

A letter to William Squire, Esquire ... on the present aspect of the Yarmouth sanitary movement; together with suggestions for its farther development / by C. Lockhart Robertson.

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LETTER

TO

WILLIAM SQUIRE, ESQUIRE,

ONE OF THE PAVING COMMISSIONERS FOR THE BOROUGH,

ON THE

PRESENT ASPECT

OF THE

YARMOUTH SANITARY MOVEMENT;

TOGETHER WITH

SUGGESTIONS FOR ITS FARTHER DEVELOPEMENT

BY

C. LOCKHART ROBERTSON, M.D.

FELLOW OF THE ROYAL COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS, EDIN.

YARMOUTH:

PRINTED BY CHARLES SLOMAN, KING-STREET.

PRICE SIXPENCE.

"The proper execution of drainage works, together with the appliances of hydraulic engineering, cannot be reasonably expected to be dealt with incidentally or collaterally to ordinary occupations, or even to connected professional pursuits, but require a degree of special study, which not only place them beyond the sphere of the discussion of popular administrative bodies, but beyond that of ordinary engineering and architectural purposes."

First Report of the Metropolitan Sanitary Commissioners (presented to both Houses of Parliament by command of Her Majesty) November, 1847.

"None but those who have by personal examination ascertained the state of degradation, both moral and physical, which is exhibited in the vast majority of these dwellings of the labouring classes, both in the Metropolis and the Provincial Towns, can imagine the extent of the evil with which the Society had to grapple in this undertaking.

"Many of these lodging-houses may truly be described as the very hot-beds of vice and crime—a disgrace to humanity—a reproach to the christianity of England; and yet it is in such sinks of iniquity and contamination that the young artizan too often takes up his abode on first arriving in London, or when quitting the paternal roof, and there has every good principle undermined by evil associates, until he becomes a pest to society, and either sinks through disease and want into an untimely grave, or forfeits his freedom to the laws of his country.

"To show the practicability of effecting a great improvement in the existing lodging-houses, the Society began by taking three lodging-houses in one of the worst neighbourhoods in London—*viz.* Charles Street, Drury Lane. These they completely renovated and converted into one house, which has been fitted up with clean and wholesome beds, and all other appurtenances requisite for the health and comfort of eighty-two working men, who pay at the same rate as is charged for the wretched accommodation afforded in ordinary lodging-houses—*viz.* fourpence per night, or two shillings per week, and cheerfully conform to the regulations of the establishment.

"In a financial point of view, this experiment is amply remanerative."

Report of the Society for the Improvement of the Condition of the Labouring Classes, June, 1848.

"No language, however eloquent, no comment, however instructive, could equal the significance of the figures which I have cited as illustrating the great utility of public baths and wash-houses; and, as regards their pecuniary success, it is impossible to furnish you with better testimony than is comprised in the fact, that the guardians of the poor in a great metropolitan parish have recently, out of the poor rates, founded an institution of this nature. They have become witnesses to the financial economy of that sanitary and social boon."

MR. SIMON'S *Annual Report to the City Commissioners of Sewers, 1848.*

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A LETTER,

&c. &c.

ROYAL BARRACKS, GREAT YARMOUTH,

December 12th, 1849.

MY DEAR MR. SQUIRE,

I have to congratulate you and every advocate of Sanitary Reform in this Borough, on the success which has attended the late efforts to obtain a preliminary inquiry into the sanitary condition of the town. The recent visit of a superintending Inspector of the General Board of Health, for the information of that Board, and for the purpose of enabling them to judge of the propriety of obtaining an order in Council for the introduction of the Public Health Act into this town, is likely to be attended with important results.

The facility with which you obtained within one week double the amount of signatures to the petition required by the Act of Parliament (*one-tenth of the rate-payers*) exemplifies strongly the necessity felt by the inhabitants at large, that such an inquiry should take place, and their sense of the inability of the local authorities, with their present limited powers, to carry out those sanitary reforms which the exigencies of the town now demand.

I confess I feel gratified thus to observe that the principle, which two years ago I for the first time here advocated,* of Sanitary Reform, *carried out under the controul of a central Board of Health, empowered by Act of Parliament to enforce the sanitary improvements required, and composed of persons qualified to carry the same into effect here and elsewhere*, has at last been so generally preferred by those whom the measure concerns (the rate-paying householders of the Borough) to the disorganized, and therefore inefficient, efforts of the local authorities, towards accomplishing the same object.

It is also a matter of just pride to reflect that this progress in public opinion has been accomplished throughout the country without any effort to enlist on the side of the wished-for reform, the feelings and passions of the people. Yet if ever there were a cause capable of arousing the minds of the suffering poor to feelings of discontent and hatred towards their rulers, it would be that cause which could, and can still,

* "In compiling the following Lecture, my aim was to demonstrate, by the statement of plain facts, the urgent necessity for the immediate passing into law of a comprehensive sanitary measure; to show by a few illustrations the applicability of remedies to the removal of these facts; and by suitable reflections, to excite the feelings of my audience to a sympathy with the exertions now being made by the Health of Towns Associations, to procure the same during the present session.

"I was fully aware that any attempt at a systematic exposition of the mass of facts accumulated, in evidence of the needfulness of a sanitary reform, and of the practical and scientific information, which has been, by more able labourers in the cause, brought to bear on the remedying of one and all of the long-accumulated sanitary neglects, would, in the limits of a single Lecture, have been hopeless, even had my audience been qualified, by previous education, to appreciate such an exposition, which they were not.

"Indeed, my object was not to teach them how to reform their inferior sanitary condition, but rather to urge them to a co-operation with those who are endeavouring to obtain from the Government a Health of Towns Bill, and a Council of Health, composed of persons qualified to carry into effect the measures necessary to the sanitary reform of individual cities and towns."

