

A few remarks on the high rate of mortality in Glasgow : with observations on the measure taken by the municipal authorities to reduce same, under 'The Glasgow Improvements Act, 1866' and other public acts / by James Morrison.

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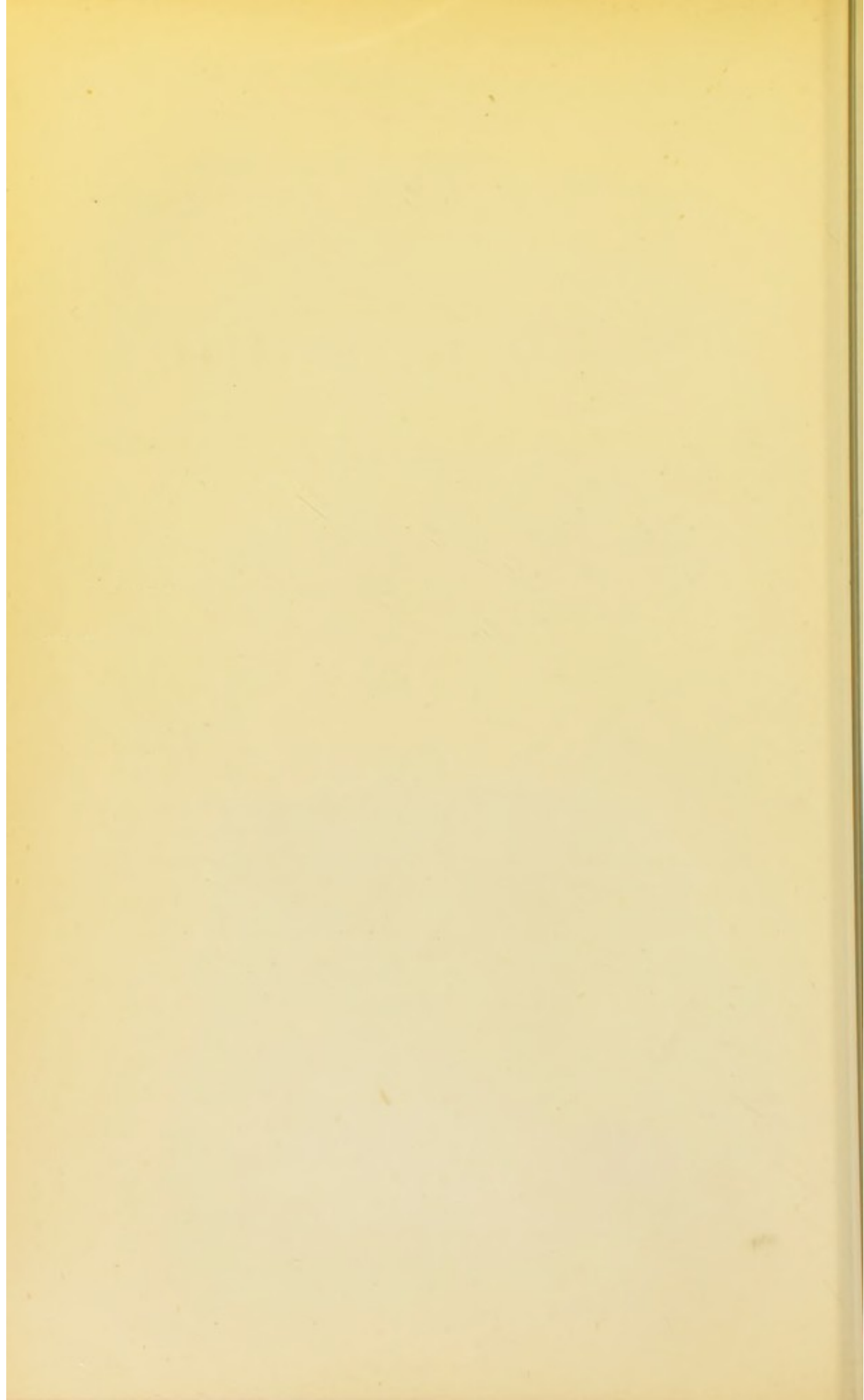
A FEW REMARKS
ON THE
HIGH RATE OF MORTALITY
IN GLASGOW,

WITH OBSERVATIONS ON THE MEASURES TAKEN BY THE
MUNICIPAL AUTHORITIES TO REDUCE SAME, UNDER
"THE GLASGOW IMPROVEMENTS ACT, 1866,"
AND OTHER PUBLIC ACTS.

