

Observations on the condition of the middle and lower classes in the north of Ireland, as it tends to promote the diffusion of contagious fever; with the history and treatment of the late epidemic disorder, as it prevailed in an extensive district of that country. And a detail of the measures adopted to arrest its progress / [Francis Rogan].

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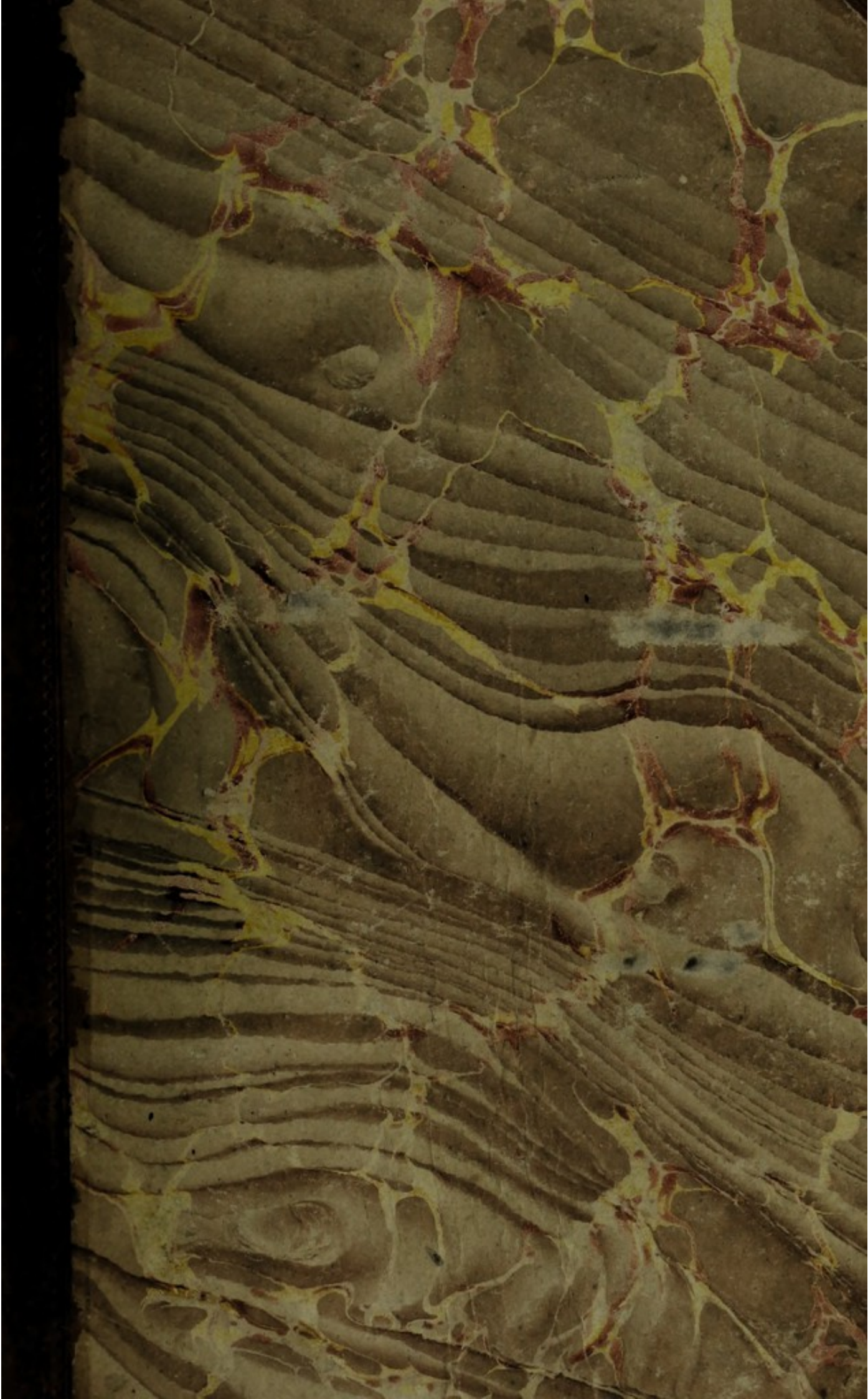
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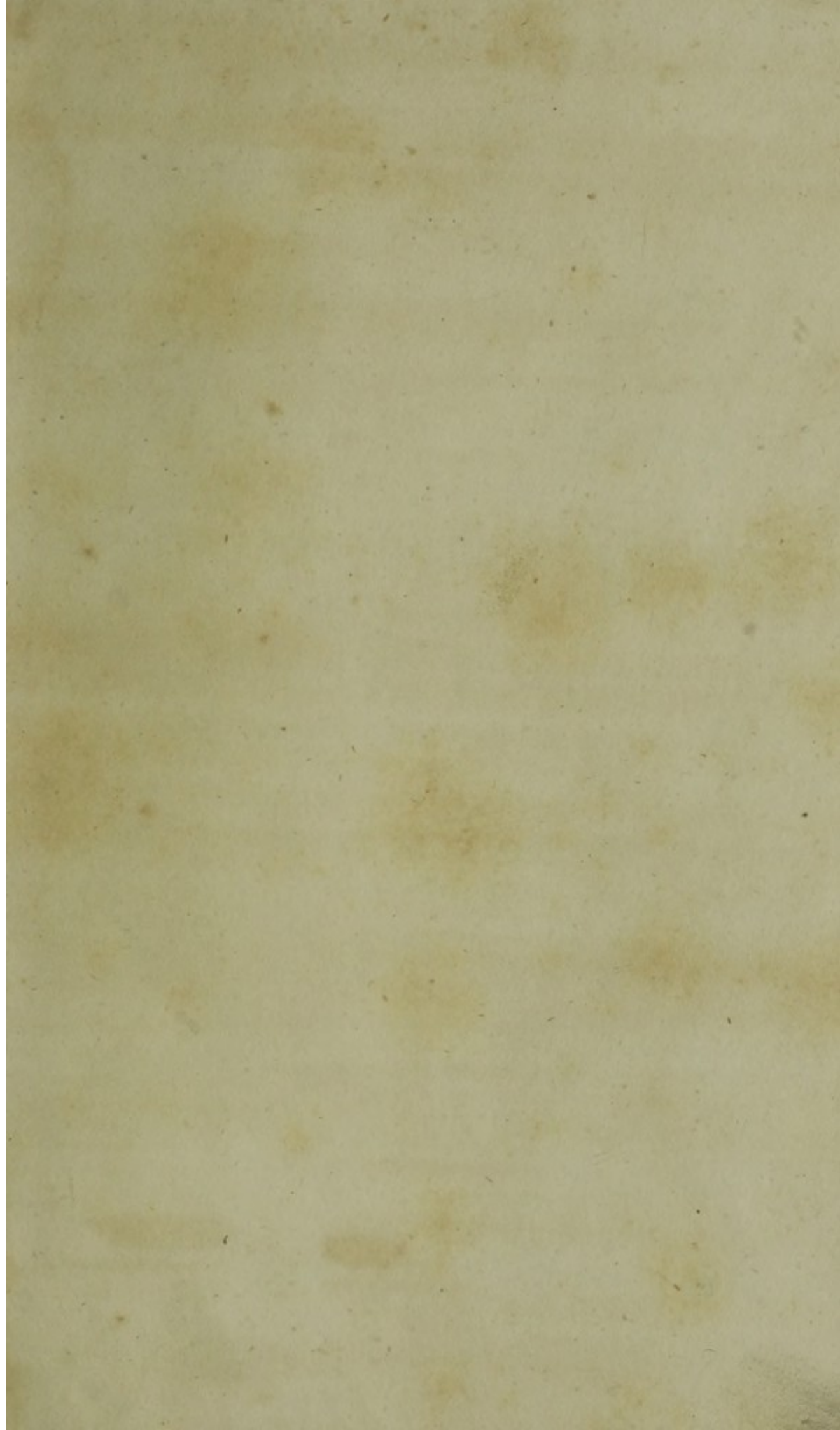