*Extract from the Preface to "The Sanitary Condition of Great Yarmouth,"
a Lecture by C. LOCKHART ROBERTSON, M.D. published by the Health
of Towns Association, 1847.*

truthfully point to the existence of unnecessary sickness and premature death, and demonstrate the same to be, in a great measure, the result of their rulers' neglect of the physical laws by which the Creator governs this universe. But in no one instance has such a course been adopted by the advocates of Sanitary Reform : it was to higher motives of action to which alone they appealed. They demonstrated by the aid of the science of vital statistics, the existence in our cities and towns*

* MR. LEE, in opening the recent Sanitary Inquiry, observed "that there is excessive mortality in Yarmouth is beyond a doubt, for I have returns from various places in the county, and on looking at them, there is such excess of disease in Yarmouth, that, by comparing it with other places in your locality, it is at once apparent that the loss entailed by it is far more than the cost of the application of the Public Health Act could be. I will give you figures which must convince you there is such mortality, to the extent I have named. The returns for the county of Norfolk, made to the Registrar-General, are divided into eight districts—of which the first is Wayland, Giltcross, and Depwade; the next, Flegg, Tunstead, Aylsham, and Erpingham, which I find to be more unhealthy than the three places I first named; Loddon, St. Faith's, Henstead, and Blofield, are found to be still more unhealthy than the previous places named; then Norwich, and still going downwards next comes Yarmouth. Now, in the three first places, 1 in 54 of the entire population die annually; in Yarmouth, 1 in 49. Of deaths from epidemic disease, which is a class most powerfully affected by a bad sanitary condition, there is only one in 424 in the Wayland district, against 1 in 298 in Yarmouth. The average age at death, of all who have died, in the former is 35 years and 1 month; in Yarmouth, 33 years and 2 months only: therefore, of all who are born here, there is a loss of life to each of nearly 2 years, as compared with other districts in your own county; and of adult persons who have attained the age of 20, the average age is 60 years in the former, but in Yarmouth only $58\frac{1}{2}$ years, a loss, therefore, of 18 months to each. Wherever the drainage, ventilation, and water supply, is defective, it has been found the mortality among infants is excessive, because they are more susceptible of atmospheric disease and the miasma arising from unremoved decomposing matter. They do not go about from place to place as adults do, but are more stationary in the localities where evils producing disease and death exist, and I find that the proportion of deaths of infants to the entire number of deaths, is as follows:—under 1 year of age, in the first-named district 23 per cent., in Yarmouth $22\frac{1}{2}$ per cent., there is rather less in the latter; under 5 years $32\frac{1}{2}$ per cent., against $34\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. in Yarmouth; under 15 years 40 per cent., in Yarmouth $41\frac{1}{2}$ per cent.; and under 20 years $44\frac{1}{2}$ per cent., in Yarmouth 47 per cent.; so that $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. would be in excess, taking a

of much preventible sickness and premature death, and pointed out the consequent moral obligation which binds all men to guard jealously over God's holy gift of health and life; and, strong in the power of truth, they gained the support of thinking men of all parties and politics, until at last, in the autumn of 1848, a legislative enactment was procured for promoting the public health.

It remains, however, a melancholy fact, that while the noble, the learned, and the good thus united to advance the people's cause of Sanitary Reform, it was long and pertinaciously opposed by those who, since the passing of the Municipal Reform Act, have gained possession of the local government, and the ascendancy in the municipal institutions of this country*—persons whose daily experience should have made them best acquainted with the evils which weigh heavy upon the poor.

The past history of the sanitary movement in this borough may be thus briefly stated. The importance which the question had assumed in public estimation, owing to its advocacy in Parliament and to the efforts of the London Health of Towns' Association, induced the Committee of the

view only of the infantile mortality. As people advance in life, you will find at once there is a greater mortality among old people in the former or more healthy district; the proportion of deaths of aged persons to the entire population is as follows:—

	WAYLAND DIST.	YARMOUTH
Between 50 and 60 years.....	5·2 per cent.	6·7 per cent.
„ 60 „ 70 „	8·0 „	7·7 „
„ 70 „ 80 „	11·5 „	10·2 „
„ 80 „ 90 „	10·4 „	10·4 „
„ 90 and upwards.....	2·0 „	1·3 „

MR. MEALE'S *Report of the Sanitary Inquiry*, p. 9.

* Every true patriot must rejoice at the re-action which is taking place throughout the country, and which will soon, I trust, restore to their legitimate guardians, the municipal and other local offices, and thus rescue these time-honoured institutions of our saxon forefathers from the discredit they have within late years fallen into.

Young Man's Institute for Yarmouth and Southtown, in the autumn of 1847, to request that I should read before this society a Lecture on the subject, which Lecture was subsequently printed at the request of those who heard it. This investigation into the sanitary condition of the town brought many existing evils to light: the sewerage of the town was found to be most deficient; the most crowded localities traversed by open drains, evolving offensive and poisonous gases; and no supply of water existed by which either those drains could be flushed, or fire, if it broke out, extinguished. The slaughter-houses in the centre of the town were also a focus of disease; the refuse of the town was accumulated in the vicinity of many dwellings of the poor; extensive buildings on the Denes were being carried on without any provision whatever for drainage; in one word, (for a repetition of these evils is in this place unnecessary) the sanitary condition of the town appeared in many particulars to be most defective, and long accumulating evils existed, prejudicial alike to health and life.

Such being the state in which the local authorities, hampered as they are with the want of sufficient powers, allowed the town to remain, I felt it to be my duty strongly to urge on my hearers the necessity of co-operating with those who were then endeavouring to procure from the Government a Health of Towns' Bill, and a General Board of Health, qualified to carry out the sanitary reforms required here and in other towns.

On the other hand, the local authorities, thus stimulated into action, endeavoured to carry out their views of sanitary improvements, but without any practical results; meetings of the various bodies were held, but no marked abatement of existing nuisances was then or has since been accomplished.*

* I need scarcely mention the many ineffectual complaints made during the last two years to the Council, the Guardians, and the Paving Commissioners, as

In the mean time, the Public Health Act passed both Houses of Parliament in the autumn of 1848.