BY
JAMES MORRISON,

ONE OF THE MAGISTRATES OF THE CITY, AND CHAIRMAN OF THE COMMITTEE
OF MANAGEMENT OF THE GLASGOW IMPROVEMENT TRUST.

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REMARKS

ON THE

HIGH RATE OF MORTALITY IN GLASGOW.

MR. SIMON, the Medical Officer of H.M. Privy Council, in a recent Report, states that, in England and Wales *alone* 120,000 persons die every year of preventible diseases, or, in other words, through neglect of Sanitary precautions. The Registrar-General explains—"Any deaths in a people exceeding seventeen in a thousand annually are unnatural deaths. "If the people were shot, drowned, poisoned by strychnine, "their deaths would not be more natural than the deaths "wrought clandestinely by disease in excess of the quota of "natural death—that is, in excess of seventeen deaths in a "thousand living."

This fearful annual sacrifice of human life in this country through neglect far exceeds the ravages of modern warfare, however destructive its weapons; but the Mortality Tables give no real indication of the untold physical suffering, permanent loss of health, and deterioration of the human race, especially in our large cities.

The National Association for the Promotion of Social Science was instituted for circulation of information and interchange of opinion on questions bearing directly or

indirectly on Social and Sanitary reform ; and without presuming to affirm it as the result of these meetings, it is a remarkable fact that since their origination the enactments relating to such subjects, passed by our Legislature, exceed in number and importance those in existence for many hundred years prior.

The Committee, anxious that the subjects discussed should be of a character likely to lead to practical measures, have suggested the question,—“ In what way can healthy dwellings for working-men be erected, in lieu of those removed for the purpose of carrying out Sanitary or Municipal Improvements, or for other purposes ? ”

The Paper I propose under this head is one in which no speculative theory is started ; the discovery of no panacea is claimed, but is simply an epitome of the measures adopted by the Municipal Authorities of this city to remove evils of the greatest magnitude and ameliorate the condition of the lower classes, as principally carried out under the “ Glasgow Improvements Act, 1866,” in the hope that these experiences may be the means of assisting other cities similarly situated.

The high rate of mortality in Glasgow has long been a source of the deepest regret, and has engrossed the attention of the civic authorities, more or less, for the last thirty years. It arises from a variety of causes :—

First—The Character and Occupation of the Population.—Glasgow is a city of large workshops and factories, or, in other words, a labouring community, and the certainty of procuring employment, in some capacity or other, attracts to it and Liverpool, more than to any cities in the United Kingdom, masses of labourers of the lowest class—the hewers of wood and drawers of water of the nineteenth century—men and women born in the thinly-peopled hills and plains

of Ireland or our Scottish Highlands, living in mud huts, roofed with thatch or turf—the ashpits sometimes within and sometimes without, but never more than a few feet from the door. You can easily conceive that retention of such habits and neglect of sanitary precautions in large centres of population originate and spread disease like wildfire.

Second—Impurity of the Atmosphere.—Dr. R. A. Smith, of Manchester, who recently compared the impurities in large cities, stated that while the air in the western portion of Glasgow was as pure as on the heights of Innellan—a favourite sea-coast residence—its streets and squares, as a rule, were below the average, and that in a close in Gallowgate (in one of the areas operated on by the City Improvements Trustees, but not the most overcrowded in that district), the chemical impurities, to use his own words, were the same as “in a midden in Manchester.”

Third—Density of Population and Overcrowding.—The Registrar-General’s returns prove that density is one of the great causes of high mortality. After making reasonable allowance for difference in character of population and impurities of atmosphere, it will be found that the rate of mortality in large cities is proportionate to density; but the comparative mortality of large cities with each other does not illustrate this so strikingly as a comparison between various districts of the same city, where, in addition to density, you have overcrowding of the worst class of population, huddled together in unhealthy houses. This is explained very clearly in the Report of the Sub-Committee on the causes of the excessive mortality in Liverpool, who, in 1866, state,—
 “Assuming overcrowding to mean not only the existence of
 “too many people in a room or in a house, but also the
 “massing together in narrow ill-ventilated streets and squalid
 “courts too great a number of houses; and also assuming,
 “what is incontrovertible, that such overcrowding, by its
 “effects on the physical condition of the people, tends to

“encourage intemperance, immorality, and indigence, the
 “remedies appear to be—to provide decent dwellings for the
 “labouring classes; to break up those masses of crowded
 “dwellings by driving thoroughfares through and across them
 “to let in the light and the air.”