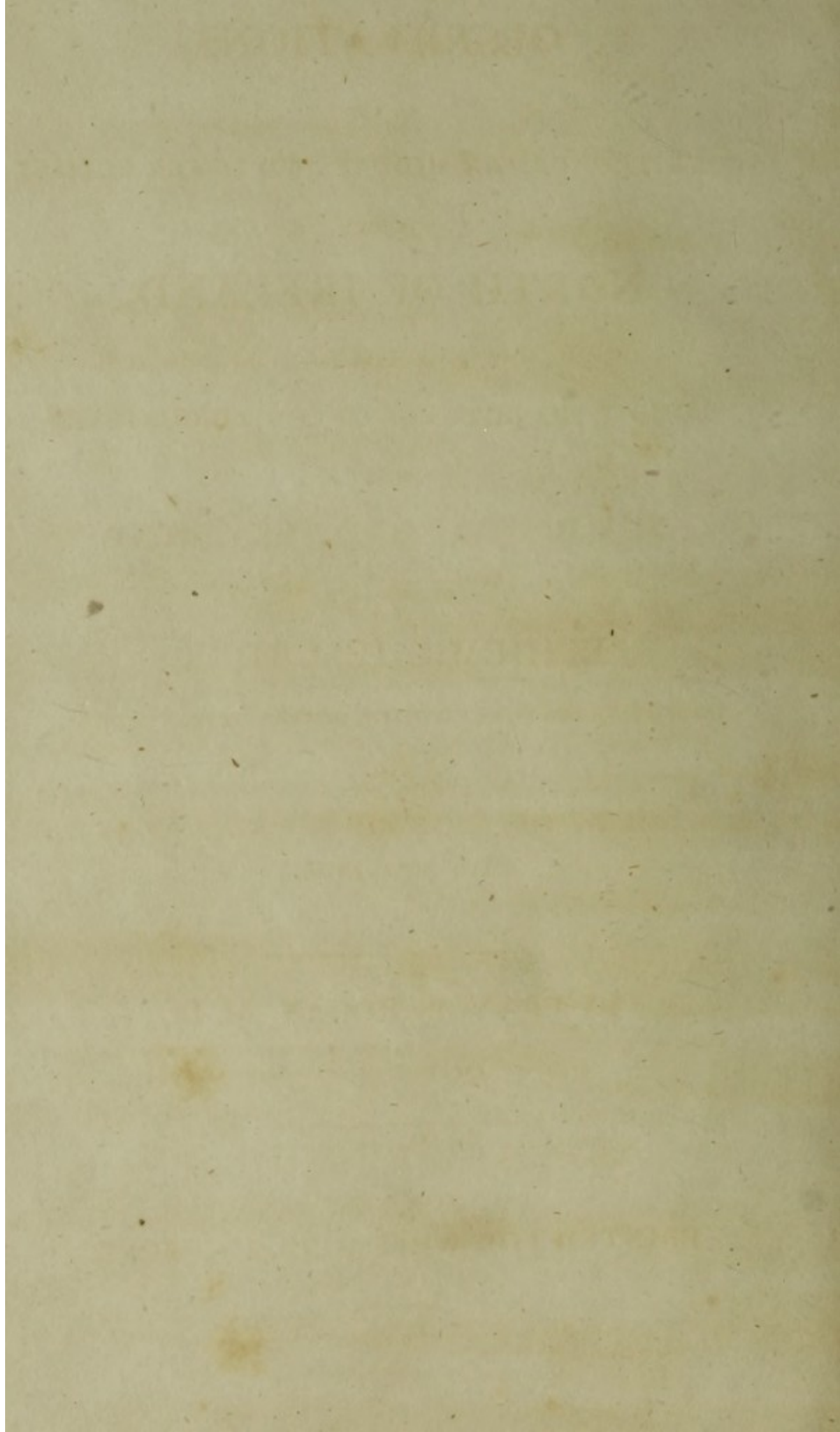
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ROGAN, F.





OBSERVATIONS
ON THE
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IN THE
NORTH OF IRELAND,
AS IT TENDS TO
PROMOTE THE DIFFUSION OF CONTAGIOUS FEVER;
WITH
THE HISTORY AND TREATMENT
OF THE LATE
EPIDEMIC DISORDER,
AS IT PREVAILED IN AN EXTENSIVE DISTRICT OF THAT COUNTRY;
AND
A DETAIL OF THE MEASURES ADOPTED TO ARREST
ITS PROGRESS.

BY FRANCIS ROGAN, M. D.,

MEMBER OF THE ROYAL COLLEGE OF SURGEONS IN IRELAND, AND PHYSICIAN TO THE
STRABANE FEVER HOSPITAL AND DISPENSARY.

LONDON:
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CHARING-CROSS.

1819.

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TO
SIR JOHN JAMES BURGOYNE,
PROVOST OF STRABANE.

DEAR SIR JOHN,

IN publishing an account of the means adopted for the suppression of Fever, throughout the extensive estates of the Marquis of Abercorn, intrusted to your care, I feel called on to state that much of the success, attendant on those means, was owing to the zeal with which you caused every measure, likely to prove useful in checking the progress of contagion, to be carried into immediate operation; and that, without such exertions on your part, it would have been impossible to effect that extensive good which has actually resulted from them.

Accept my best thanks for the steady friendship with which you have always favoured me; and believe me,

Dear Sir John,
Your faithful and obedient Servant,
FRANCIS ROGAN.

SIR JOHN JAMES BURGESS

PROVOST OF STURABANE

INTRODUCTION

Dear Sir John,

In publishing an account of the means adopted for the suppression of Fever throughout the extensive estates of the Marquis of Abercorn, entrusted to your care, I feel called on to state that much of the success, attendant on those means, was owing to the zeal with which you pursued every measure likely to prove useful in checking the progress of contagion, to be carried into immediate operation; and that without such exertions on your part, it would have been impossible to effect that extensive good which has actually resulted from them.

Accept my best thanks for the steady friendship with which you have always favoured me; and believe me,

Yours truly, Sir John, James Burgess

Your faithful and obedient servant,

FRANCIS HOGAN

INTRODUCTION.

THERE are few subjects more deserving the serious attention, not only of the medical profession, but of the Public in general, than an inquiry into the causes which give rise to Contagious Fever, and the means best calculated for preventing its diffusion. It seems well ascertained, that nearly one-tenth of the annual mortality of the Empire is imputable to this disease; and people in every rank of life in this island have, of late, but too amply experienced the great distress occasioned by any member of a family labouring under it. The minds of the nearest relatives are

filled with dread, lest life should be endangered, in affording to the sick the attentions rendered necessary by their situation, and dictated as well by affection as humanity. Universal alarm is excited throughout the neighbourhood in which the disease is known to exist, and all intercourse with the infected house is cautiously avoided, as the danger of receiving the contagion is supposed to be infinitely greater than is really the case, owing to the ignorance generally prevalent respecting the laws by which its propagation is controlled ; and when to these we add the numbers who, from the expenses incurred by the sickness of their families, or the death of those on whom they depended for support, are reduced to a state of poverty, from which they never afterwards are able to emerge, the object must appear of such importance, that scarcely any sacrifice on the part of the community would be too great to expect,

if it can be made appear that, by it, the suppression of fever might be effected.

The disease so prevalent in most parts of Ireland, during the two last years, claims our attention, as well in consequence of having affected a much larger portion of the population than any former epidemic, as for having afforded the most ample field for ascertaining the relative efficacy of the different means hitherto advised for the cure or prevention of fever. Were we possessed of histories of the complaint, as it appeared in different districts, we should then be enabled to ascertain the circumstances by which its progress has been arrested in some places, whilst it has continued unabated in others ; or, if checked for a time, has broken out with new virulence, and still seems to increase, notwithstanding the measures employed to remove it. Nor can we discover why, in some parts of the kingdom, it has proved so

much more fatal than in others ; unless by considering the difference resulting from peculiarity of situation—increased malignancy of the epidemic, greater previous sufferings amongst the poor, or variation in the mode of treatment pursued.