Contrary to the example of many other corporate bodies, the Town Council of this Borough did not come forward to solicit from the General Board of Health the application of the Act, with its attendant powers and benefits. Engaged in futile plans, which they had neither power nor funds to carry out, they remained inactive during the winter of 1848-9; and when, in the summer of 1849, the Asiatic Cholera again visited our shores, no preparations of any kind had been made to ward off its attacks. The consequence of this negligence was, that, although the situation of this town is remarkably favorable to a high state of public health, and is calculated to protect its inhabitants from the ravages of epidemic disease, the cholera broke out here, *while no other place on the coast of Norfolk suffered from it.* "At Yarmouth," says the Registrar-General, in his Official Return for the quarter ending September 30, 1849, "the mortality was not double the average; and of fifty-five deaths from cholera in the northern sub-district, eighteen were of persons landed at Yarmouth from London vessels, which had taken in water at the port. *The rest of the coast of Norfolk, (he adds) fenced by sand-banks, and cliffs of sand and gravel on which the sea is encroaching, suffered nothing, and many of the districts in the interior of the county were unusually healthy.*"*

to the condition of the open drain in Mr. Palmer's wood-yard, near the Mariners' Chapel.

The drain is still a public nuisance, and injurious to the health of the neighbourhood. That it is a nuisance difficult to remedy, and requires some skill in engineering, I admit; and I farther hope, and indeed feel sure, that the Staff of the General Board of Health will afford to the Local Board of Health (under the provisions of the public Health Act) suggestions for properly overcoming the difficulties, which appear to have mastered the skill of those employed by the local Board in this work.

* The following are the registrar's notes for the summer quarter, ending September 30, 1849.—"Yarmouth, *Southern District*—Births 91, Deaths 76.

It is foreign to the present subject, and also I think unnecessary, any longer to insist on the intimate connexion between this epidemic and the absence of due sanitary arrangements. The existence of this fact is recognized, not only by those who have paid particular attention to vital statistics and to the health of large communities, but also by others, whose views cannot be said to be in any way biassed towards sanitary theories. Thus, the Bishop of London, in his late Circular Letter (November 30) to the Clergy of the Metropolitan Diocese says:—

“Judging from the unvarying tenour of the reports made by the medical inspectors, and of other persons who have watched the progress of that fatal disease, I do not hesitate to declare my belief, that by far the greatest number of those who have fallen victims to the pestilence might, under GOD’s blessing, have been saved from death, had timely and effectual measures been taken for cleansing and ventilating their dwellings, preventing their over-crowded state, and draining the courts and alleys in which they are situate.”

Similar terms were employed by the Vicar of St. Martin-in-the-Fields, in his Sermon preached on the late Day of Thanksgiving. In referring to this subject he observes:—

“In the late visitation, in many cases the skill of the wisest and ablest has been so baffled, that it is impossible not to recognize in it the

The number of deaths is twenty above the average; the excess is chiefly by deaths from cholera and diarrhoea; eleven from cholera, and fifteen from diarrhoea having been registered; five deaths from scarlatina were also registered in the early part of the quarter: within the last ten days, cholera has entirely disappeared and diarrhoea has very much diminished.

Yarmouth, *Northern District*—Births 102, Deaths 189. The deaths registered this quarter, exceed by one hundred the deaths registered in the corresponding quarter of 1848. There have been thirty-two cases of coroner’s inquests. Cholera has proved fatal in forty-two cases in the district. To these must be added thirteen cases in the workhouse, among persons who were landed at Yarmouth from London vessels on their way to the north; these vessels having taken in their water at the pool, London. Five persons were brought into the district from on ship-board, and died from cholera at private lodgings. The deaths from diarrhoea are fourteen, from typhus, five.—*Quarterly Return of the Marriages, Births, and Deaths, registered in the Divisions, Counties, and Districts of England, No. 3, 1849. p. 63.* Published by authority of the Registrar-General.

direct will of the great Author of our Being. But, at the same time, in still more numerous instances, cause and effect have been so clearly traceable between habitual uncleanness and fatal disease, that it is impossible not to see that much of the evil we have deplored admits of remedial measures; and we are justified in the conclusion, that if we took the necessary steps for purifying unwholesome localities, correcting uncleanness, and improving the dwellings of the poor, however the LORD might otherwise visit us in His displeasure, He would not in the like measure visit us with the scourge under which we have so lately and so severely suffered."

The evident truth of these views, together with the daily growing conviction, that the necessary steps for improving the low sanitary condition of the town, could only be properly attained by such a provision for central controul and adequate local powers as the Public Health Act affords, became at last embodied in the petition which was presented by you last autumn to the General Board of Health, and which led to that inspection of the Superintending Inspector, WILLIAM LEE, Esq. on the termination of which I am now congratulating you and all who with you forwarded this very desirable object.

It was a matter of much personal regret to me, that pressing private affairs detained me in London, and prevented me from tendering my evidence to the Inspector. I have however carefully looked over the Report of the proceedings which you kindly sent to me. I find that the inquiry elicited even more clearly than was formerly stated, the low sanitary condition of the town; or rather, the entire absence of the three great sanitary essentials—sewerage, drainage, and water.

I extract the following descriptions from Mr. MEALL'S Report.

"FULLER'S HILL.—*Green's Alley*, buildings close, no ventilation; five cottages to one pump, water containing flocculent matter; cottages on south side several feet below surface of the alley, privies under the sleeping rooms; visited by small-pox and cholera, six or eight deaths from the latter. Recently white-washed by Board of Guardians.

"NORTH END.—*Ferry-boat Row*, smelt privies, which were very bad two months ago, but have since been cleaned out; pump between two privies, has been out of repair six months, is 'going to be mended.' *Money's Row* (No. 5) privies only six inches from window; only one pump, between two privies; well nine feet off, water impure.—*Wade's Buildings*, very bad, stagnant, open channel.—*Rampant Row*, recently white-washed, but bad drainage.—*Garrison Walk*, the muck-holes, ironically called "Spice Island," town manure brought here and mixed with sand, to be taken up the river; rags picked out and spread on the land to dry. An open ditch contains the only drainage for the north end; horrible stench—quite sufficient bad gas to cause disease for a considerable distance around: Jackman, a twine-spinner, living near, has often been so sick he could not work; and Sir E. Lacon said, persons living in the locality were obliged to burn pastiles: it runs through Messrs. Youell's gardens, who say the foul gases deface and discolour the marks on the flowers, and discolour the looking-glasses; quite enough to destroy life.—*Children's Hospital Garden*, foul piggeries and stagnant ditch.