Fourth—Infant Mortality, which increases most rapidly in the conditions fatal to our adult population.—Professor Gairdner says,—“Given a community in which the infants
 “die with extreme rapidity, and in which the general death-
 “rate is also high, you have, in the fact of the high infantile
 “mortality, not only a corroborative proof of the defective
 “sanitary conditions operating on the entire population, but,
 “in proportion as the infant mortality is higher than the
 “average of places having the same general death-rate,
 “you have proof of defective sanitary conditions operating
 “specially on the young life, in all probability through the
 “neglect, or vice, or ignorance of the parents.” In Glasgow one in every ten of the children under five years of age die each year.

I have thus endeavoured concisely to point out four of the leading causes of the high rate of mortality, and shall now bring under notice the condition of “Ancient Glasgow,” in the centre of the city where the evils enumerated existed, and still exist (being only very partially remedied) in their most aggravated form, and, in doing so, shall quote the description of these plague spots, from the pen of our Lord Provost, Sir James Watson, who has taken the deepest and most active interest in this question for many years, and brought it under the notice of the Social Science Congress while here in 1860.

“From each side of the streets in the districts referred to,
 “(*i.e.*, Gallowgate, High Street, Saltmarket, Trongate, &c.),
 “there are narrow lanes or closes, running, like so many
 “rents or fissures, backwards to the extent of sometimes

“ 200, sometimes 300 feet, in which houses of three and four
 “ stories stand behind each other, generally built so close on
 “ each side that the women can either shake hands or
 “ scold each other, as they often do, from the opposite
 “ windows. When clothes are put out from such windows to
 “ dry, as is usually done by means of sticks, they generally
 “ touch each other; the breadth of these lanes is in most
 “ instances from 3 to 4 feet, the expense of the ground
 “ having at first induced the proprietor to build upon every
 “ available inch of it. Throughout the whole of these
 “ districts the population is densely crowded—in many of the
 “ lanes and closes there are residing in each not fewer than
 “ 500, 600, and even 700 souls; and in one case we observed
 “ thirty-eight families, or nearly 300 persons, occupying one
 “ common stair. In the Tontine Close, on the north side of
 “ Trongate, there are nearly 800 of the most vicious of our
 “ population crowded together, forming one immense hotbed
 “ of debauchery and crime. This close has obtained of late
 “ an unenviable notoriety; but there are others equally bad
 “ both in Gallowgate and some parts of High Street.”

* * * * *

“ The effect produced on the physical condition by over-
 “ crowding must be apparent; and when disease of a con-
 “ tagious nature breaks out its ravages become frightful.
 “ The moral disease is still more appalling. In such houses
 “ as those described, where men and women occupy the same
 “ apartment, virtue and morality are impossibilities. As
 “ well might we expect the plant to flourish when deprived
 “ of the refreshing light and dews of heaven, as that virtuous
 “ life could exist in such a region. Living in a tainted
 “ atmosphere, without either the decencies or conveniences
 “ of life, surrounded by a mass of poverty and dirt, with-
 “ out contact with anything in the locality to elevate or
 “ stimulate to improvement—without, as has been well
 “ expressed, anything to remind one either of God or nature—

“ it would be strange indeed if these districts were not to show, as they do, only the characteristics of pauperism, intemperance, and crime. We question if in any city of Europe the vicious are allowed to congregate together in such clusters as in the city of Glasgow; and in no city that we are aware of are such facilities given, by means of the buildings and localities, both for hatching and perpetuating vice and crime.”

This, then, was the condition in 1865 of what may be designated “Ancient Glasgow,” covering an area of about 88 acres in the centre of the city, where a population of 51,304 was packed together at the average rate of 583 persons to the acre, in upwards of 10,000 houses, the walls of which were permeated with disease. The population of the whole city in 1865 was 423,723, so that fully twelve per cent. occupied houses, in every sense of the word, unfit for human habitation, rapidly spreading moral and physical deterioration. The death-rate over the whole city was, as might be expected, 32·8 to the 1000, which increased in 1869 to 34 to the 1000, and the average death-rate of the 88 acres specially alluded to was 38·64 to the 1000. These figures still, however, fail to convey an adequate idea of the rapidly increasing over-density. The Improvement Scheme comprises 40 areas, in the worst of which, and in portions of the others, the population was housed at the rate of 1000 to the acre, or 640,000 to the square mile. In these plague spots and fever dens the death-rate was as high as 52·21 to the 1000 in 1865. In 1870, before demolition commenced, it rose to 70 in the 1000.