From such an inquiry it would, I think, be evident that although all the causes to which fever is owing cannot be guarded against, by far the greater number require only moderate exertion to effect their complete removal. The higher classes would have sufficient proof that inattention, on their parts, to the comfort of the lower orders, amongst whom the disease usually originates, is sure to bring its own punishment. They would perceive the necessity of using every means for bettering the condition of the poor, as the only certain method of protecting themselves from this formidable disease, which the experience of the late epidemic has proved to be pe-

cularly fatal in the upper ranks of society. They would learn that, by mitigating the distresses of the indigent, they increase their own prospect of enjoying, for a longer period, the goods of this world; and might, therefore, be induced to contribute a more liberal portion of them towards supporting the different institutions which have been formed for relieving the poor in sickness, or increasing their comforts in health.

Highly-valuable information respecting the late epidemic has already been communicated to the Public; but, as all the works on the subject, which I have yet seen, one excepted, treat of it as it prevailed in our large towns, I should hope that our knowledge will be somewhat increased by an account of it as affecting the population of the country, whose habits and constitutions differ so much from those of the same class residing in crowded cities,

as to justify us in supposing that, from these causes, the mode of treatment would require to be considerably modified.

However true it may be, respecting diseases in general, that the field of observation open to a country practitioner, bears small proportion to that presented to the physicians of hospitals in large towns, the remark is not applicable to the late epidemic ; since its universal prevalence enabled every one engaged in the practice of medicine, who reflected on the subject, to form a correct opinion of the causes to which the disease owed its origin, and the efficacy of the different means employed for its suppression. Of however little value the following remarks may prove, their demerits are not to be imputed to my not having had sufficient opportunities of witnessing the disorder. The situation of Medical Attendant at the Strabane Dispensary, which I have held for some years,

has placed under my care almost all the sick poor of an extensive and populous district; and, during the last two years, above two thousand cases of fever were entered upon the books of that institution, of whom above five hundred were treated in the Fever Hospital—whilst the medical establishments on the estates of the Marquis of Abercorn, of which an account will be found in another part of this work, where above three thousand patients were assisted, afforded still greater scope for observing the epidemic under every variety of circumstance.

In the following pages I purpose to give a brief account of the fever as it prevailed in the district placed under my care, and to detail the regulations adopted in the town and surrounding country, for the suppression of the disease, and the relief of those labouring under it. I shall then offer some remarks on the causes to which

it appeared chiefly owing, and on the measures best calculated to arrest its progress, or prevent its recurrence. I am not conscious of any inaccuracy, either in the history of the epidemic, or of the effects of the remedies employed ; and as I have no theoretical opinions to support, I am the less likely to have fallen into error respecting them. The preventive measures recommended may be the more confidently relied on, from having been already tried to a considerable extent, and found of great utility : that they would prove of the utmost benefit if generally and fully carried into effect, I entertain no doubt.

Although I have confined myself to the description of the epidemic as it prevailed in the district under my immediate care, I may with confidence assert, that little difference either in its symptoms or causes was observed throughout this province, as I have been favoured with communications

on the subject from many of my medical friends in different parts of it, which agree so perfectly with my own observations, that, whilst they confirm my belief in the correctness of the account here given, they render it unnecessary to publish their remarks, as I purposed to do when I applied to them for information on the subject. I cannot, however, deny myself the pleasure of inserting in an Appendix a communication from my friend Dr. Thomson, one of the physicians to the Belfast Fever Hospital ; as it shews the powerful operation of those causes to which the fever of large towns is generally owing, and establishes the inadequacy of a Fever Hospital alone to effect its removal, when not assisted by measures for destroying contagion in the houses from whence patients are brought.

Having had several opportunities of seeing the patients under Dr. Thomson's

care, I am enabled to state that the epidemic of Belfast differed in no respect from that of this district; except that, as was to be expected, the population of a great manufacturing town furnished a larger proportion of cases labouring under its worst forms than occurred among the inhabitants of the country, in whom the disease more frequently assumed an inflammatory type, and sometimes required depletion to an extent which, in the practice of the Belfast Hospital, was very rarely requisite. Those not aware of the manner in which that Institution is conducted, might suppose that the crowded state of the Hospital would sufficiently account for the more frequent recurrence of the worst forms of typhus among its inmates; but to this cause it was in no degree owing, as in point of cleanliness, ventilation, and minute attention to the comforts of the patients, it will bear comparison with the best regulated establishments of

its kind in the Empire, so as to reflect the highest credit on those by whose unre-mitted exertions it has been brought to its present admirable state of arrangement.

Whilst I lament the necessity for speaking of the greater number of absentee proprietors in the manner I have felt it my duty to do, it affords me a melancholy pleasure to reflect that a brilliant example of conduct, in all respects the reverse of that censured, has been exhibited by a nobleman, to whom, from the commencement of my professional life till the period of his lamented decease, I have been indebted for unceasing marks of kindness. The benefits which have resulted to the tenantry on his extensive estates, from the paternal attention paid to their distresses, will be long and most gratefully remembered by them ; and, it may be hoped that the extraordinary success which at-

tended the measures employed for their relief, will encourage other landlords to similar exertions ; and that they will cease to deserve the severe reflection thrown on them by the Committee of the House of Commons, in their report on the subject of Fever in Ireland, “ that they were in general very negligent of the distresses endured from this cause by the residents on their estates ;” a censure which, as applied to the great majority, was but too well founded.

The minute detail of the wretched state of the lower orders in this country may to some appear overcharged, and to others, perhaps, prove disgusting. To the former I would observe, that very numerous instances of distress, at least equal to any of which I have given a description, must be familiar to every medical man who practises among this class, and more especially to those intrusted with the care of chari-

table institutions, similar to that of which I have had the management. To the latter I would suggest the absolute necessity of making the upper ranks fully acquainted with the misery endured by the poor around them, as the only means of inducing them to make the exertions requisite to improve their condition ; and as, in this hope, the following work has been chiefly undertaken, it became necessary to place their wants and distresses in the clearest point of view. Those wishing to benefit them will thus learn the objects to which their attention may be most advantageously directed, and be protected from the mortification of discovering, when too late, that owing to their not being possessed of accurate knowledge respecting the actual state of the people around, a large share of their attention, and perhaps a considerable expenditure of money, had been wasted in useless attempts at rendering them more comfortable, which, had

their exertions been at first properly directed, might not only have relieved their immediate wants, but have effected a permanent improvement in their condition.

F. R.

OBSERVATIONS,

&c.

PART I.

THE parishes of Camus, Leck, and Urney form the district to which the aid afforded by the Strabane Dispensary is limited. They extend about ten miles in each direction, and unite at Strabane, so that a part of the town is situated in each parish. The land along the rivers Foyle and Fin, which bound the district on the north, and that along the Mourne, which flows between Camus and Urney, yield good crops, but the whole produce is consumed by the inhabitants, even in plentiful years; and when the season proves unfavourable, large quantities of provisions are imported from the southern and western parts of the kingdom. The sides and summits of the mountains, which occupy nearly a fourth of the district, are covered with peat, and where this has been removed for fuel, the sub-soil, generally of a bad quality, is cultivated by cottagers, who have been induced to

settle there, by the low rent at which cabins may be obtained. The farms throughout the district are small, varying in size from ten to thirty acres, and one of fifty acres is regarded as a considerable holding.