"ST. GEORGE'S ROAD.—Large pool, into which flows surface drainage from Harrison's fish-office and thirty houses; stench very bad.—Royal Standard public-house, brackish water but very clear.—Mr. G. D. Palmer's premises, water discoloured from percolation.—*St. John's and Alfred Places*, no drainage; lodgers have left in consequence of the stench; twelve houses use one pump; wells close to cesspools; water tolerably colourless.—*Rodney Place*, water foul.

"SOUTH STREET.—*Six-step Alley*, very bad place, below level of street; foul drain, having to be emptied out every week.—*Julier's Alley*, a wretched place, 13 families (great number of children) residing in a court 72 feet by 9 feet; three entirely dilapidated privies without doors, and one without a seat also; brackish water, and cesspool drain; rental 1s. 6d. per week; some of the rooms are under-let.—*Garden Lane*, foul drain, and two privies under the sleeping rooms; water cannot be drunk."

There is much more of the same style contained in the Report of the Inspection.

An inquiry, so generally petitioned and bringing such existing evils to light, must, I conceive, from the tenor of the Act for promoting the Public Health, necessarily result

in an order in council for the application of the act to this Borough. (See § 10.)

I perceive that a certain petition is reported to have been presented at the Inspector's court against the proceedings, and it will doubtless be forwarded by him to the General Board of Health. The following statement by the Board however, will, I think, be sufficient to prove, that no impediment will thereby be thrown in the way of the carrying out in this place of the provisions of the Public Health Act, with its attendant benefits. :—

“ Considering the provisions made for the satisfaction of the rate-payers with the application of the act, we should hesitate to recommend the enforcement of its provisions against the general and deliberate wishes of the inhabitants of any town, when the intended measures were placed fully and fairly before them. But in the face of proved facts of preventible evils under which the great bulk of the population of a town may be suffering, we should be cautious in accepting as the real expression of opinion, declarations against remedies, unless under scrutinies and precautions such as experience has suggested in relation to the guises assumed by such interests as those above indicated. We should not accept as expositions of the aversion of ‘ the people,’ or of the unwillingness of the town, declarations which we know to be got up on ignorant or false representations by the owners of the worst-conditioned tenements, in respect to which it may be requisite to adopt compulsory measures, *or by local functionaries whose powers it may be necessary to supersede ; or by one local party, in the mere spirit of opposition against the measures which may happen to have been initiated by persons belonging to another, or to no local party whatsoever.*”

I most unhesitatingly declare my conviction, that the immediate enforcement of the act will tend to the improvement of the general health of the inhabitants and of the social condition of the labouring classes : and I farther feel satisfied, that the attendant expense, which has been ridiculously over-rated, will not exceed, if it equal, the amount the local

authorities proposed ultimately to expend.* In making this assertion, I include, however, the reduction in existing direct charges; as, for example, the annual expense in cleansing cesspools, which a proper house drainage will avoid; reductions which the local schemes neither contemplated nor could accomplish.

"The contrasts," says the Report of the General Board of Health,† "between the estimates made by the Inspectors upon the improvement in economy and efficiency of construction which have followed the investigations under the Metropolitan Sanitary Commissioners, are so great when compared with those to which the local authorities have been accustomed, that they have frequently incredulously asserted that such works cannot be carried out for any such sums as those named in the reports; nor is it to be expected

* In estimating the expense of sanitary improvements here, the pecuniary loss occasioned by the inferior sanitary condition of the town may very fairly be included in our calculations. "It has been found that funerals, &c. do not cost so little as £5 each on an average, but it has been taken at that sum, so that there may be no excess. It has also been found that, for every death from preventible disease, there are twenty-eight cases of sickness, which cost on an average 20s. each; and this data has enabled those who have drawn out the calculations I have already quoted, see foot-note, page 5, to estimate the pecuniary loss occasioned by deaths which are preventible. Taking Yarmouth, we find there are fifty-two deaths every year in excess; every individual loses one year and eleven months of his life, and every adult, one year and six months; and for every such loss of time there is pecuniary loss in the shape of labour, which, at the low estimate of 7s. 6d. per week, would amount to £7,627; the loss by funerals would be £260; the loss occasioned in the curing of preventible sickness would be £1,456; making a total annual loss to the town of £9,343. Every man must be convinced that the amount fixed for wages is sufficiently low, and therefore, *however enormous the sum named may seem, I believe its accuracy cannot be called in question; and I have little hesitation in saying, that any measures which might be carried out under the Public Health Act, would not cost anything like the sum now annually lost to the Inhabitants by excessive sickness and death.*" (MR. LEE.)

† Report to the General Board of Health on the measures adopted for the execution of the Nuisances Removal and Diseases Prevention Act, and the Public Health Act, up to July, 1849. Presented to both Houses of Parliament, by command of Her Majesty.

that they would be, unless under such securities as those to which we must subsequently advert."

To the poor, the introduction of the act will be a positive boon; but it is equally certain that the larger owners of property will benefit by the measure. Of this truth both classes would seem to be equally sensible. "The feelings manifested by the inhabitants of the poorest districts," it is stated in the Report of the General Board of Health, "were in the first instance surprise at the novelty of an official visit of inspection by an officer acting under the authority of the government, and then satisfaction; next, complaints as to their condition; and lastly, urgent requests that something might be done for them. They readily threw open their doors and gave every explanation to the inspectors. The extensive manifestation of a sense of their condition by the poorest classes, has afforded important promise of the success of the new works contemplated by the legislature. Had those classes evinced a spirit of resistance to measures of improvement, had they shown a preference for dirt, or an indifference to works of cleansing, their introduction might have been much more difficult; but although the objections to new rates and the pleas of poverty were frequent, as might be expected, yet where there were opportunities of informing them of the real character of the charges contemplated, and asking them whether they were willing to pay rates in return for the advantages promised, there was a fair and generally very hearty expression of good will to do so."