The powers under existing public legislation were totally inadequate to enable the authorities to remedy evils of such magnitude. It is quite true that under the “Nuisance Removal (Scotland) Act, 1856,” and the “Public Health (Scotland) Act, 1867,” power is given to compel proprietors to remedy—

(a) "Any insufficiency of size, defect of structure, defect of ventilation, want of repair, or proper drainage, or suitable water-closet, or privy accommodation, or cesspool, or any other matter or circumstance rendering any inhabited house, building, premises, or part thereof, injurious to the health of the inmates, or unfit for human habitation or use ;"

(f) And further, to shut up "any house or part of a house so overcrowded as to be dangerous or injurious to the health of the inmates."

But the expense connected with the legal proceedings before the Sheriff, and the protracted litigations certain to arise, in many cases, before the repairs or structural alterations needed could be agreed on between parties, or decided by the Sheriff, deterred the Authorities from beginning a series of prosecutions on such an extensive scale ; besides which, it must be borne in mind, that a large proportion of the properties were held by trustees for the benefit of widows and orphans, who, deprived of the revenue on which they were dependent for annual maintenance, would have been pauperized. In these circumstances, after an abortive attempt by several public spirited citizens to deal with the worst portion of the evils at their own risk and expense, which failed through want of compulsory powers of purchase, the Corporation, with the consent of the inhabitants, applied for a special Act of Parliament to purchase the properties, paying fair compensation to the heritable proprietors, on the footing of a compulsory sale, the value thereof, failing arrangement by private negotiation, to be fixed by Arbiters or a Jury.

Plans were prepared, showing the properties to be taken, and Parliamentary Notices, in the usual form, were served on all the heritable proprietors whose property was needed, none of whom opposed the Bill.

The value of the property scheduled is upwards of £1,500,000, and the Preamble of the Act narrates :—

“Whereas various portions of the City of Glasgow are so
 “built, and the buildings thereon are so densely inhabited,
 “as to be highly injurious to the moral and physical welfare
 “of the inhabitants, and many of the thoroughfares are
 “narrow, circuitous, and inconvenient, and it would be of
 “public and local advantage if various houses and buildings
 “were taken down, and those portions of the said city recon-
 “stituted, and new streets were constructed in and through
 “various parts of the said city, and several of the existing
 “streets altered and widened, and diverted, and that in con-
 “nection with the reconstitution of these portions of the city,
 “provision was made for dwellings for the labouring classes
 “who may be displaced in consequence thereof.”

The Trustees are the Members of the Town Council, and the operations are managed by a Committee, who report their proceedings to the General Trustees.

The compulsory powers of purchase are confined to the properties scheduled, and there is no power to remedy evils of a similar character in any other portion of the city, except the general provisions of “The Public Health (Scotland) Act.”

The areas selected are coloured *green* on the map of the city, hanging on the wall.

The Act was passed in 1866, and the purchasing of the property needed commenced with vigour; but it was 1870 before any improvements of an extensive character could be begun, the Trustees finding that if they proceeded with reconstruction before having acquired at least the greater portion of the property, they would materially increase the value on themselves.

The operations, when completed, involve the purchase and demolition of upwards of 10,000 houses, which no structural alterations, however extensive, could make healthy residences ; the gradual removal and spreading of the population resident there ; the laying off the ground in open spaces, and formation of forty new streets to be cut through the centre of the districts ; removing sanitary evils and affording commercial facilities ; and the resale of the surplus lands for the erection of modern buildings, subject to the conditions, provisions, and restrictions of "The Glasgow Police Act, 1866," and the authority of the Dean of Guild Court. A plan *showing the alterations* of one of these areas has been prepared, and hangs on the wall for inspection.

To prevent individual hardship, Clause 28 was inserted in the Act, under which the Trustees cannot eject within six months any number of the labouring classes exceeding 500 without a certificate from the Sheriff, granted on evidence furnished by the Trustees, that sufficient accommodation has been provided or exists within the city or in its immediate neighbourhood for the population displaced.

For the purposes of the Act, the Trustees are authorized to borrow £1,250,000 on the security of the assessment and property acquired by them ; and as a proof of the monetary confidence in the measure, loans to an extent far in excess of their requirements have been freely offered them at a lower rate of interest than is usually paid in Scotland on heritable security.