The town of Strabane is situated on the banks of the Mourne. This river, though very shallow in summer, is often so swollen in the winter and spring, by the rains which fall in the extensive mountain-range to the south and east, for the waters of which it affords the only outlet, as to rise at times eighteen or twenty feet above its usual level. The greater part of the town is built on a hill overhanging the river; but a part, containing nearly a fourth of the population, stands on a plain, so little elevated, that few winters pass without the occurrence of floods, sufficiently high to inundate the houses. The inhabitants amount to about four thousand, of whom a large proportion are tradesmen, in poor circumstances, or day-labourers. The only manufacture carried on in the district is that of linen; and the persons thus employed reside chiefly in the country, where food and fuel can be obtained at a cheaper rate than in town.

The Munterloney mountains lie to the south and east of the Dispensary District. They extend nearly twenty miles, and contain, in the numerous glens by which they are intersected, so great a

population, that, except in the most favourable years, the produce of their farms is unequal to their support. In seasons of dearth, they procure a considerable portion of their food from the more cultivated districts around them; and this, as well as the payment of their rents, is accomplished by the sale of butter, black cattle, and sheep, and by the manufacture of linen cloth and yarn, which they carry on to a considerable extent.

The dwellings of the farmers are generally thatched cottages, containing three or four rooms; except among the non-wealthy, they are badly ventilated, as the windows seldom admit of being opened. The beds are often placed in small recesses, and are closed in front, either by a partition with a sliding door, or by a straw matting.

Besides those who hold immediately from the proprietors of estates, there is a much more numerous class, named cottiers, who rent from the farmers a cabin and potato garden. Many of them have also a small portion of ground for flax and oats, with grazing for a milch cow, and liberty of cutting turf for fuel. When the cottier is not a tradesman, his rent is generally paid by labouring at a low rate for the farmer under whom he lives, whilst his family derive their subsistence chiefly from the produce of his small holding, and the sale of yarn spun by his wife and daughters.

The houses of the cottiers seldom contain more than one or two rooms, and, to afford the greater space, the beds are generally placed in outshots, the name given to the recesses already mentioned. The windows are nailed to the frames, so that no air can at any time be admitted through them. It is usually stipulated, that the roofs of the cottiers' houses shall be kept in repair by the farmer; but he frequently neglects to fulfil his engagement, and from this, as well as from the moist situation in which many of the cabins are built, they are often extremely damp, and prove powerful existing causes of rheumatic affections, from which the poor suffer severely.

The food of the labouring classes consists chiefly of potatoes, oatmeal, and milk. In favourable years, the cottier has nearly a sufficient quantity of these articles for the support of his family; but as even in plentiful seasons there is no redundancy, when an unproductive harvest occurs his distress is extreme, and the greater part of his labour being given, in payment of rent, to the farmer with whom he lives, he has little money to lay out in the purchase of provisions.

Peat is the fuel generally used by all ranks throughout the district; when the summer proves dry, it is cheap and abundant; but in wet seasons, owing to the difficulty and expense of saving it, the

price becomes so high as to put it nearly beyond the reach of the poor ; and as in such years the crops throughout the mountains are very deficient, the inhabitants of these parts suffer at the same time both from cold and hunger.

As in this country no law exists to authorize the imposition of a tax on the inhabitants at large, for the support of those who are incapable of earning a livelihood, they are obliged to travel from place to place in search of subsistence. Most of those who in plentiful times live by begging, are either persons who, from old age or infirmities, are incapable of earning their bread by labour ; or widows, with families too numerous to be supported by any effort of industry in their power. In seasons of scarcity, the number of mendicants is greatly increased, many being then forced to betake themselves to begging, who would be capable of earning a livelihood, if they could procure employment. Great numbers of labourers, with large families, are then reduced to this state, owing to the poorer farmers becoming unable to defray the usual expenses of labour ; but still greater numbers of females are, in such times, deprived of support, as the high price of provisions makes it the interest of the farmer to reduce his establishment as low as possible. He therefore dismisses the female servants, whom he usually employs in spinning linen yarn, as the profit of their labour seldom exceeds

sixpence per day, and often falls short of this sum, so that he would not be sufficiently remunerated for their food. In most farm-houses, one or more women-servants are generally employed in this way; so that, in a season of scarcity, numbers are thus either reduced to beggary, or are obliged to return to their parents, who may be generally ranked amongst the poorest of the community.

The diseases most prevalent throughout the district, are rheumatism, dyspepsia, and cutaneous affections. From the account already given of the habitations and food of the poor, it will be evident, that the two former admit but of temporary alleviation from medicine, as damp houses and vegetable diet render them particularly subject to returns of these disorders; and the little attention paid to personal cleanliness makes the cure of the different cutaneous complaints a matter of considerable difficulty.

At first view there appeared to be some difficulty in accounting for the number of weavers who laboured under rheumatism and dyspepsia, as they are in general well fed and comfortably clothed; but on inquiring into their habits of life, they were found to be peculiarly exposed to the exciting causes of both diseases. Their looms are always placed in the dampest part of the house, as the yarn is there much less apt to break than it would be in

drier situations. The weaver is generally employed for twelve hours in the day, and the body is kept in a bent position during all that time, unless where the fly-shuttle is used, which is yet far from being universally the case, although the workman is enabled to finish above one-fourth more cloth with it, than he can accomplish in the old method. When to these are joined a vegetable diet, it is not strange that stomach-complaints should be very prevalent among them. The bad effects resulting from their habits of life are in some measure, however, counteracted by the field-work, performed for the farmer, from whom they rent their cottages ; and the advantage of occasional employment in the open air is well exemplified in the good health enjoyed by the weavers who reside in the country, compared with those who live in towns, and subsist entirely by the profits of the loom ; though even the former will not bear comparison, in this respect, with the portion of the population employed constantly in agriculture.

Similar causes render these diseases, but more especially dyspepsia, very prevalent among the females of the district. From the age of ten or twelve years they are employed in spinning, and rarely take any share in the labours of the farm, except so far as is connected with the preparation of flax. Their sedentary life, and close confinement in the heated atmosphere of their cabins, tend

to weaken their digestive powers, and deprive them, at an early age, of that freshness of complexion which is enjoyed, to a much later period, by the women in those parts of the country, where it is customary to employ them much out of doors.

The observations made respecting the district around Strabane, are equally applicable to almost the whole of the extensive counties of Tyrone, Donegal, and Derry. In all these the population is limited only by the difficulty of procuring food. Owing to the universal adoption of the Cottier system, and, to the custom of subdividing farms among the sons, on the death of the father, the labouring classes are infinitely more numerous than are required for the purposes of agriculture. Under these circumstances, they are engaged in a constant struggle for the necessaries of life, and rarely enjoy any of its comforts.

The protracted severity of the winter of 1815, rendered the sowing season, in the following spring, unusually late, and the incessant rains in the summer months, caused much of the seed to perish, and retarded the ripening of the grain, even on the best soils, till the frosts set in. In the mountainous districts the crops failed almost entirely; insomuch, that many farmers, who usually had a large surplus produce to dispose of, were then obliged to go to market for the greater quan-

tity of the provisions required for their own families.