So also with the larger owners. The Report of the General Board of Health states that, "some of the best supporters of the measures of local improvement are the large owners, whose interests indeed are the most permanent, and when closely and strictly examined, are found to be, in respect to the proposed works, most in coincidence with those of the poorest class of occupiers."

On the other hand, the chief opposition which the Board has commonly experienced to the introduction of the act has been "from the owners of the lowest-conditioned tenements ; often from those where the highest rents were obtained ; and most frequently from those where the payment of rates was nevertheless excused."

The general sanitary objects which the introduction of the Public Health Act will attain are, as you are aware, a general system of drainage and sewerage, a supply of water, the removal of all nuisances, street cleansing, the registration and inspection of slaughter-houses, lodging-houses, &c. &c.

You will observe that, under the provisions of this act, (section 12) the Town Council of the borough will, in the instance of Great Yarmouth, be constituted the Local Board of Health.

The powers which they, as the Local Board of Health in this borough will possess, are very ample. They will have the selection of their own officers (inspector of nuisances, &c.), the power of making both a general and special district rate at their discretion, and even of exempting any premises, already well drained, from any district rate imposed for new drainage (section 86). Again, the entire controul over the sewerage, the supply of water, the condition of the public streets, the removal of nuisances, the burial-grounds, the registration of slaughter-houses, the making of contracts, are one and all confided to the Local Board.

This slight sketch of the powers thus conveyed (which may better be understood by consulting the act itself) will at once prove the weakness of that cry which has been raised in certain quarters, as to the town being able to conduct their own sanitary affairs without the interference of the General Board of Health. Now, whatever doubts may have been raised as to their power of so acting, it is certain

that the intention of the powers of the Public Health Act, as is plain from the whole tenor of that Act, was not only to extend their present, but also to confer on them additional powers of a very important nature.

The General Board will exercise a certain superintendence over their actions, chiefly as regards expenditure, not, as has been so incorrectly stated at the council and elsewhere, with the view of adding greatly to the expenditure and rates of the town, but on the other hand, to *controul undue extravagance* (§ 119), and *prevent the unfair imposition of district rates* (§ 120), &c. &c.

May the ample powers which they will thus be armed with, and the organised arrangements and means of obtaining scientific opinions on their measures which will then be at their command, enable them fully to carry out the object of the enactment, with all the wise provisions it makes for the protection of the public health.

The due balance which, under this act, is maintained between local government on the one side and central controul on the other, certainly leads me to anticipate measures more adapted for the public weal, and particularly for the protection of the health of the labouring classes, than are offered by the operation of the various powers now under sundry acts committed to the corporation, paving commissioners, and guardians—powers which, by the conflict of separate interests and party feeling, have been rendered totally ineffectual for the carrying out the objects proposed.

Pending however the introduction of the Public Health Act, and the realization of the benefits to be derived from its application, permit me to remind you, that it does not become those who, in spite of much opposition, have attained the first principles of Sanitary Reform, to rest satisfied with this success.

Sanitary Reform, like every other great principle, must gradually pass through successive stages of developement. And, reflecting how intimately the physical and moral condition of the people are connected, how "the evils which render them an easy prey to disease and death, likewise place them at a hopeless distance from the Church's teaching and ministry,"* I cannot shrink from offering suggestions, which, however feeble, may tend to the FARTHER DEVELOPEMENT OF THIS THE YARMOUTH SANITARY MOVEMENT.

II.—The point to which, under this head of my Letter, I would desire to call your attention, is the urgent necessity for some effective and permanent improvement of the domiciliary condition of the working class, particularly of that of the very poorest. And I conceive, as has eloquently been observed by one† who has ably devoted the influence of his high rank to the cause of England's poor, that "the present time is singularly favourable for such an effort. We have been spared, by God's mercy, the profligacy and demoralization so often the consequences of pestilence and mortality; the people have been rather softened than exasperated by their sufferings. The valuable reports of MR. GRANGER to the Board of Health, and of MR. SIMON to the Corporation of London, will attest that they are labouring under no prejudice, nor belief of poisoned wells, and sinister attempts to reduce the population; nay, the reverse; they are really grateful to those who have visited from house to house in their behalf; and, having acquired at last a better understanding of their own physical and social exigencies, are most ready to receive any counsels that friendly and experienced persons might be disposed to give them."

* "I remarked in my last letter, that persons immersed in misery and filth, are for the most part inaccessible to the motives and consolations of the Gospel."

Circular letter of the Bishop of London, Nov. 30, 1849.

† LORD ASHLEY. *Letter to the Editor of the 'Times,' October 16th, 1849.*

No sanitary arrangements can in any way be considered as fulfilling their object, which do not take this the domiciliary condition of the labouring classes into consideration; and no attempts such as those which have recently been making towards improving 'the health of the community at large, by placing it under the guardianship of the General Board of Health, can attain the desired object, if the poor do not possess within their dwellings the necessary means of cleanliness and decency.

Now that, throughout this Christian land, the very poor really have not within their reach these first essentials to health and religion, the means of cleanliness and decency, is no mere talk of sanitary reformers, as some would have it believed—but a stern truth. Let those who doubt it visit in the larger towns of this kingdom the dwellings of the poor; and, awful as are the descriptions published by the various Health of Towns Commissioners and Associations, they will find them fall short of the 'monstrous reality.'* And, although the

* "Last and not least, among the influences prejudicial to health in the city of London, as elsewhere, must be reckoned the social condition of the lower classes: and I refer to this the more especially, because, often, in discussion of sanitary subjects before your honourable court, the filthy, or slovenly, or improvident, or destructive, or intemperate, or dishonest habits of these classes, are cited as an explanation of the inefficiency of measures designed for their advantage. It was constantly urged, that to bring improved domestic arrangements within the reach of such persons is a waste and folly; that if you give them a coal-skuttle, a washing-basin, and a water-closet, each of these several utensils will be applied to the purpose of another, or one to the purposes of all; and that meanwhile the objects of your charitable solicitude will remain in the same unredeemed lowness and misery as before. Now it is unquestionable, and I admit it, that in houses containing all the sanitary evils which I have enumerated—undrained, and waterless, and unventilated—there do dwell whole hordes of persons who struggle so little in self-defence against that which surrounds them, that they may be considered almost indifferent to its existence, or almost acclimated to endure its continuance. It is too true that among these classes, there are swarms of men and women who have yet to learn that human beings should dwell differently from cattle; swarms to whom personal cleanliness is utterly unknown; swarms by whom delicacy and decency in their social relations are quite unconceived. Men and women, boys and girls, in scores of each, using jointly one single, common

condition of the dwellings of the poor in this town is in no way so sad as that of the Metropolis, it is nevertheless clearly proved to be very far from what it might or ought to be, as well by the extracts from the Report of the recent Inquiry made at p. 10, as also by the result of our recent inspection.