The sum originally estimated to be assessed, as the cost of the improvement, involved an authorized tax of 6d. per £ on rental for five years, and 3d. per £ for ten years ; but the operations of the Trustees have been carried out more suc-

cessfully than was anticipated, and the rate of taxation has been reduced as follows—6d. per £ for one year, 4d. per £ for four years, 3d. per £ for two years, and 2d. per £ for eight years. This difference of the assessment produces about £177,000 less than the Trustees would have received under the original scale, but the sum at their disposal will be sufficient for the purposes of the Act. It will thus be seen that these evils, many of which were the growth of centuries, fell to be remedied by the ratepayers during fifteen years; and it is now generally admitted that the dissatisfaction freely expressed on this point had reasonable foundation, and it would have been more equitable to have extended the period of assessment over a longer series of years at a lesser rate.

The assessment for City Improvement is in addition to a tax of 2d. per £ for general Sanitary purposes, so that the ratepayers expend about £40,000 per annum in their attempts to ameliorate the condition of the people, and lessen the high rate of mortality.

Although possessed of compulsory powers, and entitled to take possession of the properties under statutory notice, the Trustees deemed it politic to purchase the properties, as far as practicable, by private negotiations. The various proprietors, or their agents, were waited on by an employé of the Trust, and offers solicited; on obtaining which the property was inspected and valued by two of the Trustees, with competent assistance, and, on their Report, the Committee either accepted or declined the offer made. As a proof that these negotiations have been fairly conducted on each side I may mention that up to 31st August upwards of 1000 tenements have been purchased, at a cost of £1,241,353 17s. 9d. Only sixty-four of these were referred to Arbiters, and even of these many were *pro forma* rendered necessary for the personal protection of Trustees or Agents, in the absence of beneficiaries, or from some other unavoidable cause.

In these circumstances, we feel quite entitled to assume that our operations have had the moral sympathy of the owners, who, recognizing its necessity, have, with very few exceptions, thoroughly acquiesced in the means employed for the protection of the health and lives of the citizens.

The Committee of Management, on the other hand, have never used the power entrusted to them by the Legislature to the prejudice of the private rights of any individual. It would, however, have been simply impossible to make progress without compulsory powers, the possession and judicious use of which is indispensable to any community similarly situated, and all public or private efforts conducted without these, if on an extensive scale, must fail.

The changes to be effected will extend over a period of probably not less than 20 to 25 years. Although the time is limited during which the Trustees must either acquire the property or serve notice of their intention to do so, there is no limitation as to the period of reconstruction, which can only be proceeded with gradually. Very great discretion is needed to prevent needless sacrifice of revenue by too extensive demolitions at one time, which would also create disturbance to business in central districts of the city, and personal loss.

The gradual displacement of the population has been successfully accomplished up to this time, and no case of individual hardship is known.

This will be even less difficult in the future, the new properties erected on the line of the improvements affording better accommodation in the same locality, with increased commercial facilities arising from the improved accesses formed.

While satisfied that it would be an error in judgment to

push reconstruction too quickly, and that a long period must elapse before the scheme could be completed, the Authorities, alarmed by the increase of the mortality in 1869 to 34 per 1000, felt it their duty to cope with the difficulty as far as possible, without further delay, and expended large sums in what I might characterize as temporary remedies, white-washing, cleansing, ventilation, purifying, asphaltting, and causewaying courts, &c., &c.

The most important of these operations consisted in thinning the ground by demolition of the worst houses, selecting where practicable the centre row of each three long parallel rows of tenements, displacing in about four years, 1870 to 1874, about 15,425 persons, who have found more healthy residences to their own advantage and to the advantage of those remaining in the localities so thinned.

The present time is perhaps the best to form an idea of the character and extent of our operations. The objectionable buildings remaining will give any one who visits them a conception of those demolished, and the marks on the ground show where these formerly stood. All present are earnestly invited to visit the localities, as an hour's inspection will give a more just conception of the evils and remedy than can be formed by any other method.

It is difficult to believe that districts through which you may now walk during daylight with perfect safety and confidence were formerly the scene of many murders, robberies, and assaults of the most aggravated character.

The intricate net-work of houses then existing, now partially broken up, consisted of miles of alleys or "closes," as they are termed in Scotland, on an average not more than 3 or 4 feet wide, with lofty dark tenements on each side, forming a series of communicating fortresses, from which the criminal classes sallied with comparative impunity at night

to ply their nefarious practices, having at hand facilities of escape and refuge. So much was this the case that in 1867 the crimes reported to the Police rose to the highest point ever attained, and were of a more serious character than at any previous time in the history of the city, and were rapidly increasing.

The diminution of crime in subsequent years is largely due to the clearances made, which gave the Police control and supervision over the criminal classes, as will be shown by the following Table, keeping in view that the demolition of houses was trifling in 1868 and 1869, and that it was 1870 before this was carried out to any extent.