The sufferings of the poorer inhabitants in the district, may be conceived from the fact, that those who, in ordinary seasons, raised on their farms, a sufficient quantity of oats and potatoes for the support of their families, had not in that year, any grain to make into meal, the oats being still green when the frosts commenced, and the ear never filled; so that, in most instances, it was found not worth while to submit the corn to the flail, and it was given, unthrashed, as fodder to the cattle. The potato crop also failed in a great, though not an equal degree; and, besides the deficiency in quantity, the quality was far inferior to what it usually is. This was soon ascertained by those who made starch from potatoes, which is commonly employed throughout the country, as a substitute for wheaten-starch, as they found that the quantity yielded, by a given bulk of the root, was far short of that obtained in other years. Various other causes contributed to augment the distress occasioned by the failure of the harvest. The reduction of our military establishment, on the termination of the war, and the sudden stop put to recruiting for the army, which, for many years, had drawn off much of the redundant population of this country, caused a great increase of labourers, and a consequent reduction of wages. Cattle fell, at the same

time, to a third of their former price, and the value of butter was much lowered, so that the inhabitants of the mountains, owing to the great depreciation in the articles which constituted their wealth, were suddenly reduced from comfortable circumstances to poverty. But, the great depression of the linen trade, in all its branches, which immediately followed the conclusion of peace, was still more generally and severely felt. The wages of the weaver were reduced to little more than half his usual earnings; and the profit of spinning, which, in the preceding year, had enabled the lower classes to live comfortably, fell short of procuring them as much food as would preserve their existence. Three-pence per day was as much as could be earned by employment of this kind, whilst provisions were selling for double the usual price. As this sum was quite inadequate to the support of a family, those who had no other resource, were reduced to beggary; and the numbers obliged to seek subsistence, by asking alms, rapidly increased, as the small stock of potatoes and oatmeal, possessed by the cottiers, became exhausted; whilst the scarcity of fuel operated nearly as powerfully as the want of provisions, in compelling many inhabitants of the mountains to seek shelter and subsistence in the low lands, at the commencement of the winter.

Early in the spring of 1817, a soup-house was established, by private subscription, for the relief

of the poor inhabitants of Strabane. On an accurate census they were found to amount to three hundred and four families, containing one thousand and twenty-six individuals; but, in this return, few were included, except the actual paupers, as a feeling of pride prevented many, in extreme distress, from applying for assistance of this kind. To the families placed on the list, a gratuitous distribution of soup was made, three days in each week, in quantities proportioned to the number of their children. It was at first intended to confine this relief to those who were permanent residents in the town; but, the multitudes who flocked in from the surrounding country, as the season advanced, and who were actually perishing in the streets from want, made it soon indispensable to prepare a large quantity of broth every day, in order to preserve their lives. It was sold at an halfpenny per quart, being about half its prime cost, and afforded a daily supply of wholesome nourishment to at least a thousand persons. Besides the money subscribed for the soup-establishment, a considerable sum was lent by the inhabitants of the town and neighbourhood, for the purchase of rice, oatmeal, and rye-flour, to be sold to the poor at first cost. The latter was baked into loaves, which were eagerly purchased, as the bread was very palatable, and cheaper than almost any other kind of food.

Great as the number of paupers must appear, when the population of the town is considered, it

soon bore a very small proportion to those who came from all parts of the surrounding country, in the hope of participating in the relief thus afforded. The streets were thronged with beggars, whose emaciated bodies plainly shewed the extent of their sufferings from famine. As the summer advanced, vegetables, not generally regarded as esculent, were greedily eaten. Nettles, wild-mustard, and the leaves of cabbage, were sought for most anxiously; and, with a very small admixture of oatmeal, formed the chief support of many families, who endeavoured to remain in their cottages. When the begging poor were so fortunate as to get a few potatoes, their impatience to satisfy their hunger, often prevented them from waiting till they were sufficiently boiled; so that they were eaten as soon as they became warm, and cabbage leaves were devoured without any previous cooking.

The bad effects of such food were soon apparent. Dysentery became common, about the month of February, and was aggravated by the extreme cold to which they were subjected, from the scarcity of fuel. The complaint began with symptoms of diarrhœa, and, after a few days, tormina and tenesmus supervened. The stools became scanty, mixed with mucus, and often with blood. The pulse was little accelerated, but the appetite failed, and rapid depression of strength came on. The dysentery was frequently attended, or followed, by an anasarca, which also often

occurred without any preceding bowel complaint. So general was the dropsical affection, that 107 persons labouring under it applied for relief at the dispensary, in the month of July alone. Both sexes and all ages were affected by it, but men seemed to suffer in greater numbers than women; and children were less subject to both dropsy and dysentery, though by no means exempt from either. I could not observe that the dysentery was contagious, in any instance. It was confined to the poorest class—it did not affect those who had a sufficiency of wholesome food, and it frequently attacked but one or two members of a numerous family. A dose of castor-oil, given every second or third day, with a few grains of calomel on the previous night, and the regular administration of an opiate at bed-time, generally succeeded in speedily removing the complaint; but it often returned, on fresh exposure to cold and wet, and a recurrence to the same unwholesome diet; and I found that a permanent cure could be best effected by having the patients put on the books of the soup-kitchen, from which they obtained a sufficient supply of nourishment. From the adoption of this plan, few of those who resided in town, or in the immediate neighbourhood, sunk under these complaints; though, in the more remote parts of the district, both dysentery and anasarca often proved fatal.

When anasarca and dysentery occurred toge-

ther, they were both generally removed by the remedies now mentioned ; but, when the former was unattended with bowel-complaint, three grains of gamboge and half an ounce of supertartrate of potass were dissolved in a quart of water, and drank at short intervals, till purging was caused. This was repeated every third day, and a solution of supertartrate of potass in infusion of ginger was given in large quantities as drink. As more benefit was derived from the purgative than from the diuretic effects of the medicine, jalap and calomel were given in the few cases where the gamboge failed to act on the bowels, or caused sickness ; and, when these medicines did not produce an increased secretion of urine, I gave at the same time acetum scillæ and spiritus etheris nitrosi, a drachm of each being taken every fourth or sixth hour. In the months of June, July, and August, 170 persons labouring under anasarca, were entered on the books of the dispensary ; and these bore a very small proportion to the actual numbers ill of the disease throughout the district ; as the poor in remote situations were so pressed by hunger, that no time could be spared to seek relief from a complaint which, as it caused little pain, was not much attended to.

The annexed Return shews the number of patients affected with dysentery or anasarca, who were entered on the books of the dispensary in each

month, from January 1817, till April 1818. Since that period only six cases of dysentery, and nine cases of anasarca have applied for relief:—

1817.	Anasarca.	Dysentery.
January	5	9
February	4	15
March	6	15
April	3	12
May	3	6
June	23	2
July	107	31
August	40	22
September	9	23
October	13	8
November	5	4
December	4	8
1818.		
January	3	10
February	4	7
March	3	2
April	2	4

About the beginning of May, a few cases of small-pox occurred in town, and great numbers of the children of the begging poor soon caught the infection. This disease had for some years previous been hardly known in the neighbourhood, as inoculation with variolous matter had been entirely discontinued by the medical practitioners; and, although in the mountains it was sometimes prac-

tised, the distance between the hamlets, and the little intercourse with other parts of the country, prevented the contagion from being widely diffused. Vaccination had long been generally adopted by the better-informed throughout the district; but the children of the poor were left, in most instances, without this protection, as, from the absence of immediate cause of alarm, the parents became careless on the subject; and, although the dispensary afforded the means of obtaining gratuitous inoculation, comparatively few availed themselves of the offer. In the mountains it had been scarcely at all practised, owing in some measure to the poverty of the inhabitants, but still more to their prejudices against it.

The mortality caused by the small-pox was very great, as the poor could seldom be prevailed on to keep their children lightly covered. They looked on heat as requisite to make the eruption strike out, as they termed it, and the greater the appearance of pustules, the more necessary did they deem warmth. Even the beggars, who carried their infants about with them, took especial care to guard against the effects of cold, by wrapping them up so closely in their blankets, that they appeared in danger of suffocation. Under such treatment, the disease was chiefly of the confluent kind, and proved fatal to hundreds.

The numerous cases which came to my knowledge, of children in the neighbouring towns who had taken small-pox, after having been vaccinated by medical practitioners of high respectability, led me to pay particular attention to those whom I myself had inoculated ; and, although they were numerous, both in private practice and at the dispensary, not one instance of failure occurred among them. I am disposed to attribute my success to my having invariably practised the test recommended by Mr. Brice of Edinburgh ; and I was enabled to effect this, among the dispensary patients, by adopting the plan followed at the Cowpock Institution in Dublin, of obliging the parent to deposit a small sum when the child was inoculated, half of which was returned on the 7th, and the remaining half on the 11th day, if the child were brought back at these times. As those children were almost daily exposed to the contagion of small-pox, I feel quite satisfied that the vaccine inoculation has, with them, proved a complete preventative.