Wretched as is the condition of the dwellings of the poor, that of the common lodging-houses infinitely exceeds in misery.* I would recall to your recollection the description

privy; grown persons of both sexes sleeping in common with their married parents; a woman suffering travail in the midst of the males and females of three several families of fellow-lodgers, in a single room; an adult son sharing his mothers bed during her confinement. Such are instances recently within my knowledge (and I might easily adduce others) of the degree and of the manner in which a people may relapse into the habits of savage life, when their domestic condition is neglected, and when they are suffered to habituate themselves to the uttermost depths of physical obscenity and degradation."—*Mr. Simons' Annual Report to the City Commissioners of Sewers, 1848.*

* In an able exposure of the physical and moral evils of the London lodging-houses for the poor, in the Quarterly Review, No. CLXIII (December, 1847) I find the following passage: "We will keep to the mass of those hospitable mansions which hold out to every humble stranger in London, the promise of good entertainment. He enters the first, perhaps the largest, and finds it to consist of seven apartments of very moderate dimensions. Here are stowed, besides children, sixty adults, a goodly company of males and females of every profession of fraud and violence, with a very few poor and industrious labourers. He turns to another hostel, the reader will not, we know, proceed without misgivings; but we assure him our picture is drawn from real life:—The parlour measures 18 ft. by 10 ft., beds are arranged on each side of it, composed of straw, rags, and shavings, all in order, but not decently. Here he sees twenty-seven male and female adults and thirty-one children, with several dogs, in all, fifty-eight human beings, in a contracted den, from which light and air are systematically excluded. He seeks the upper room as more likely to remind him of his native hills: it measures 12 ft. by 10 ft. and contains six beds, which in their turn contain thirty-two individuals, and these bearing but little resemblance to Alexander the Great, Cujas the lawyer, or Lord Herbert of Cherbury; whose bodies yielded naturally a fine perfume. Disgusted, once more he turns with hope to the tranquillity of a smaller tenement; here, groping his way up an ascent more like a flue than a staircase, he finds a nest of four tiny compartments, and they are all full. It is however in vain to search further. The evening has set in; the tenants are returned to their layers; the dirt, confusion, and obscenity baffle alike tongue, pen, or paint-brush; but if our bewildered novice would have for the night a roof over his head, he must share the floor with as many men, women, and babies as it has space for."

you gave of your visit by night, in company with Mr. LEE, to the lodging-houses of this town.* Promiscuous overcrowding, stench, and filth, was, I think, your summary of their condition. Mr. MEALL has kindly furnished me with the following extract from his notes of this visit. It requires no comment:—

“*LODGING-HOUSES, Tuesday Evening, Nov. 13, 1849.*—Mrs. ———, Charlotte-Street.—Five persons sleeping head and tail, like herrings, in bed very dilapidated; woman and her son about fifteen years at the head, and three children from five years to ten at the foot, these latter belonged to quite another family; two other beds with two inmates each, in same room, about 12 feet by 12 feet and 6 feet high. Mrs. ———, Charlotte-Street.—Four beds in room, 15 feet by 15 feet and 8 feet high, two in each bed; another room 15 feet by 15 feet and 6 feet high, five beds, two in each—in one a woman about thirty-five years was sleeping *naked* with a lad sixteen, likewise *naked*: both strangers.”

All writers on the science of health concur in the statement, that this inferior condition of the dwellings of the poor is one great cause of the extra mortality and shortening of life existing in our towns, while the spiritual instructors of the people point to this same state of things—this absence of all means of cleanliness, and even of decency—as the greatest impediment to the general spread of education and religion.

Let the following extract from LORD ASHLEY's Letter suffice; did space admit, I might indefinitely multiply my proofs:—

“I have long entertained a belief, which is confirmed by hourly investigation, and the opinion of many friends who are joined with me

* I am aware that in section 66 of the Public Health Act, provision is made for the registration, inspection, &c. of the common lodgings. But improvements so great as the present class of lodging-houses require, will, it is evident, be much more efficiently and rapidly brought about by the establishment of self-paying houses of a superior order, such as I am about to sketch. Besides, it is only in such establishments that that moral control over conduct, often so requisite, can be attempted to be exercised.

in these inquiries, that a very large proportion of the pauperism of the country, with its appalling train of debilitated frames, widows, and orphans, is the result of the sanitary condition to which our neglect has abandoned such vast multitudes.

“As for the moral mischiefs, their name is Legion. I can call to witness, I am sure, every minister of religion, the Scripture readers, the city missionaries, the district visitors. They will concur with me in declaring, that to aim at the spiritual improvement of the fetid swarms that, without either the practice or the possibility of decency, without limitation of age, sex, or numbers, crowd the stinking apartments of the lanes, courts, and alleys of this great Metropolis, is a vain and fruitless effort. The work, too, of education is altogether baffled; for the child, returning to these abodes of promiscuous and animal life, unlearns in a single hour the lessons of an entire day.”

It will be a great satisfaction to you to learn that these sad evils admit of an easy remedy.