Extract from the official "Criminal Returns," showing the number of crimes reported to the Police as having been committed in the City of Glasgow during the years 1867, 1868, 1869, 1870, 1871, 1872, and 1873; also the number of persons apprehended and convicted for the same:—

Year.	Total Crimes Reported.	Total Apprehensions.	Per Centage.	Total Convictions.	Per Centage.
1867,	10,899	5,042	46·2	2,975	27·2
1868,	10,594	4,726	44·6	2,996	28·2
1869,	9,394	5,228	55·6	3,122	33·4
1870,	8,702	5,077	58·3	3,000	34·1
1871,	7,521	5,046	67·0	2,872	38·2
1872,	7,946	5,287	66·5	3,128	39·3
1873,	7,869	5,791	73·7	3,526	44·8

Taking the highest and lowest for comparison, to bring out the result:—

Year.	Crimes Reported.	Apprehensions.	Per Centage.	Convictions.	Per Centage.
1867,.....	10,899	5,042	46·2	2,975	27·2
1873,.....	7,869	5,791	73·7	3,526	44·8
	3,030	749		551	
	Less cases of Crimes re-ported.	More Appre-hensions.		More Con-victions.	

The population in 1867 was 440,979, and in 1873, 498,462, so that the crimes reported in ordinary circumstances would have increased instead of diminished.

Extract from the official "Criminal Returns," showing the number of thefts reported to the Police as having been committed within the City of Glasgow by prostitutes or in brothels, during the years 1867, 1868, 1869, 1870, 1871, 1872, and 1873:—

1867.—Total Thefts of this description reported,	...	...	1192
1868. Do. do. do.	...	...	1246
1869. Do. do. do.	...	...	1146
1870. Do. do. do.	...	...	807
1871. Do. do. do.	...	...	458
1872. Do. do. do.	...	...	227
1873. Do. do. do.	...	...	264

Or, in other words, in this class of crime, instead of 1192 cases in 1867, there were reported in 1873 only 264, showing a diminution of this class of offence of 928 cases in seven years.

Captain M'Call says, in his official "Criminal Returns" for year ending 31st December, 1871:—"I would consider I fell short of my duty in this Report were I not to acknowledge that the operations of the City Improvement Trustees, and

“ the Directors of the City Union Railway, have contributed
 “ to the results. Through these operations the city has
 “ been cleared of the foulest dens of crime and profligacy, and
 “ their occupants been scattered amongst a population breath-
 “ ing a purer moral atmosphere, thereby affording facilities
 “ to the Police for bringing the vicious to justice more easily
 “ and certainly than when the whole formed a concentrated
 “ and combined colony of ruffianism.”

The effect of the operations on that portion of the population hanging on the borders of crime, who, by reason of their circumstances and surroundings, are under the strongest temptations to swell its ranks, it is impossible even to estimate, but many hundreds, if not thousands, must have been saved from contaminating influences.

In one area alone, in 1873, no less than thirty-six shebeens and two brothel keepers were expelled by the instructions of the Committee, who co-operate with the Police in repression of crime, expelling all parties leading an immoral life, and living by dishonest practices, from their property. These, in many cases, have been compelled thus to lead honest lives, and are working as outdoor labourers to their own personal and family advantage, and the gain of the community.

It was feared at one time that the dispersion of the low class population might have a tendency to spread crime and disease, and was a most dangerous experiment. None of these fears have been verified; on the contrary, the Police and Sanitary Inspectors have repeatedly certified that the whole condition of the population displaced has been improved, and, although paying higher rents in other districts of the city for houses worthy of the name, they are themselves satisfied of the advantages of the change.

The Committee of Health, elected by the Police Board in 1870, and the officials under their charge, have been of the

greatest assistance in these beneficial changes. Without close supervision the pulling down of buildings would not have spread the population, who cling to their old haunts as long as possible, and the density would have been intensified by overcrowding of two or more families in one house, to the detriment of the health of all; but the supervision of the Sanitary Inspectors, and the prosecutions before the Magistrate for such practices, has reduced this to a point so low as almost to imply extinction shortly. I may here also notice, as an indication of the progress of public opinion on sanitary matters, that we have at present more complete organization for coping with epidemic disease than it has ever been in our power to possess, and hospital accommodation which, if plain, is good and abundant.

I shall now give one example of the efficacy of the operations in controlling epidemic disease, selecting a district in which all the evils which produce the highest rate of mortality are intensified, the population physically and morally being of the very lowest type.