Varicella was very prevalent during the summer and autumn, and, in a few instances the fever was high, and the pustules numerous, so that some doubt was at first entertained respecting the disease ; but the speedy filling and scabbing of the pustules soon shewed clearly its nature.

A few cases of fever were met with among the poor, in the months of May, June, and July, but the disease was, for some time, kept in check by immediately removing the patients to a small hospital attached to the dispensary—by whitewashing the houses from which the sick were removed, and by furnishing fresh straw for bedding, and burning that before used. At length it seized on some beggars, who resided in a large house, where every room was so filled at night, that the floors were quite covered with their beds. As the hospital was too small to receive all who were now attacked, and an early separation of the sick from the healthy was no longer practicable, the disease soon became widely diffused; and, in a few weeks, above an hundred persons were taken ill, in different parts of the town.

On visiting the houses where fever prevailed, I found some of them in a state of filth beyond any thing I had ever witnessed. That in which the disease began had been occupied, during the winter, by a number of families, who had come from the mountains in search of employment, and had brought with them no furniture, nor any bedding except their blankets; each room was rented at a shilling per week, and the tenant, that he might be enabled to make this payment, afforded lodging to the begging poor at a penny per night. The

floors and staircase were covered with filth, which had been accumulating for many months. The straw used as bedding, which had not been changed for a great length of time, was gathered into a corner of the room, in the morning, and spread over the floor at night. All who applied for lodging were received, and so numerous were the strangers from every part of the surrounding country, that twenty or more often lay in one small room. To protect themselves from the cold, every crevice, by which air could find entrance, was carefully closed. The roof was in such bad repair that the floors were always damp, and the cellars filled during the winter with stagnant water, which emitted a stench so offensive as to be perceptible at a considerable distance.

Lassitude, slight head-ach, and depression of strength, were generally the first indications of the attack of fever. These were followed by a sensation of cold, often over the whole surface; but in many instances referred more particularly to the back, and compared to a stream of water flowing along the spine. The countenance appeared anxious, the features slightly shrunk, and the complexion sallow. The spirits were depressed, and the sleep disturbed and unrefreshing. Even whilst the patient complained of cold, the heat of the surface, as indicated by the thermometer, was generally found greater than natural; this, at least, was often

the case in the trunk, whilst the extremities were one or two degrees colder than in health. The pulse was increased in frequency, from the beginning of the attack, varying from 80 to 90 beats in the minute, and, so long as the sensation of cold continued, was small and quick; but, as the heat increased, it became more full and bounding. The tongue was moist and white; an unpleasant taste was almost an invariable symptom, and was often attended with nausea, and sometimes with vomiting. The bowels were generally constipated, and the urine pale, and passed in large quantity.

After these symptoms had continued for one or two days, the head-ach became more acute, and was referred, by the great majority of patients, to the forehead and temples. Severe pain was felt in the loins, which, however, did not seem much increased by attempts at motion. The pains of the limbs grew more acute, affecting the muscles as well as the articulations. The heat of skin rose to 102 or 103 degrees, and little variation was observable in it at any time of the day. The surface was in most instances dry, and the thirst considerable. The tongue became covered in the middle with a thick coating of whitish or yellowish mucus, whilst its edges were either nearly clean, or had a thinner layer of the same kind. The bowels, unless when acted on by purgatives, usually remained constipated, and the urine became

gradually higher coloured and more scanty, seldom depositing a sediment. The patient still retained his powers of perception and judgment, except on awaking from sleep, when he seemed for some time at a loss to determine, whether the impressions on his mind were the effects of dreaming or reality, but from this tendency to delirium he could in general be easily recalled.

By far the greater number continued, for some days, nearly in the state now described ; when, in a few instances, a profuse perspiration came on, with sudden abatement of all the symptoms ; but in most cases the heat of skin slowly diminished, the head-ach grew less severe, the bowels became free, and the pulse gradually fell to the standard of health, and in some instances considerably below it. These changes usually took place between the 10th and 14th days of the disease.

The train of symptoms now described occurred generally in patients advanced in life, or whose strength had been reduced, before their illness, by want of sufficient nourishment. The young and well-fed were oftener attacked suddenly with rigor and acute head-ach, which were soon followed by increased heat of skin and flushed face. In all classes, however, there was little difference observable in the after-symptoms.

In the more severe cases the delirium, after a few days, became constant, and the patient could hardly be brought to recognize those around him. His pulse increased much in frequency; the heat of skin fell one or two degrees below what had existed in the first week of the disease, but the surface remained parched, and often communicated a peculiar sense of pungency to the hand. He sometimes made violent efforts to get out of bed, but more frequently his strength was so much reduced, that he lay chiefly on his back, from inability to support himself on either side. His articulation grew indistinct; and, when not asleep, he was constantly muttering to himself. The tongue became covered with a thick brown or blackish crust, and trembled much when protruded; the teeth and gums were coated deeply with the same kind of substance, and he became nearly incapable of stretching forth his hand, on being desired. The sense of hearing, which, in the early stage of the disease, was often morbidly acute, was frequently in its progress much blunted, and the patient lay with his eyelids half closed, apparently insensible to surrounding objects, picking at or gathering up the bed-clothes, or tossing out his arms. In the worst cases he sunk towards the termination of the illness, into a state of coma; the urine was either discharged involuntarily, or retained till the bladder became so distended, as to

render it necessary to use the catheter, and the fœces were passed without consciousness, in a liquid form, and of very offensive smell. These symptoms were often accompanied by subsultus tendinum, or hiccough; and the latter in particular was always found to indicate extreme danger. As the fatal event approached, the pulse grew irregular, the breathing was impeded by the accumulation of mucus in the trachea, and the power of deglutition was lost. The body was often bathed in sweat, whilst the heat of the surface was even below the natural standard, the extremities grew cold, and death soon followed.

In some of the patients brought to the hospital, in the more advanced stages of the disease, the body was covered with petechiæ; and, in a few of these, hæmorrhage occurred from the gums and nostrils, the stools were black and of the consistence of tar; the urine brown and turbid, and the petechiæ were interspersed with large vibices. The latter symptoms were only observed in those who had been confined in close and heated apartments; but in private practice, cases were occasionally met with, where the petechiæ were very numerous, though every attention had been paid to preserve the chamber of the patient in as cool a state as possible. They sometimes appeared so early as the 4th or 5th day of the disease, but were not in general observed till a more advanced period. They varied

in colour from light brown to the deepest black, and were more numerous on the trunk than on the extremities. The deep-coloured petechiæ were always proofs of imminent danger; but the fever was not observed to prove more violent, when the brownish petechiæ occurred, than when no such symptom was present.

The description now given of the epidemic applies to by far the greater number of cases; but sometimes, besides the general symptoms of fever, others appeared, which marked the existence of disease in some of the cavities. In the summer and autumn, the head or abdomen were those in which the local morbid actions chiefly occurred; whilst, during the winter and spring, the chest was most frequently affected.

In a few instances, the head-ach, even at the commencement of the attack, was extremely acute, the face flushed, the eyes red, and impatient of light, and the pulse hard and frequent. These symptoms, when not checked by copious and early depletion, were soon followed by violent delirium, which at last changed to low muttering: the pulse became small, irregular, and very frequent; whilst subsultus tendinum, involuntary discharge of urine and fœces, and loss of the power of swallowing, plainly shewed that the fatal termination was at hand. Two or three cases were met with in private

practice, where, although little pain of the head was felt, and the pulse was full, soft, and not remarkably increased in frequency, the countenance was bloated, the eyes heavy and red, and the external senses blunted. These patients gradually fell into a state of coma, and expired about the 6th or 8th day from the commencement of the attack.