The Society for the Improvement of the Condition of the Labouring Classes have, by their recent efforts, indisputably demonstrated that every comfort requisite for health, as cleanliness, ventilation, drainage, water, baths, gas, &c. &c., can be supplied to the poor in their dwellings for the same rental now generally asked for the wretched places I have just stated to be inhabited by them. This they have accomplished by means of their model lodging-houses. These houses are of three different classes, for the accommodation of families, single men, and single women, and are erected on two different principles, *viz.* new model buildings, and secondly, old houses fitted up for their present purposes. The result of these experiments is embodied in the following remarks, which I extract from one of the Society's printed Statements:—

“The cost of these buildings, erected under contract in a substantial manner, warrants the Committee in the confident belief, that, whilst securing a remunerating rate of interest on the outlay, they afford to the occupants accommodations of a very superior description to those at present attainable by the labouring classes, and that at a lower rent than is now commonly paid. The Committee hope and

believe, also, that the detailed statement, which they are prepared to lay before the public (showing a return of six per cent. net on the cost of the buildings, and of four and a half per cent. on the cost of the land, held on lease for ninety-nine years) will encourage many benevolent individuals to promote the erection in their own neighbourhood of similar dwellings, and thereby conduce to the moral as well as the physical welfare of a large class of their poorer brethren, who at present have not the opportunity of bringing up their families with a due regard even to the decencies of life, and are thus placed in circumstances tending greatly to counteract the influence of all religious instruction.

“It may be proper to state, that the cost of these buildings has been increased by the unfavourable nature of the ground for foundations, and the temporary high price of bricks; under ordinary circumstances, and with the recent reduction of duty on building materials, the cost of similar houses would be reduced, and consequently a larger per centage returned on the outlay.”

The limits of a letter, which I fear I have already much exceeded, will only allow me to refer to the details of one of these classes of model lodging-houses, and I therefore select that which I think can be most readily adopted here, *viz.* the manner in which old and ill-arranged buildings may be renovated and fitted up, not, indeed, in such a manner as to attain the standard of accommodation supplied in new buildings, but still to effect a vast improvement upon the existing state of things, and to secure the possession of many comforts at present unknown in such buildings.

With this view, the Committee have undertaken, two distinct models—one a lodging-house for men, and the other for women. That for men, which is in Charles-Street, Drury Lane, originally consisted of three separate tenements, occupied as lodging-houses of the very lowest description; a lease of these premises for twenty-eight years was taken, at a rent of £45 per annum; they were entirely remodelled and the interior thrown into one house, the greater part of the yard was covered over and formed into a living or common room;

a scullery and requisite offices, with a bath, were added—the whole of which, together with the fittings, furniture, &c., cost the sum of £1163.

For the comfortable accommodation afforded in this house, the lodgers pay the same amount as is usually charged in the neighbouring wretched lodging-houses for a single bed—*viz.* 4*d.* for each night, but if they remain a week the charge is 2*s.* for the week—the object of the Society being not to lower the price, but to improve the quality of the dwellings, and in no other way to assume the position of rival landlords. After deducting all expenses, including the wages of the superintendent and assistant, fuel, light, and other incidentals, together with rent, taxes, and interest on the amount of outlay, this house has been found, in a pecuniary point of view, the most profitable of the Society's undertakings.

All the lodging-houses are furnished, and the inmates are supplied with utensils for their food and other purposes, which must be returned, or made good at their leaving.

In all these lodging-houses rules exist for the purpose of insuring cleanliness, sobriety, carefulness, and general propriety of conduct, any infraction of which subjects the offender to immediate expulsion. For the sake of those who choose to avail themselves of the opportunity, Scripture readings are appointed to take place in the common room every evening, at nine o'clock; and copies of the Scriptures, with other well-chosen books, are left in charge of the superintendent for distribution among the lodgers, in the hope that they may thus be induced to occupy their leisure to advantage.

I recently was much interested with a visit I paid in company with the late rector of this parish to one of these model lodging-houses.

While, however, these institutions are, when once established, remunerative, it is equally true that the poor, engaged in daily toil and destitute alike of capital and of leisure, cannot

themselves originate such a scheme. The initiation therefore must rest with others; and to their energy and christian zeal I would now commend the scheme of a model lodging-house, as one worthy of their efforts. On the one hand, the many sea-faring men* in temporary residence at this port; and on the other, the number of single women employed in Mr. BROWN's well-conducted factory, are evidently two classes of persons whose moral and physical well-being would in the highest degree be ameliorated by lodging-houses on the model of the London Society. Each of these classes have great claims on society; at present they mutually contaminate each other; but who could limit the amount of benefit which such houses would be the means of extending among both parties—benefits influencing alike the temporal and spiritual welfare, not only of those who would participate in the advantages of these houses, but also of many others within the sphere of their influence.

The Society for the Improvement of the Condition of the Labouring Classes express in their report a perfect willingness to form District Associations, and to co-operate with all who may be willing to aid in the advancement of this good work. They likewise freely place all their plans and the results of their experience at the disposal of the public.

III.—The only other point to which I should briefly wish to allude before concluding this letter, is to the entire absence in this town of the means of personal cleanliness—of public baths and wash-houses.

The importance of these establishments cannot be exaggerated.

In the first place, the skin is one of the means whereby the system relieves itself of much matter prejudicial to health.

* Shoulds these suggestions be carried out, it would probably be expedient to devote one establishment entirely for the accommodation of sailors—A SAILORS' HOME.

The average daily exhalation from the skin in a state of health is thirty ounces. If, however, personal cleanliness be neglected, the pores of the skin are soon filled up, and consequently this noxious matter circulates with the fluids, predisposing to various blood-diseases, as scrofula, fever, rheumatism, &c.

Now, at the present time, there are certainly two-thirds of the inhabitants of this town who have not the means of personal ablution in their reach.

Again, the injurious influence of the moisture and damp arising from the washing and drying of linen in the rooms inhabited by the poor (as is their daily practice) is self-evident, and need not to be enlarged on here.

In consequence principally of the efforts of the REV. SIR HENRY DUCKINFIELD, an act was framed in the autumn of 1846 (9th and 10th Vict. cap. LXXIV), to encourage the establishment of public baths and wash-houses, and regulate the controul of the same.