The district selected is one known in Glasgow as the Havannah and New Vennel, off High Street, which I hope some of you may be induced to visit. The population in 1865 was 3033; in 1871 it may be assumed in round numbers as 3250. The ground measures, as near as possible, $3\frac{1}{4}$ acres, so that this low class population, with the worst habits, was huddled together at the rate of 1000 to the acre. Very little property was purchased there by the Trustees till 1870-1871, the prices asked by the holders being in excess of the value which the Trustees considered should be paid for that class of possession; and it was end of 1871, or, rather, early in 1872, before they were in a position to begin operations, and the results of these are startling. In 1871, 303 fever patients and 16 small-pox patients were removed by the Authorities to their hospitals, and treated at the public expense—in all 319, or nearly 10 per cent. of the population; so that, humanly

speaking, in about eleven years every soul in that block, the circumstances remaining unaltered, would have been dealt with as fever or small-pox patients at the public expense, the death-rate being 70.

In 1872 the partial demolition and temporary remedies, to which I have already alluded, were instituted, and the fever cases were reduced to 62, small-pox 1—total 63; death-rate being reduced to 57. In 1873, when further operations in the same direction, which it is fair to remember, reduces the density and lowers the risk of contagion, there were only 5 cases of fever and 17 cases of small-pox, then epidemic, in all, 22 cases, death-rate 54; so that, as a precautionary measure for curtailing the ravages of epidemic, the destruction of houses unfit for human habitation, and spread of population, is not only one of the best, but appears to me to be in the end the cheapest of all remedies.

If the opinion I have expressed on the importance of such operations in large cities is correct, then there remains no doubt but that the general powers conferred by the Legislature on Municipal and Local Authorities might, with great propriety, be extended, especially the privilege of compulsory purchase of properties, the removal of which would tend to control the spread of epidemics, or which, in the opinion of the Medical Officer of Health, were permanently unhealthy.

I am further inclined to advocate that Municipal and Local Authorities might be allowed, should they deem it necessary, to erect buildings of a better class in lieu of those removed, where needed, to accommodate the population dispossessed, such a clause being permissive and not compulsory, as in Clause 23 of the "Glasgow City Improvements Act."

As a rule, however, it is not judicious for an elected body, changing periodically, to undertake the erection of buildings which demand close attention for successful prosecution, and

such a course is calculated to check private enterprise, which, in all ordinary circumstances, is usually sufficient to supply the wants of the community.

In Glasgow, for example, 3085 houses have been demolished by the City Improvement Trustees, displacing an estimated population of 15,425; to provide for which, and the natural growth of the city, 26,794 houses have been erected within the Municipal boundaries, under the provisions, conditions, and restrictions of the "Glasgow Police Act," under the authority of the Dean of Guild Court, from 19th June, 1866, to 31st August, 1874, which are estimated to accommodate 133,970. This does not include the numerous buildings in the immediate outskirts of the city.

The propriety of erecting dwelling-houses for the working-classes from the funds collected by taxation has been often discussed by the Trustees, and invariably negatived by large majorities. The only exception being the erection of male and female lodging-houses as a measure of self-defence for protection of health. I find that in 1847 an appeal was made to the public spirit of Glasgow in a Report, which I shall quote, as its language is both truthful and concise:—

" It is perhaps not generally known that a large portion of
 " the dwellings of the poor in the Wynds and Streets upon the
 " south side of the Trongate, in the High Street, Gallowgate,
 " Calton, &c., consist of lodging-houses, and constitute the very
 " worst parts of these localities. A large number of them are
 " literally crowded with inmates; men and women are promiscuously huddled together; there is a total absence of
 " everything like ventilation, cleanliness, or what is necessary
 " to contribute to the common decencies of life; and too often
 " they are the haunts of immorality and vice. In many of
 " these places fever is at present raging with fearful severity,
 " yet the healthy and diseased often inhabit the same apartments; and no sooner is a bed empty by the removal of a

" patient to the hospital, than it is occupied by another lodger,
 " and this without any change of bed-clothes, if such wretched
 " rags as are used as substitutes deserve the name! That
 " fever should continue to spread under such circumstances is
 " not to be wondered at. Persons occupying such houses carry
 " infection along with them to the various parts of the city,
 " and no class of the community can protect themselves from
 " such contagion. The question, therefore, occurs—Can any-
 " thing be done to remedy these serious evils? Certainly the
 " most effectual remedy would be to remove the receptacles
 " referred to, and substitute proper houses in their place.
 " This, however, appears at present impracticable. Next to it,
 " probably the most effective remedy would be the enforce-
 " ment of police regulations, by which the number in each
 " house would be restricted, the healthy kept separated from
 " the diseased, cleanliness required, and a freer current of air
 " admitted. Such, however, is the want of lodging-house
 " accommodation, that the police have ascertained that, until
 " additional accommodation can be provided, it is altogether
 " impossible for them to enforce such regulations; and Mr.
 " Wilson, of the police, states that were they to do so, they
 " would turn nightly to the street not less than 5000
 " persons."