Although, in most instances, the bowels were constipated, it occasionally happened that diarrhœa came on at the beginning of the disease, and continued throughout its whole progress. The stools in those cases were generally offensive, dark-coloured, and attended with a good deal of griping. But a dysenteric affection still more frequently occurred; the stools being scanty, passed with much pain, and mixed with mucus or blood. This state of the bowels was difficult of removal, and never failed to keep up the feverish action for a long period. The patients thus affected were particularly subject to relapses, on the slightest irregularity, and their strength returned very slowly.

In some, who were not brought to the hospital till the disease was far advanced, the belly was found tense, swollen, and very painful on pressure. When stools were procured, for which purpose it was necessary to give much larger doses of purgative medicines than in other cases, they were dark-

coloured, hard, and offensive. Delirium, hiccough, and subsultus tendinum, frequently accompanied this state of the abdomen, and only subsided as the accumulation of feculent matter, to which they seemed owing, was removed by the continued administration of purgatives.

As the weather became cold, many of the cases received into the hospital were attended with affections of the chest. The cough was at first hard and dry, but in a few days the expectoration became copious, and the slight flitting pains through the thorax, which were almost universally complained of at the beginning, generally subsided as this change took place. A few cases were met with among the younger patients, where the pain was so acute, and the breathing so difficult, as to render it necessary to bleed; but they bore a very small proportion to those in whom the affection was more of a chronic nature.

Among the persons advanced in life, the cough sometimes did not prove very troublesome, till the febrile symptoms had existed for many days; the breathing then became difficult, more especially in the recumbent posture; the cough grew more frequent, and the expectoration, after severe and long-continued efforts, very copious. The pulse was hurried, the face flushed, and the lips acquired a purple hue. Those affected in this way had in general laboured under chronic cough, for some time

before they were attacked by fever ; and when the disease proved fatal, it seemed to be by causing affusion into the cells of the bronchiæ.

In very few of the bad cases, could any thing resembling a regular crisis be observed. In the greater number, the abatement of the symptoms was so gradual, that for one or two days the amendment was scarcely perceptible. The alarming appearances then slowly declined ; the pulse abated in frequency ; nourishment was taken in larger quantities ; the crust covering the tongue and teeth began to separate, and the sleep became refreshing. The changes in the urine afforded little assistance in forming an opinion respecting the probable event ; as in patients, under circumstances in all respects the same, it varied so much as to prevent any reliance being placed on it.

Relapses were very frequent, and happened much oftener among the poor than the rich. They were generally brought on by the patient quitting his bed, and endeavouring to resume his former employment, before his strength was sufficiently restored. When they occurred among the better class, they seemed chiefly owing to the employment of too stimulating a regimen, on the first abatement of the symptoms ; and more particularly to the early use of animal food. These cases seldom proved fatal ; but the patients recovered very slowly from the state of debility induced by them.

Nearly two-thirds of the dispensary patients were females. This was to be expected, as to them would be confided the care of the sick, whilst their domestic employments, by confining them constantly within doors, must render them more susceptible of contagion than the men, who were chiefly occupied in the open air. Children were more frequently attacked than the middle-aged, and seemed liable to the disease in proportion to their youth; but infants, and persons of either sex, far advanced in life, were peculiarly exempt from it. Thus, it often happened, that the infant at the breast escaped, though lying constantly with its mother ill of the disease, and, in numerous families, where all the other members were attacked, the grandmother alone retained her health, though occupied in discharging the duties of nurse-tender; so as to be at all times exposed to the contagion.

The mortality among the upper classes far exceeded that among the poor, above one-tenth of the patients in the former being carried off, whilst of the latter not more than one in twenty died. This, however, was the case only where proper attention was paid to the sick, as, when this was not given, the deaths in both classes were nearly in equal proportion. Amongst those who had not suffered from want of food, the disease, in its early stage, was usually attended with marks of great determination to the head; with the poor, on

the contrary, the chest or abdomen was most frequently the chief seat of diseased action, and when this was relieved, the patient's strength was easily supported by light nourishment, or moderate cordials, which too often disappointed the hopes of the physician, when administered to those who had been daily accustomed to their use, when in health. A large proportion of the cases which terminated fatally occurred among persons from 40 to 60 years of age, and these generally sunk under the symptoms of peripneumony; whilst, in the younger patients, death seemed more frequently the consequence of effusion within the cranium, subsequent to great determination to the head.

Of the following returns the first shews the population of Strabane, with the number ill of fever from the commencement of the epidemic, and the mortality that took place among them. The second shews the number of patients received into the fever hospitals, from the 22d August, 1817, till 1st December, 1818, with the deaths that occurred in these institutions:—

Population of Strabane.			Number Ill of Fever, from the Commence- ment of the Epidemic till 1st October, 1818.	Number of Deaths.
Males.	Females.	Total.		
1,822	2,047	3,869	639	59

Thus, it appears, that nearly one-sixth of the

inhabitants have laboured under fever, and that more than one in nine of those attacked have died.

Number of patients received into	
the fever hospitals from 22d	
August, 1817, to 1st December,	
1818	535
Dismissed cured.....	514
Died	19
In hospital, 1st December	2
	—
	535
	—

So that the mortality among the patients in hospital, has been only one in 28.

More than half of the hospital-patients were strangers, who had come into the town during the scarcity of the preceding spring; and as they returned to their homes when provisions became more abundant, they are not included in the census of inhabitants. Had this been done, the number ill of fever would have fallen little short of 1,000, or nearly one-fourth of the whole population.

The above returns afford a satisfactory reply to an assertion which has been sometimes made, by persons in other respects well informed—that medicine was of little avail in the treatment of the epidemic, as, to those who received no professional assistance, the disease rarely proved fatal. The

foundation of such an opinion is sufficiently plain. When a poor man dies, the event is known only to his immediate neighbours or relatives, whilst the death of a person in good circumstances is spoken of for miles around.

The rapidity with which the disease spread through the district, will appear from the following Return of the number of fever patients entered on the books of the dispensary, in each month from January, 1817, till December, 1818:—

	1817.	1818.
January	9	83
February	13	46
March	6	60
April	13	48
May	3	39
June	10	71
July	60	106
August	206	90
September	287	57
October	233	49
November	193	40
December	140	38

For some time after the commencement of the epidemic, it was the usual practice to give an emetic, as soon as the symptoms which marked an attack of fever were complained of; and the fur-

ther progress of the disease was, by this means, occasionally arrested. This effect, however, took place in a very small proportion of cases; and, when it did happen, it seemed owing to the general and profuse perspiration excited. When marks of great determination to the head existed, emetics were seldom administered, lest this should be increased by the effort of vomiting; but the cough and slight pains of the chest, which were so generally complained of, did not deter me from employing them, as these symptoms, instead of being aggravated by their action, were usually much relieved by them. Soon after the opening of the Temporary Fever Hospital, I left off the use of emetics as general remedies, having observed that the numerous patients received into that establishment, recovered fully as speedily, and in even a greater proportion than took place in private practice, although they were rarely prescribed for them, few having been admitted at so early a period of the disease, as to warrant the hope of cutting it short, by any means which could then be employed. They have since been given only with the intention of unloading the stomach, where nausea or spontaneous vomiting indicated some offending matter; and, with this view, hippo has been usually employed, proving equally efficacious as emetic tartar, and much less violent in its operation.

Purgatives were found to be invariably beneficial,

and were given immediately on the admission of the patient. That chiefly used in the practice of the hospital was calomel, either alone, or joined with jalap; and when by these means the bowels were freely emptied, their regular action was afterwards promoted by the occasional administration of some of the saline purgatives, or of infusion of senna, in such doses as to procure one or two stools daily.