The results furnished by the model baths and wash-houses established under this act in the parish of St. Martin-in-the-Fields, are most encouraging. From the date of their opening, 23rd of January, 1849, to the 23rd of November,

The total number of bathers has been 178,085

The receipts £2639 6 8

The laundries are yet only partially ready. From the 9th of October to the 17th of November, 1849,

The number of washers has been 1328

The receipts £19

On the other hand, the rate of expenditure has been less than £2000 a year.

From these data, it is evident that the establishment has been largely had recourse to; and also that, after paying current expenses, a fair sum is even now left for rental.

In estimating this relative income and expenditure, it is to be borne in mind that, in this model establishment, expenses have been incurred which experience has proved to be unnecessary; and also that the site and style of the building erected by the churchwardens in that, the royal parish, are more expensive than they would in this place require to be.

Mr. SIMON, in his Report, refers to another similar establishment, in George-Street, Euston-Square. "During the year 1848," he says, "the number of payments made here for bathing was 111,788; the number of payments for washing in the laundries 246,760. This establishment has not only proved self-supporting, but has been enabled to accumulate a large surplus, which is now being applied to enlarge and improve the building."

Seeing then the necessity, and also the practicability, of erecting such establishments, you will be pleased to learn that the act I have referred to (9th and 10th Vict. cap. LXXIV.) gives to the Corporation in this borough power immediately to erect a public bath and wash-house, for the general use of the inhabitants (§ 3); and also provides authority for borrowing the necessary money for the erection of the building from the Public Works Loan Commissioners (§ 22); while § 24 entitles them to appropriate any of the borough lands for the purposes of this act.

This act also regulates the charges to be demanded for the use of such public baths and wash-houses on the following scales, which are the maximum charges to be made:—

I.—Baths for the labouring classes, supplied with clean water for every bather, or for several children bathing together: For one person above eight years old, including the use of one clean towel—

Cold bath	....	....	....	....	one penny
Warm bath	....	....	....	....	two pence

For several children, not exceeding four, including the use of one clean towel, for every child—

Cold bath	....	....	....	....	two pence
Warm bath	....	....	....	....	four pence

II.—Wash-houses for the labouring classes, supplied with conveniences for washing and drying cloths and other articles:

For the use by one person of one washing tub or trough, or one pair of washing tubs or troughs—

For one hour only in any one day one penny

For two consecutive hours only in one day three pence

Such charges to include the use of the drying apparatus for drying all articles washed. The time occupied in drying not to be included in the hour or two hours. A fraction of one hour, exceeding five minutes, to be reckoned one hour.

Besides this, extra charges may be made for a better class of accommodation for bathers of the higher classes. At the St. Martin's bath-houses a large profit is realized for such baths at the charge of sixpence.

Farther, the Public Health Act has a distinct section (78) for facilitating the supply, by the local Board of Health, of water to such an establishment, in the event of water-works being introduced into the town.

The necessity of public baths and wash-houses is self-evident; they are in the next place found to be self-remunerative—indeed, to yield a considerable amount of profit; thirdly, the legislature have provided for their construction and government: I trust therefore that further argument will not be needed in order to convince the members of the Corporation of the expediency of their immediate adoption in this town.

Foremost in these sanitary reforms stand the Bishop of London and the Clergy of the National Church in the Metropolis, thus evincing to the poor that they, who there

minister to them in spiritual things, are not neglectful of their temporal wants. Nor are they alone in carrying out the good work ; together with them are associated men high in rank and influence, and already their efforts are visibly being accomplished.

Against the immediate adoption here of the schemes which I have now brought to your notice, the plea of economy cannot be urged. The model lodging-houses, the baths, and wash-houses to which I have referred are self-supporting ; Parliament has provided for the erection of the latter ; and I cannot suppose that the Christian philanthropy of this town will, when the necessity and advantage of the former are fairly represented, refuse its aid and support towards the organization of a model lodging-house.

Before concluding these hasty reflections, I would recall to your recollection a beautiful passage bearing on the subject of this letter, contained in that which, in some respects, is perhaps the best of Mr. DICKENS' larger works, (I prefer his Christmas Stories) *The Old Curiosity Shop*, assured that the sentiments there so eloquently expressed will generally be responded to :—

“And let me,” he writes, “linger in this place for an instant to remark that, if ever household affections and loves are graceful things, they are graceful in poor. The ties that bind the wealthy and the proud to home may be forged on earth ; but those which link the poor man to his humble hearth are of the truer metal, and bear the stamp of Heaven. The man of high descent may love the halls and lands of his inheritance as a part of himself ; as trophies of his birth and power ; his associations with them are associations of pride, and wealth, and triumph : the poor man's attachment to the tenement he holds, which strangers have held before and may to-morrow occupy again, has a worthier root, struck deep into a purer soil ; his household gods are of flesh and

blood, with no alloy of silver, gold, or precious stone ; he has no property but in the affections of his own heart ; and when they endear bare floors and walls, despite of rags, and toil, and scanty fare, that man has his love of home from God, and his rude hut becomes a solemn place !

“ Oh ! if those who rule the destinies of nations would but remember this—if they would but think how hard it is for the very poor to have engendered in their hearts that love of home, from which all domestic virtues spring, when they live in dense and squalid masses where social decency is lost, or rather never found—if they would but turn aside from the wide thoroughfares and great houses, and strive to improve the wretched dwellings in bye-ways, where only poverty may walk, many lowly roofs would point more truly to the sky than the loftiest steeple that now rears proudly up from the midst of guilt, and crime, and horrible disease, to mock them by its contrast. In hollow voices from workhouse, hospital, and gaol, this truth is preached from day to day, and has been proclaimed for years. It is no light matter—no outcry from the working vulgar—no mere question of the people’s health and comfort, that may be whistled down on Wednesday nights. In love of home, the love of country has its rise ; and who are the truer patriots, or the better in time of need—those who venerate the land, owning its wood, and stream, and earth, and all that they produce ? or those who love their country, boasting not a foot of ground in all its wide domain ? ”

With renewed expressions of my esteem for your recent efforts in the cause of Sanitary Reform,

Believe me,

Yours sincerely,

C. L. ROBERTSON.