With the laudable intention of mitigating these evils, a
 Committee was appointed and an Association formed to erect
 lodging-houses for this loose, floating population; and it is
 worthy of remark that the gentlemen who faced these evils
 in 1847 at their own risk, and have erected and managed
 several of these lodging-houses so successfully for twenty-
 seven years, were the most prominent in attempting, on a
 much larger scale and at considerable personal risk and
 trouble, the renovation of Glasgow from 1860 to 1866, prior
 to the passing of the Improvements Act; our Lord Provost,
 Sir James Watson, being Chairman, and the late ex-Provost
 Blackie one of the Directors.

The present accommodation afforded under the management of this Association is about 600 nightly.

The importance of these Institutions was very soon recognized by the Municipal Authorities, and on the application to Parliament in 1866 for the City Improvements Bill, power was asked and granted for the erection and management of such public lodging-houses by the City Improvement Trustees. We have built and furnished only two yet, one for males, capable of accommodating about 300 nightly, and the other for females, accommodating about 100 nightly. In each there is a large day-room, lavatories, &c. Each inmate has a separate bed in small detached compartment for their exclusive use. Great attention is paid by the Matron and Superintendents to cleanliness and ventilation. The charge was originally 3d. per night, but increased lately to 3½d. per night, including use of large cooking ranges, &c. They are so managed as to be self-supporting, including five per cent. interest on the capital.

The houses are inspected at least once a fortnight by members of Committee in rotation. The accommodation, though very plain, is superior in every respect to the low class dens superseded. The stringent rules for maintenance of order are rigidly enforced.

I wrote Mr. Dickson, the Secretary of the Lodging-houses under the management of the Association alluded to, asking if there had been epidemic disease in any of their establishments since 1847, upwards of twenty-seven years ago, and in reply, on 14th September, 1874, he states:—

“With reference to your inquiry as to whether we have
“ever had any fever or epidemic disease in our lodging-
“houses, I have great satisfaction in stating that we *have had*
“*none whatever*. There may have been a case now and

“again of a lodger having to be removed to the hospital,
 “but such cases have invariably been those of persons suffer-
 “ing from disease before coming into the house. The
 “Superintendents have instructions to remove any person at
 “once to the hospital who may appear to be suffering from
 “any disease, infectious or otherwise.”

Our experience is similar. Since our buildings were erected in 1870 there has never been a single case of fever or epidemic disease in either of the houses. You will thus observe that about 1000 of the worst class of loose, floating population are comfortably housed every night, who, formerly uncared for, were the principal means of spreading epidemics, demonstrating the wisdom and advantage of such care.

This character of accommodation, after such experience, I consider indispensable in all large centres of population, and every encouragement and power ought to be given to municipal authorities for such purposes.

In 1872 the Town Council of Glasgow promoted a second Bill, which was sanctioned by the Legislature, for further improvements in other districts of the city, which you will note coloured *red* on the map on the wall, involving the purchase of property to the value of £250,000 for demolition and reconstruction.

The operations under “The Streets Improvement Act, 1872,” are being carried out in the precise manner I have already described, under the previous Improvement Act, so that I shall not detain you with observations of a repetitive character.

In conclusion, allow me to add that the various remedies alluded to are in their infancy. The progress made may be apparently imperceptible, and it must be at least fifteen or twenty years before the advantage of these measures can be

fully obtained. Many may be discouraged, and think the efforts to reduce mortality and crime have not succeeded. In estimating this, however, it should be kept in view that before these operations commenced the strong tide of disease and crime was rapidly increasing, and that if we have only checked its growth and arrested its progress, we have done a noble work. All the results beyond that are a mere indication of greater benefits in the future. The greatest obstacle to progress is the vice, ignorance, or apathy of the class sought to be benefited, and as education spreads their co-operation will be secured. We must not, therefore, be discouraged, remembering the value of human life in the eyes of our Creator, revealed to us by our Lord and Saviour—"Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered."