spirit, which in the nineteenth century has in a great degree taken their place, was almost absolutely unfelt.” Some few exceptions are mentioned, but on the whole this middle period is sharply distinguished both from the preceding period and the following one, which began with the reign of George the Third, during which the reforming and philanthropic spirit again became conspicuous.<sup>1</sup> Mr. Lecky’s paragraphs on this subject are short and brilliant, and in many ways instructive. The temper of the philanthropists who became prominent during the reign of Anne is very different from that which follows. There was an increased activity during the reign of George III. The work of Sharp and his successors falls entirely within it. Howard also belongs to this period, and it was not until after his work had told that much effectual prison reform was accomplished. Howard’s precursor, Oglethorpe, is mentioned by Mr. Lecky as one of the exceptions to his general judgment of the period—death of Anne to accession of George III.<sup>2</sup> In one passage the description of the sterility of this period—1714-1760—is less sweeping, and is confined to philanthropy in the sphere of politics. The Parliamentary grant of £100,000 in 1755, for relief of the Portuguese after the great earthquake, is mentioned by Mr. Lecky as almost the only instance of warm and disinterested philanthropy in the sphere of politics. It must be remembered, however, that the grants for the Foundling Hospital date from almost the same year, and even if this be not disinterested, it is unnecessary to doubt the warmth of the impulse. The earlier grants

<sup>1</sup> History of England, i., 467, 498-503.

<sup>2</sup> Oglethorpe, however, was not alone. He forms as it were a link in the chain connecting Mr. Shute or the heretic Firmin with Mrs. Fry and later prison philanthropists.



for the founding of Oglethorpe's labour colony in Georgia are still more in point; for in this case the benefit was not confined to our own poor, but shared by many German refugees.

I have already noticed the changed mood of the philanthropists of the middle of the century from that of those who lived in the reign of Anne; this change may be described as a decline of enthusiasm and rancour. While the charitable efforts of the High Church party were put forth chiefly with a view to a theological end, the primary intention of the founders of, *e.g.*, the hospitals, is the relief or cure of disease. At the same time it would be a misreading of history to suppose that philanthropy was at any part of the period confined to members of one sect. Charities closely connected with the Established Church are numerous before 1714. The Anglicans were very active, and just because their activities were the most numerous they lend a character to the period. But even at that time the work of the Quakers, and of Firmin, to name no others, indicates the existence of another motive. On the whole I believe the direct and immediate influence of religious *opinion* on philanthropy is apt to be exaggerated. The religious influence exists and is strong, but it is very largely indirect, acting chiefly through the tone it imparts to character.

It is hardly possible to regard these years—1714-1760—as barren when it is remembered that they can claim all the London general hospitals of the century, the only Foundling Hospital, the first dispensaries, the early penitentiaries for girls and reformatories for boys, besides orphanages for children, hospitals for special diseases, and numerous charities founded by the foreign residents in London, not without aid from British subscribers. These same years also witnessed the earlier provincial hospitals, and although these became more numerous during the reign of George III., this is no more than might be expected in a movement that naturally gathers momentum as it proceeds. I venture, therefore, to regard the various charitable institutions of one hundred and twenty years as forming one series of



events. There were subsidiary differences of temper from time to time; but we do not find that the work was at any time monopolised by any one party. The workers were sometimes animated by motives of mutual rivalry. It was, perhaps, more frequently the case that people whose opinions were mutually scandalous were brought together on a common basis of benevolence. But with few and unimportant pauses the series of societies continued to increase in number from its beginning, about 1680, until and indeed long after the close of the eighteenth century. And the common feature in all these societies is to be found in the reliance placed on the association of voluntary subscribers for a charitable purpose. The outward symbol of this faith is the customary subscription list.

## 1. THE PHILANTHROPIC PUBLIC.

The growing perception of need for a more complete and more flexible apparatus of relief, which is characteristic of the period, indicated and is founded on a keener sensitiveness to human suffering. Some fresh impulse of charity as an inward quality of soul must be assumed. Without it we cannot explain the facts. But if we should go further and ask to what extent and in what force this spirit was dominant, the answer would be difficult, or, more probably, impossible. Charity is hardly capable of quantitative measurement. Biographical insight may discern it as powerful, or very powerful, or as it may be, comparatively inoperative, in a given individual. In dealing with masses of men even so much accuracy cannot be hoped for. This new spring of humanity arose, and, we may be sure, arose first in the hearts of the few. Even in them it is doubly obscured—obscured, firstly, by that callousness to which I have alluded. The age was a brutal one in its pleasures and its punishments, coarse in its tastes and its habits. The philanthropists, if they were in advance of their age, yet did not, apparently, feel called to any striking or effectual protest



against the normal roughness of life. We are reminded that every gain in humanity is fragmentary. Much that is evil and at the same time familiar passes without objection, even while in one direction a stronger impulse to the good is followed. The force of the charitable impulse is further obscured by being mixed with certain secondary sentiments of a less admirable kind, which it will be necessary to examine ; yet not forgetting the existence of the nobler emotion.

The philanthropic reports contain many passages that provoke a smile and some that are of a repellent character. This is probably to be accounted for by the necessity under which this kind of literary composition labours of proceeding on a false presupposition. In theory, society consists of a large number of charitable people ; in fact, the number of those who can properly be so described is a small one. The few who are really in earnest in their desire to alleviate distress even at the cost of a considerable expenditure of time and money, are surrounded by a multitude of persons who are willing to assist but only provided they can do so at no great inconvenience to themselves. This lower power of sympathy passes gradually through the stage of languid interest to complete indifference.<sup>1</sup> But the number who can be prevailed on to become subscribers varies with the force of appeal that is addressed to them. The amount of a subscription is determined on the same principle. One of the most potent devices of the charity report writer is therefore to create in the minds of those who are not charitable, or charitable only in the slightest degree, a flattering illusion of their own virtue. The following is a good specimen in this style :—" Let it not be surmised that the committee are of opinion that those who gave on this occasion, did it with a view that their good works might here be recorded ; they are amply convinced that humanity, not meaner motives,

<sup>1</sup> The theory is further vitiated by the many subscribers who are moved only by business consideration, as *e.g.*, a fear of being thought less liberal than a trade rival. See M. de Lévis's "*L'Angleterre*," p. 152.



prompted to this benevolence. Justice, nevertheless, is due to all, and to those who are entitled to rewards by well doing, more particularly." Then follow the subscription list.<sup>1</sup> The value of a high sounding rhetoric disguised as modesty was soon discovered. "A needless pomp of words would rather obscure, than illustrate this design; the utility and humanity of which, all, who have the smallest attention, or tenderness, cannot fail to comprehend." Yet the vocabulary of the few preceding lines contains such "needless pomp of words" as "so frightful," "inevitable," "utmost confusion," "inhuman," "so glorious," "so compassionate."<sup>2</sup>

Appeals to the vanity or crude literary taste of some, were supplemented by appeals to the common sense of others. Nothing is more common than to suggest that whatever may be said of other schemes, the particular charity that is being recommended is undoubtedly of the highest value and not liable to abuse. At the end of the century soup kitchens were advocated on both these grounds. Again, there is an appearance of dealing frankly with the plain man on the score of expense. "It will do much more good with much less expense than any other charity." In this respect the method of the eighteenth century is not quite similar to that of the present time. Now, as then, attention is drawn to the great amount of good that can be done at a cheap rate; but whereas it has now been discovered that the public likes to give small sums towards a great total, the earlier policy was to minimise the cost rather than to magnify it. Perhaps it has been proved that it is not more difficult to get two-thirds of a large than of a small sum.

The committees who were responsible for the appeals were probably unconsciously influenced by the need to reach the largest possible number of purses. But they can hardly have been entirely imposed on by their own eloquence and

<sup>1</sup> "Proceedings of the Committee . . . Relieving Poor Germans" (1764).

<sup>2</sup> "An Account of the . . . Hospital . . . for Small Pox" (1753); cf. "Numbers, I am persuaded, amongst my countrymen, famed through every nation for their extreme humanity. . . .;" "Proposals for . . . Place of Reception for Penitent Prostitutes" (1758).



must have known that the language in which the donors were described was not applicable to all who gave. The illusion which they suffered under or assumed may have been fostered by the fact that their own interest in philanthropy was not inconsiderable. But, whatever the explanation, exaggeration, reaching sometimes to insincerity, is one of the features of these reports. This may have been necessary in order to gain the proposed end because it is certain that when people are left to assess their own taxes there is a strong tendency to underestimate them, a tendency to be counteracted by the violence of the appeal. Yet withal, strong as is the language of the appeals, this difficulty was far from being overcome.

## 2. THE INNER CIRCLE.

A more serious consideration is that of the reaction of report writing on the inner circle of philanthropists themselves. Members of committee were usually prominent subscribers who also devoted some share of time to the charity. It was difficult to avoid a feeling that they were not less praiseworthy than the others. And this feeling takes the form of a certain unjustified complacency with their own work. This sentiment is inherent in human nature. Attention is fixed, and necessarily so, on what is being done to the partial oversight of what is still not done. "The utility of public hospitals, is of late years too well understood, to need any recital of the benefits that attend them. It is certain the poor are thereby assisted with advice, medicine, and every necessary to restore them to health."<sup>1</sup> But the important questions were, how many of those who needed such assistance could obtain it, was provision being made to supplement the work in hospital by such after care as would really complete the cure? And such questions as these are obscured by an over facile complacency. It is not easy for ordinary men to take broad views of things while actually engaged

<sup>1</sup> "An Account . . . of the Lock Hospital" (1749).



in the details of administration: a certain narrowness of vision may be essential to immediate success. Nevertheless the feelings of self-satisfaction to which I have referred led to an unfortunate result, which may be described as the illusion of simplicity. A problem which was difficult was thought to be easy, an enterprise that was costly was regarded as cheap, a task that would tax the resources of the nation was supposed to be within the means of casual benefactors or charity concert balances and the leisure time of private committee men.

### 3. PATRONAGE.

Another motive that influenced alike the managers of the charities and the subscribers was the love of power. Bernard has some indignant remarks on this subject prompted by the difficulty he experienced in gaining support for his Fever Hospital. According to the plan of this institution all patients were to be admitted gratuitously, because they needed treatment, not because it would be the pleasure of some third party for them to be healed. This scheme, he says, excludes "all Patronage. There are no earnest calls to be expected for a Governor's vote and interest, or for his proxy,—to exonerate some opulent individual from the support of a superannuated and helpless dependant; and there is, therefore, less of personal consequence and personal interest, to be acquired by a subscription to this charity."<sup>1</sup> Bernard, who was intimately acquainted with the philanthropic world, assigns this absence of patronage as the cause of failure. His judgment, that a love of patronage is at the root of much so-called charity, is confirmed by a remark of Alcock's some half-century earlier. "It's greatly for the interest of charity," he writes, "that the objects of it should be respectful and grateful. We think our kindness in a manner repaid, when it is thankfully received: It's a pleasure then to have done it, and an incitement to do more."<sup>2</sup> The

<sup>1</sup> "Report of the Society for Bettering the Condition of the Poor," v., 186.

<sup>2</sup> "Observations," p. 15.



opinion is further supported by the tenor of a large number of reports that I have read. The need to foster this sense of adventitious superiority may account for the letters of thanks which patients were instructed to write to their patrons. In addition to regarding themselves as the benefactors of the poor, we are assured that supporters of these institutions enjoyed a sense of superiority over their non-subscribing neighbours.<sup>1</sup>

#### 4. THE ILLUSION OF CHEAPNESS.

Our judgment of the importance of charitable undertakings is largely determined by the point of view taken. We may turn our regard chiefly to the record of what has been achieved or attempted, and in this case the list of eighteenth-century charities is an imposing one, especially when we remember that they form the beginning of the modern philanthropic movement. They indicate a wide range of sympathy and considerable pertinacity of effort. It would be unfair to form an adverse judgment, because the provision failed to overcome the need within a limited number of years. On the other hand it is necessary to regard the subject from the social point of view and to take a survey of what is required. When we have first estimated what is wanted and only then turn to notice what is supplied, the record ceases to be imposing on account of its obvious inadequacy. It is from the latter standpoint that this book is mainly written, and it is fair to recall what has been illustrated in the foregoing narrative, viz., that the philanthropists were constantly on the outlook for fresh directions into which their energies might go. The development, as has been shown, is continuous. Each observed defect leads to fresh effort. But in each new experiment the old error is made of supposing that a costly undertaking can be cheap.

<sup>1</sup> See Chalmers' "Christian and Civic Economy," i., 163-4: "It is somewhat amusing to observe how the yearly subscriber of one guinea to some favourite scheme of philanthropy, thereby purchases to himself the right of stigmatizing every cold-blooded spectator who refuses his concurrence."



Accordingly every effort in turn proves to be inadequate. And this is partly due to the preference of the philanthropists for the first point of view, that of work done, rather than for the second, or an estimate of work required. So much in reference to the attitude adopted in regard to individual undertakings.

When we turn to the general question we find a very strong tendency to the over hasty assumption that every thing is well accomplished. Writing only shortly after the close of the century in his history of Charity, Highmore tells us that there "is not a disease that can afflict human nature nor a want which the varying condition of man can require . . . but finds an open asylum, a resort ready prepared with every needful accommodation for reception, comfort, instruction, and cure, and, with the exception of a very few cases, entirely free of expense."<sup>1</sup> The passage is a good summing up of a prevalent mode of thought, and is to be regretted, just because premature satisfaction is an obstacle in the way of thorough execution. It represents an unthinking attitude that had long been common, and is the superficial result of that process of taking stock of philanthropy which we find towards the close of our period.

## 5. EXHAUSTION AND DISILLUSION.

A different and more disconcerting reflection presented itself when men reflected upon what they had been doing. The optimism of two generations was giving way to a sad disillusioning of a third. A passage from Colquhoun, the magistrate, illustrates this: "Reflecting on the foregoing list of various laudable institutions which it cannot be expected should be altogether perfect, but which may be said to be unparalleled in point of extent, as well as munificence, and conferring the highest honour on the national character for charity and humanity; the mind is lost in astonishment, that greater and more extensive benefits have

<sup>1</sup> "Pietas Londinensis," i., xxv. The author was himself a prominent actor in the philanthropic world.



not arisen to the inhabitants of the metropolis."<sup>1</sup> This utterance reflects the sense of disappointment that was becoming oppressive about the year 1800. The feeling is in part a natural reaction from the bright visions of easy triumph indulged in a little earlier. It was accompanied by, and perhaps in part resulted from, a sense of financial exhaustion. The indications of this, an increasing difficulty in obtaining funds, are numerous. The experience gained in the case of the Foundling Hospital had been forgotten. The result of Parliamentary grants had then been to impair the source of private donations. When the same rule was seen to apply in the case of the Fever Hospital there was a feeling of discouragement as at the unexpected. The difficulty of getting supplies is illustrated by the keener style in which institutions bid against one another,<sup>2</sup> and the supporters of one institution are accused of being indifferent or hostile to others. Under the name of economy cheaper processes were advocated, since "waste in charities exhausts and annihilates those funds."<sup>3</sup> The exhaustion is seen in another instance, viz., the difficulty of procuring stewards for festivals, and active committees, which is described at the beginning of the nineteenth century and made itself felt earlier. Such causes as the terror inspired by the French Revolution, and the famine prices experienced in the last years of the century, together with the long lasting and extreme misery caused by foreign wars all assisted to sharpen the process of criticism and discontent through which the philanthropists were passing. The disillusion would inevitably have come even had it not been thus accelerated, for it is to be regarded as a natural phase in the historical development. Dissatisfaction was the necessary outcome of an earlier excessive hopefulness that had not justified itself by adequate efforts. How striking is the contrast between 1737 and 1803! In the former year the Governors of St.

<sup>1</sup> "Police of Metropolis" (7th ed.), pp. 575-6.

<sup>2</sup> E.g., "Plan and Reports of Royal Humane Society" (1775), pp. 44-5; R. S. B. P., v., 187

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, iv., 55.



George's Hospital reassure their subscribers with the remark that "the number of proper objects is amply sufficient to employ the bounty of the rich"; in the latter Bernard is convinced that "the necessities and sufferings of man will ever produce claims and demands beyond the power of satisfaction."<sup>1</sup> Certainly there has been an evolution in philanthropic reflection during these two generations.

## 6. HISTORY AND SCIENCE OF PHILANTHROPY.

The reaction just described was accompanied by numerous attempts to write the history and deduce a doctrine of the science of philanthropy. An era of perplexity is naturally one also of enquiry. But just as the crisis might have been anticipated without the French Revolution, so investigation would have become necessary apart from the crisis. One of the significant issues from the growing preoccupation with problems of philanthropy was the professional philanthropist. In an earlier age, the charitable trustee had usually avoided this character by regarding his responsibilities in a cavalier manner. Among those who themselves distributed their alms in their own lifetime, some devoted a great amount of time and thought to this business. But these were individual workers acting in a tolerably complete isolation from one another. The character of what they did was determined by their own native capacity, and there was little of that interchange of thought which helps to crystallize experience into doctrine.<sup>2</sup> The opportunity for this came with the subscription list, the body of governors, and the formation of the weekly committees. Not that the term professional applies to all committee men. But there were commonly within this smaller circle one or two individuals who took a more constant interest in administration, who were probably large subscribers to the funds, and who might often be the

<sup>1</sup> In R. S. B. P.

<sup>2</sup> What is here said does not, of course, apply to such public policy as that, *e.g.*, of setting the poor on work in the seventeenth century. But it would be stretching the term to speak of the Privy Council as a body of professional philanthropists.



initiators of the undertaking. These men were in frequent communication with one another, at first chiefly for decision of the details of one institution, but then, also, by and by for discussion of larger questions of policy. And just as in the commercial world the same person may be a director of many companies, so one individual might sit on several committees, and even be the leading spirit in the direction of numerous undertakings. But when a group of people find their mutual and continuous occupation over a common datum of experience, we have the condition that naturally leads to reflection—theory about it. We have had evidence already that during the eighteenth century this co-operation of philanthropists was resulting in the diffusion of a general type of charitable administration. It was in matters of routine that the first consensus of opinion was gained. There are few traces of the emergence during this period of the more important problems that are troubling the publicists of the present day. Nor need we expect to find them all anticipated in the discussions which, at the close of the period, were directed towards the establishment of what was named “The New Philosophy.”<sup>1</sup> Yet we shall find, as a result of the informal conferences of governors, and the hints towards a theory contained in some of the reports, a broader comprehension of the problem than that contained in the “Address to Persons of Quality” written eighty years before.

The way had been prepared for a history of philanthropy by such enquiries and publications as those of Oglethorpe, Howard, Sharp, Clarkson, Hanway and others. Oglethorpe's investigations had been embodied in the Parliamentary Journals; the others were authors in their own name. Their work was largely descriptive, but, even so, as in the case of Howard, it included the whole western civilisation, and Clarkson was led into long historical and legal discussions. Work such as this explains the noticeable difference between the earlier and some of the later reports: those were short, commonly of three or four pages only; a

<sup>1</sup> R. S. B. P., iii., 2.



paragraph might be allowed for general considerations, but they dealt almost entirely with the work of the particular institution, and the need for funds for carrying it on; many of the later reports are little volumes dealing, as one of them expresses it, not only with facts but with reasonings; and they endeavour to regard their own object in its relation to the universe. But they have one feature in common with the earlier reports and the writers just mentioned. They are concerned primarily with a single institution, or at least a single abuse calling for a particular remedy. Their immediate aim is practical.

One of the most ambitious of these essays in philanthropy is embodied in the reports of the Philanthropic Society.<sup>1</sup> They are long, they are rather dull. A good deal of information may be dug out of them; but they bristle with arguments and didactic passages. The author is Robert Young, the director of the industrial or reformatory school. The aim of the society, we are told, was rather in the nature of police than of charity, the object being to rescue the young children of vicious parents from bad surroundings, and bring them up under a good discipline. Under the form of a report upon this work, Young has composed an essay on the doctrine of society and of education.

The labouring class was still commonly recognised as the foundation of society. In this view the author concurs. In the origin of society all men had had to work: now, through the progress of industry, more was produced "than enough for the subsistence of the whole." A surplus had arisen which became "riches in the hands of a few." This wealth was produced by the labourers. Thus society is constituted of two classes, a large class of producers, a smaller class which collects wealth "either for preservation or use."<sup>2</sup> There was room for no third, and the relative

<sup>1</sup> "First and Second Reports" (1788, 1789).

<sup>2</sup> "First Report," pp. 9-10. In the eighteenth century, when people of position freely admitted their dependence on the poor, they regarded this as a pleasant and providential arrangement. Later, when conscience had become more acute, and the sense of being dependent on



proportions of these two must be maintained. The one class must be large and industrious, the other small. This desirable condition was in danger. If the labourers became idle, the rich would lose their distinction of wealth. Now charity, as commonly administered, encouraged the poor in idleness, and thereby endangered the security of those who, being possessed of property, should be free from any compulsion to labour.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, charity did not really benefit the poor.<sup>2</sup> It is necessary therefore, to adopt other methods based on fuller knowledge. We start, accordingly, from a doctrine of the character of the lower orders. The mind of the poor is a waste that brings forth noxious herbs.<sup>3</sup> Take, therefore, the children in hand before baneful tendencies have taken root in them, or, at least, before they have become ineradicable.<sup>4</sup> Taking life thus at a zero, raise it to its highest value, for life in itself is "an equivocal thing." It is right to preserve it only on condition of making it worth preserving, otherwise charity and police are extremely imperfect.<sup>5</sup> If the children are not taken when young there is little probability of giving this positive value to their life, and if they are left to grow up in moral disease, the fault is not theirs. "Shall we," asks the writer, "suffer the crime first, then inflict the penalty, and thus incur a double evil, while both are yet in our power to prevent?"<sup>6</sup> This theory of police or of charity, call it which we will, includes, then, not only a consideration of crime but of social conditions. The suppression of disorder is but part of a larger aim, the maintenance of order. The principle of order is psychological—the raising of life to its highest power. The details of Young's scheme are amusing, they would not commend themselves to modern educationalists, but they do not obscure the importance of his general conclusion.

the poor became irksome, we encounter the converse doctrine that the poor are dependent on the rich.

<sup>1</sup> "First Report," pp. 11-15.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 20.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 21.

<sup>4</sup> "Second Report," p. 39.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 27-9.

<sup>6</sup> "Second Report, pp. 39-40.



Wide as is the range of Young's arguments, he is throughout concerned with the particular case of his own school. But we find also discussion and description of another kind. Our attention is no longer concentrated on a specific charity: we are attracted to the whole large sphere of philanthropy. One by one, the long train of activities or proposals for the relief of distress passes before the eyes of the beholder; but he is not suffered to linger over any one. He watches a procession and is allowed a mere momentary glance at each part of it, for his admiration is still to be excited for that which follows after. The philanthropist or the student is asked to consider the whole series of human needs in its claim upon his sympathy or thought. The student, indeed, is hardly yet disentangled from the philanthropist, for, as in the "Political Economy" of Adam Smith, so here the art and science of beneficence have not been clearly distinguished. Numerous charities are described, in order that, on the one hand some appropriately pathetic quality may attract the reader to improved conduct in some single direction, or on the other, the record of these many schemes of beneficence may in its *ensemble* make a more massive appeal to the humane mind.

Work of this kind is represented by such a book as Highmore's.<sup>1</sup> It is hardly a history, though it is as such that it seems to challenge criticism. It is uncritical and flattering, ministers to an undue complacency, is calculated rather to entertain curiosity than influence conduct. The two volumes are almost entirely composed of disconnected reports. But it aims at being complete. We are presented with a comprehensive survey of what London has done and is doing, and this gives the work a certain unity of purpose and interest.<sup>2</sup>

The names of Lettsom, Hanway and Bernard, are more

<sup>1</sup> "Pietas Londinensis."

<sup>2</sup> The work of M. de Lévis, the French émigré, may also be mentioned. One of the longest chapters in "l'Angleterre en commencement du dix-neuvième siècle" (1814) is devoted to charities. The author both brings these into connection with English civilisation generally and suggests some comparisons with European experience,



prominent in the broader literary work. And the practical element is strong, in the "Hints towards Promoting Benevolence," in Hanway's numerous publications, and in the reports edited by Sir Thomas Bernard. They deal, too, with details. But their range is no longer an institution, but a philosophy. The title, the "New Philosophy," is Bernard's. To him principally we owe the attempt to take stock of philanthropy; and if large acquaintance with its working be a qualification he possessed it, for none is before him in the promotion of works of charity. Others had collected information—he did so as part of his philosophical aim.

Sir Thomas Bernard was born of a good family, and educated in New Jersey, before and at the time of the War of Independence; he returned to England when scarcely more than a boy, gave himself to strenuous study of the law, became a conveyancing barrister, made an advantageous marriage, acquired in some fifteen years of professional work a competent fortune, retired from practice, and was in the position before he was fifty of having to select a new profession. His choice fell on philanthropy, or, as his biographer curiously expresses it, "the endeavour to meliorate the domestic habits of the labouring class, was the first amusing occupation that occurred to him."<sup>1</sup> Bernard became treasurer and devoted a good deal of attention to the Foundling Hospital in 1795; he was especially interested in Count Rumford's cooking stoves and the connected subject of cheap associated housekeeping. But it was not in any such limited schemes that he sought his engagement. In 1796 he founded *The Society for Bettering the Conditions and Increasing the Comforts of the Poor*. The original meeting of the society was at Mr. Wilberforce's, Old Palace Yard, and its scope was declared to be "everything that concerns the happiness of the poor."<sup>2</sup> The method adopted was to search and "disseminate useful and practical knowledge with regard to the poor," and to co-operate in all plans for their

<sup>1</sup> "Life of Sir T. Bernard," by Rev. J. Baker, pp. 1—6.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 16.



improvement.<sup>1</sup> Reports were solicited from correspondents in various parts of the country; they were to contain first-hand information only, and to be brief and clear. In the general plan of these reports they consist of two sections, one giving information, followed by another containing remarks. Let us, writes Bernard in another place, make "inquiry into all that concerns the poor, and the promotion of their happiness, a science—let us investigate practically and upon system."<sup>2</sup> In addition to the work of Bernard and some others in the matters more especially of institutional charity, important contributions to a science of poverty, and consequently of poor relief, had been made by several enquirers, and above all by Eden, in his "State of the Poor." The mention of Eden's great work suggests rather the larger science, sociology, than the more restricted matter of philanthropy. We must confine ourselves to the narrower ground, and even in it other interesting suggestions crop up to which we must turn our attention before finally seeking to gather up the result and meaning of this epoch of reflection.

In the light of the political philosophy of the nineteenth century police and philanthropy seem to suggest discrepant ideas. The one is commonly regarded as of an essentially private nature, and having to do with relief of distress in its various forms; the other as a matter of public policy concerned with the suppression of disorder. We are not unacquainted with the philanthropist who acts the part of policeman, and uses his charity in order to confine the expectant poor in ways that seem good to their patrons. From time to time the philanthropy of the eighteenth century also had attempted to exercise the functions of police. Towards the end of the century, as at the beginning, society became conscious that its own vices were ugly when practised by the poor. It is enough to recall the advice given to the gentlemen of the first society of manners to begin by reforming themselves. The later movement associated with the

<sup>1</sup> R. S. B. P., vol. ii., p. 10.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, i., p. ii.; iii., p. 2.



name of Wilberforce shows, perhaps, some improvement of temper as compared with the earlier campaign. In the one, as in the other, several of the prominent actors were men of irreproachable character, free from disgraceful habits themselves, and disapproving them in others of whatever rank. But the differences are inconsiderable: the general course of action was very similar at both periods. In each the outbreak of zeal was sporadic and died away. Even when the motives of these amateur guardians of morals were not suspected, the wisdom of their action was commonly doubted except among the section of society which took part in it.

The idea of Police as a function of philanthropy, if not unfamiliar, has always been held in dubious regard. The idea of philanthropy as a function of Police is much less familiar and cannot fail to arouse political controversy. For the doctrine of police, as formulated towards the end of the eighteenth century, contains in itself the germ of the conception of a philanthropic state. The subject is regarded not only in its negative aspect as relating to the suppression of disorder, but also in a more positive aspect as relating to the maintenance of order; and an orderly society is perceived to involve a condition of social health and well being.

The problem of a more efficient police rose first in connection with the difficulty of preserving even the outward appearance of peace and decorum, and specifically with the dangerous state of the London streets. It soon became evident that necessary as it was to substitute able bodied men for the decrepit veterans who had evaded the duties of watchmen, yet something more than this would be necessary. A considerable step was taken when the streets began to be lighted at night time. Mischief and crime would be less easily concealed and consequently less frequently indulged in. The need for a more far-reaching policy forced itself on public attention. The street lamp is symbolical. It is a first crude expression of a nascent social idea. The destruction of evil is only a negative good. Positive, constructive forces must be called in for the achievement of the real social end.



Fielding's "Causes of the Increase of Robbers," with its proposals for remedying the evil was an expression of the increased interest in matters of police. The novelist indeed was gifted with a sort of second sight that enabled the magistrate to discover a whole population of lame beggars who used their crutches merely as weapons of offence on tardy alms-givers. Yet Fielding knew that there was another sort of poor, an unfortunate industrious poor, and the feeble and diseased. He believed that their number was small, but he knew that their wants must be supplied if social order was to be maintained.<sup>1</sup>

More important work was done in this direction by Patrick Colquhoun. The intimate connection, or indeed at some points the identity, of philanthropy and police, is set forth in clear significance in the pages of his "Police of the Metropolis." Successive chapters deal with punishments theoretically considered, with the cause and progress of burglary, cheats, gaming and the lottery, of counterfeit coining, river plunder, dockyard plunder, and receivers of stolen goods. We then proceed to the origin of criminal offenders, and to the origin as found in prostitution. Under all the heads the author affords valuable information as to the actual state and the criminal manners of the time. They all belong clearly to his subject. But a chapter follows, on the state of the poor in connection with the origin of crime which seems to reach out to what might now be described as social science, and it is just this in a crude form that police meant to the author. The subject in its narrower sense is resumed with the discussion of detection, prosecution and punishment of offenders. This is followed by chapters on the Criminal Police of the Metropolis, and a proposed new system of police.

All this leads up to the Municipal Police of the Metropolis and under this heading Colquhoun treats of churches, schools, societies of learning and the fine arts, hackney coaches, watermen, etc., and what is most to our purpose, of societies

<sup>1</sup> "Increase of Robbers," pp. 45-6 *et pass.*



of a charitable and humane character. This constitutes the cardinal importance of the book. Charity is a social responsibility intended to advance that well being which is the underlying significance of outward good order. The theory of police should explain how to prevent offences; it should also lay down the social conditions under which offenders will not be created or encouraged. Social order consists in the good disposition of its members, or at least in such conditions as will not provoke their evil dispositions.

Two leading conclusions seem to result from these discussions. In the first place, an immediate feeling of pity is by itself insufficient to afford any real relief of distress. Charity, merely as sentiment, is bound to be inadequate, and likely to prove mischievous. Philanthropy requires two preparatory enquiries, the one into the character of the recipient, the other into his environment. The character of the poor is always the concern of their benefactors. The form taken at this time by the doctrine of character may be expressed thus:—It is often more important to make a man something different than to give him additional wealth. This is a truism, but it raises perplexing questions. Everything depends on the “when” and the “what”; *when* the one or other method is in place, or *when* they must be combined; *what* difference is to be aimed at, or *what* wealth is necessary.

The answer is determined not more by the character of the man, than by the nature of his environment. The tremendous influence, the critical importance of environment is a modern discovery. Comparatively little was done at this earlier period to investigate or to modify it. But a dim recognition of this as a second task waiting to be done and refusing to be neglected may be discerned working in the thoughts of these earlier philanthropists.



## CHAPTER XIII.

LOOKING TOWARDS THE NINETEENTH  
CENTURY. CONCLUSION.

THE starting-point for a history of modern philanthropy was determined for us by the nature of the philanthropic material itself. For an explanation of the critical significance of the year 1800 (A.D.), and of the reason why it marks so conclusive a landing stage, it is necessary to look beyond the confines of the philanthropic world.

We have been able in the foregoing pages to form some estimate of the extent of the misery which had haunted the mind of the benevolent, or, at least, to learn that the amount of want was far greater than the efforts made to relieve it. This discrepancy had been recognised before the close of the eighteenth century. But we have had to accept the existence of this want as being, from whatever cause, a normal incident of society, because, with scarcely an exception, the philanthropists themselves have regarded it in this light. The origin of this want, of the pervasive and persistent inequalities and distress which characterise the modern state, are to be sought in the industrial system, in an organization under which the total wealth of the nation has increased so rapidly, under which also there has been so huge a concurrent out-throw of poverty, and poverty-born disease. For an explanation of the subject-matter of misery with which philanthropy is concerned it would be necessary to look into the economic structure of society. There was some consciousness of this fact at the beginning of the seventeenth century, and it was again tentatively forcing itself into notice at the close of the eighteenth. The series of philanthropic studies, histories, sciences, and various reflections which we have reviewed in the last chapter are an indication of this.



They suggest, that is to say, the first feeble stirring of a new principle which was bound to modify, if it was not destined to supersede, the unchecked working of philanthropic voluntarism. But, so far as the consciousness of the philanthropists was concerned, there was nothing decisive in the date that ends the century. For several years afterwards activity continued entirely on the old lines. Hospitals and other institutions were founded, and after the first decade or so of the nineteenth century the movement went forward with rapidly accelerating momentum. The older tradition was apparently unaltered.

At the same time the 31st of December, 1800, was, if little noticed, a memorable date. On that day the royal assent was given to the Act authorising the taking of the first census of the English people. When we compare the first census with the eleventh, which was taken in 1901, we are struck with its simplicity, its incompleteness, its faultiness. But we mistake its significance if we test it by the amount or the accuracy of the information it affords. This census was the first official recognition of the duty of the state to know in detail the vital, cultural, and economic condition of the whole nation. The nation had once for all assumed the responsibility of knowing. And social knowledge, which is itself a kind of social action, impels of necessity to much doing of many sorts.

For a time the census stood alone as a governmental statistical instrument, although we may not overlook the numerous Parliamentary and other enquiries into the state of the wage-earning population, which date from the early years of the century. Three other censuses had been made before the founding, in 1832, of the Statistical Department of the Board of Trade. This was followed, in 1836, by the office of the Registrar-General of births, deaths, and marriages, when, for the first time, authentic information on these important events became available. It is unnecessary to pursue the subject further; but, before quitting it, we may very well notice the establishment, in 1833, of the Manchester Statistical Society, and of the London Society in the next year.



These were private associations intended to supplement, and also to stimulate and improve, the official work.

Now as to the bearing of this statistical development on philanthropy. When once the state had assumed the responsibility of knowing how the people lived it could not permanently ignore the general misery of their condition. Mischief was rampant everywhere. The spectre of destitution, both physical and mental, could not be denied, and would not be exorcised by the feeble conjuring of philanthropy. It was certainly no respect for pure knowledge, as such, which prompted to action in various directions; the fear of cholera, or the fear of revolutionary excess in an unlettered populace, was needed to enforce the lesson. (Had not our statesmen required to have their Greek beaten into them?) It is worth noticing, as an illustration of the bearing of statistical knowledge on philanthropic and political action, that one of the first things done by the Manchester Statistical Society was to appoint a committee to investigate the condition of the child population, especially in relation to its educational opportunities.

The state was beginning to concern itself with the same data which confronted the philanthropists. Out of this fact springs the principle of action which gives its distinct character to the philanthropy of the nineteenth century. This is the principle of *State intervention*. That is the mark of the nineteenth, exactly as voluntary association is the characteristic of the eighteenth, century. And yet there is something here of the nature of paradox. For the nineteenth century has seen a more thorough-going denial of the state than the eighteenth knew; and it is equally true that the private philanthropic institutions of the later period have been more various and immensely more numerous than those of the earlier. But at the one period the voluntary principle was allowed to work in pretty complete isolation, and undisturbed by either the supervision, the subvention, or the authority of the state. In the nineteenth century this has not been so. Accordingly, a study of recent philanthropy resolves itself largely into a study of social economics



and of politics. We are, at the present time, in the midst of an evolution which is far from completed, and no discussion of which can avoid being sharply controversial. The time for writing the history of the nineteenth century philanthropy is not yet. Its problems are too far from being solved, or even from being understood.

But if we were not to pursue the story up to the end it seemed unnecessary to bring it further than we have done in the last chapter. The new conditions created by the increase of Government control did not, indeed, become very obvious during the first three decades, and I might have amassed several pages of information very similar to what I had previously given. But there seemed no good reason for doing so. I must still have left the history unfinished at any date. And as a matter of fact, while the modifying action of the state did not make itself felt at first, the series of events which ultimately compelled it to intervene do date from the very opening of the century. A single instance may suffice to suggest what was to happen in province after province of the philanthropic world.

Before the close of the eighteenth century Dr. Bell had written his famous book advocating the Madras system, and Mr. Lancaster had opened that school in the Borough Road, which may be described as the cradle of our present system of elementary education. It is impossible to think of Bell and Lancaster without recalling their rivalries and the stern array of Church and Dissent for which they respectively struggled. They stand for hot dissensions which are still rife among us. The mention of the two protagonists inevitably reminds us of the foundation of the British and Foreign School Society and of the National Society for promoting the education of the poor in the principles of the Established Church. These continued for a time entirely in the eighteenth century tradition of voluntary action supported by voluntary subscription. But the disparity of the task and their means for its accomplishment shortly became evident, and the independent activity of the two societies gave place almost insensibly to a controlled activity. The



societies themselves might have been content to do a small part of the work of education and to do it badly, to leave the larger number of children untaught and for the rest to utilise the gospel stories for exercises in mental arithmetic, or to train young infants to distinguish an isosceles from a scalene triangle. But little as the country has ever cared for education, it was not willing to leave things thus. The number of children who should be at school was known ; it was known, too, how large a proportion were outside. No one wanted to teach them much, but it was felt that the few things they were supposed to learn they really had better learn—even if it were only the properties of a scalene triangle.

The year 1833 was fatal to voluntarism. A national system of state-supported education was proposed in Parliament and defeated. By way of blessed compromise, and to avoid so revolutionary an act, the minister of the day offered a small building grant of £20,000. A trivial gift, but only accepted with some prophetic misgiving by the two societies. The amount was inconsiderable in proportion to their total income, but it became a precedent for many others. Grants for building, then grants for maintenance, for teachers, for pupil teachers, and these accompanied by ever more stringent conditions. Together with the grants went a timid experiment in public inspection, ineffective inspection, on sufferance and merely advisory. But gradually the officials and the government learnt their power, and more resolutely enforced their advice or their commands.

It is not possible to pause at any point between 1798 and 1808 ; between 1808 and 1833 ; between 1833 and 1870.

Then, with the establishment of the school boards, an era of partial control gave place to an era of competing agencies, and recent events have proved that no pause was possible between 1870 and 1902. And not without a good deal of friction things still seem to be moving.

I have taken a simple case. In the matter of education



the state has almost absolutely superseded voluntary subscription and the voluntary principle. But in other directions it is not so. The relations between private philanthropy and the state are of the most various kinds and give rise to many problems of conduct. Merely to describe these would force us into the midst of every social controversy which agitates our modern world. The philanthropy of the nineteenth century is not yet matter for history but for discussion.

Here, then, we pause, and turn a last backward glance across the centuries we have traversed. We look from no high vantage ground of secure achievement, but still from the sad levels where poverty and suffering surround and overtop the figure of charity. It is matter for tragic poetry rather than for history. To have described, as alone we have been able to do, the outward circumstances of need, and the outward means of relief, seems to have missed the heart of the subject. On the one side is charity, full of generous impulses, though shrinking from the appropriate hard means; on the other the interminable ranks of the ragged army of sorrow; individuals come and go, pass across our field of vision and vanish from sight, while others always continually supply their place. In the march of the miserable, some are crushed utterly and early; some with sullen endurance wear out the allotted limit of their years; some, only they are always the few, have their discharge purchased for them out of the helpful store of pity. But, however it may be with individuals, each generation has furnished its fresh contingent; each century witnessed the same monotonous succession of the fallen and the weak, the maimed and diseased, the old people and little children. The want, which charity, not always unavailingly, has endeavoured to assuage, does nevertheless renew itself with perpetual iteration. Whence then this strange entanglement around the action of pity, so that the thing desired is never the thing done? What explanation may be given of the contradiction, growing ever more sharp, between the needs of the needy and the spirit of humanity? Still at the close, as in the beginning,



we perceive the same stupendous anomaly of pity and poverty facing one another :

“ Al the wealthe of the world : and the woo bothe.”

Somehow or other the world's wealth has not become available for the easement of the world's woe.

Our narrative closed on a note of exhaustion. The philanthropists were confronted, as they always had been confronted, with a difficulty too great for them. But at least the magnitude of their task was beginning to penetrate their consciousness. The remedy still continually eluded them, but they were, however timidly, reaching out after it. The business in hand was hard and obstinate, and their analysis was incomplete. They diligently sought for the conditions which delayed success or vitiated their efforts. They sought them in the character of the poor they tried to benefit, or, though less resolutely, in the reaction on the poor of their immediate environment. Both these were elements in the problem ; but they were not the only ones. The stubborn task was the outward symbol of an inward disability. The criticism of the thing done needed to be resolved into the deeper self criticism of those who did it. In the first place a sifting process was needed to separate out those who were called philanthropic and were not really philanthropic. These were by far the greater number. But a further sifting was needed in those who were left.

Hitherto the method of philanthropy had been the one accepted method of the humane spirit of the nation. But the nation was certainly not affected through and through by any humanitarian ideal. The value of life, as apart from power or commodities, had never been proposed as a political end. In however confused a manner, it was the philanthropic aim to increase the force and improve the quality of human life. But they had dallied with it. They, equally with the politicians, had refrained from setting this up as a constraining obligation on the nation at large. Philanthropy had not hitherto been taken itself in serious earnest. It had, therefore,



not been able to demonstrate how much it was capable of accomplishing. And still less had it entered on the further consideration which awaited it, whether philanthropy, while remaining mere philanthropy, was adequate to the enterprise it had undertaken.

A process of self criticism was needed as a supplement to the other enquiries into the character of the poor and the nature of their circumstances. This could not ultimately be avoided. Indeed, the study of environment, when broadly enough conceived, would be found to include an examination of the character of the philanthropists, their motives and activities. The comparative failure of philanthropy might then appear, not so much as resulting from the perverseness of individual poor people, as from the nature of the social organism. In this lack of thoroughness lies the explanation of the perplexity with which philanthropy was wrestling.

A process of self-criticism was needed. We are not left without indications that this could not long be delayed. I do not certainly find anything to suggest a recognition by philanthropic writers of the necessity for distrusting themselves: the nearest approximation to it is a growing distrust of one another. But the weapons they sharpened against their friends might, at any time, be turned upon themselves.

As with individuals, so with classes, the process of self-criticism is commonly preceded and suggested by a criticism from without. The whole question of the worth of philanthropy had been raised by hostile critics and decided in an adverse sense. From the world outside, the world of revolutionary thought, the first sharp challenge came, surely never sharper than in the words of Blake:

"They compel the poor to live upon a crust of bread by soft mild arts.

"They reduce the Man to want, then give with pomp and ceremony."

When exactly, or by what stages, the appeal from without awoke, or is to awake the response within the philanthropic



mind, how biting criticism gives place to less mordant, yet more suggestive self-criticism cannot be decided. Quite clearly, this point of view had not been attained within the limits covered by this volume, but, if my interpretation be in any measure a true one, the very perplexity in which our period closes is something of first class value gained on the levity of an earlier period. Sense of failure had not yet taught the philanthropists humility. They still regarded themselves as being of another order from the poor; they were still scarcely conscious that, "God and their superiors" was a very composite expression. But, at least, they had gained this: the earlier childish self-satisfaction was deeply dyed in a sombre sense of insufficiency, not yet, it is true, in themselves, but already in their work. This dissatisfaction with the thing done was one step forward in the uncomfortable but salutary process of self-criticism, or the examination of the contents of the philanthropic conscience.







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