The affusion of cold water had hitherto been seldom employed in the treatment of fever in this district; it was consequently found at first a difficult matter to procure its adoption in private practice, the prejudices of the patient, as well as his friends and attendants, being strongly opposed to it. Under these circumstances, having the surface frequently washed with cold or tepid water, was the most that could be effected. But as every measure, likely to contribute towards the recovery of the sick, could be carried into full effect in hospital, it was there employed in all the cases admitting of it. The squalid state of the patients, in almost every instance, made it necessary to wash the whole surface immediately on their admission, without reference to the temperature of the skin. Affusion was afterwards employed, and generally repeated twice a day whilst the circumstances of the case required it. Its effects were always highly salutary; and although it rarely succeeded in cutting short the attack, it never failed to lessen con-

siderably the febrile action. In the more advanced stage, sponging the surface with cold or tepid water was practised, instead of affusion. This was done in the evening, when the temperature was generally highest, and usually had the effect of abating restlessness, and procuring sleep. So well marked was the benefit resulting from the cold affusion and ablution, that the patients, who had witnessed their good effects in the hospital, had no hesitation in employing them, when any of their families were afterwards attacked, and the practice is now pretty generally adopted throughout the surrounding country.

The repeated administration of purgatives, the use of the cold affusion in the early stages of the disease, and of cold or tepid washing in the more advanced periods, together with cold drink, the free admission of cool air, and perfect quiet, were all that seemed requisite in the treatment of by far the greater number of cases that occurred, either in private or hospital practice. Along with these, however, it was customary to employ a solution of supertartrate of potass, containing also a grain of tartrate of antimony in each quart. A tea-cupful of this was drank every third hour; and, if it excited sickness at the stomach, the patient took in its stead the aqua ammoniæ acetatæ, the saline julep, or the effervescing draught; but, as it was not perceived that any of these medicines had an

evidently beneficial effect on the disease, they were chiefly administered for the purpose of tranquillizing the patient's mind, by convincing him that nothing was omitted which would be likely to contribute towards his recovery. Under this treatment the fever usually subsided about the 10th or 12th day.

When acute head-ach prevailed, with flushed face, impatience of light, and throbbing of the temples, the scalp was closely shaven, and constantly covered with cloths wetted in cold water. Twelve or eighteen leeches were applied to the temples; and, in some patients who were very delirious soon after the commencement of the attack, the temporal artery was opened, and from twelve to twenty ounces of blood taken away. This was found much more certainly and speedily beneficial than the application of leeches; so that for some time past they have been seldom had recourse to, as bleeding, either from the temporal artery or the arm, was preferred in the cases which seemed to require this treatment.

It is necessary to remark, however, that either topical or general blood-letting was employed in comparatively few cases, as the head-ach was not usually very acute, nor attended with marks of increased determination to the brain, and it in general yielded readily to the application of cold

to the scalp, and a blister to the forehead; from the latter of which in particular great relief was almost always experienced. A blister was sometimes put to the nape of the neck, or between the shoulders, with the same intention; but as the necessity for raising the patient, at each time of dressing the blistered surface, always caused a good deal of fatigue, and was much complained of by those in a weak state, I generally preferred blistering the forehead, as affording at least equal relief, and being less troublesome.

When obtuse pain of head, heaviness of eyes, slight lividity of face, and dulness of the external senses, indicated an oppressed state of brain, blood was immediately taken by opening the temporal artery, the whole scalp was covered with a blister, and stimulating clysters were thrown up every six or eight hours, whilst a large dose of calomel and jalap was administered, and repeated at intervals till the bowels were freely emptied. Under this treatment the pulse became more distinct, the countenance acquired a more lively expression, and the heat of skin, which before had little exceeded the natural standard, often rose three or four degrees. The relief was not, however, always permanent, as it sometimes happened that, after the amendment had continued for a time—occasionally for one or two days—the patient gradually sunk into his former

state; and, notwithstanding the employment of purgatives, sinapisms, and blisters, at least half these cases terminated fatally.

The cough and slight pains of chest, so often met with during the autumn, were generally relieved by the application of a blister to the sternum; and it was rarely necessary on their account to bleed, either generally or locally; but, as the winter advanced, cases sometimes occurred, in which the presence of inflammation of the lungs or pleura was marked by hard pulse and acute pain on inspiration. Most of those attacked in this manner were young persons, from whom it was necessary to take blood largely, and to repeat the operation, sometimes more than once. Indeed, the treatment pursued in these cases was what I should have adopted with patients labouring under a pleuritic attack, unconnected with contagious fever; and I had great reason to be satisfied with the result, as none of those died who were affected in this manner.

The disease, when attended with symptoms of peripneumony, proved very often fatal to persons of advanced age. Many of the poor, who were in the decline of life, had laboured under chronic cough, with copious expectoration, long before they were attacked with fever, owing to their extreme sufferings from cold, in the preceding win-

ter and spring. For some days after their illness commenced, the cough was generally not more troublesome than usual; but as the strength became reduced, the breathing grew oppressed, and the expectoration more difficult. Under these circumstances bleeding afforded no relief; and, indeed, before the symptoms became distressing, the strength was generally too much reduced to warrant its employment. Blisters to the chest, with hippo, squills, and gum ammoniac, were the remedies chiefly prescribed, but they often proved of little service;—the expectoration grew more difficult, and was sometimes mixed with a little florid blood, but had more frequently an uniform brown tinge; the breathing became more oppressed and irregular; the patient at last sunk into a state of coma, and died from the 12th to the 16th or 18th day.

The nausea and vomiting, which sometimes occurred at the commencement of the attack, generally ceased, on the stomach being emptied by repeated draughts of warm water, or by a few grains of hippo; and if, after its operation sickness still continued, it was allayed by the effervescing draught, with five or ten drops of laudanum. The most obstinate cases of vomiting were those attendant on great determination to the head. The treatment found most efficacious under these circumstances, was the application of cold to the scalp, whilst the

bowels were emptied by a stimulating clyster, and a large dose of calomel, in the form of pill, so as to act as a purgative; eight or ten grains being usually given as a dose with this intention.

When diarrhœa occurred early in the disease, it generally ceased after administering a mild purgative, such as rhubarb, or castor oil; this was occasionally repeated till the discharges became natural in smell and appearance. The purging which came on in the advanced stages seemed, in some instances, caused by an accumulation of feculent matter, as was evident from the hardened fæces brought away by catharticks. After the operation of a mild laxative, astringents were given after each stool, till the complaint was stopped. Those employed in the hospital were the chalk mixture, or tincture of kino with tincture of opium, in the proportion of one ounce of the former to a drachm of the latter. A tea-spoonful of the mixture being given after each stool. A drachm of laudanum, mixed with four ounces of gruel, was also thrown up the rectum at night, and had a still more powerful effect in checking the bowel complaint, than astringents given by the mouth.

Dysentery occurred only among the poor, and attacked chiefly those who had suffered much, before the commencement of their illness, from bad food and want of sufficient covering. When relief

was applied for sufficiently early, the symptoms readily yielded to the administration of purgatives, repeated until the patient no longer felt a weight and pressure on going to stool, as if a quantity of feculent matter which he could not discharge, were still lodged in the bowels. When the disease had gone on for some days, without the employment of any remedies, its removal was accomplished with much more difficulty. In many of these cases pain was felt when the abdomen was pressed on, either diffused over the whole cavity, or confined to the region of the liver. The practice usually adopted with patients affected in this manner, was to give five grains of calomel, and one grain of opium at night, and a dose of sulphate of magnesia or castor-oil, on the following morning; these were repeated till copious stools were procured. Fomentations were used to the abdomen, and if, on the removal of the dysentery, pain and fulness were still felt in the hepatic region, calomel was given, so as to cause slight ptyalism, which was kept up till these symptoms were completely removed.

In some instances where in the beginning of the disease, proper attention had not been paid to the state of the bowels, the belly became tense, and much swollen in the advanced stages. The patient sunk from a state of violent delirium into low and constant muttering. The skin was parched and

hot, the face flushed, and the tongue brown and dry; great restlessness, with subsultus tendinum, were often observable, and pressure over the abdomen seemed to cause considerable pain. The remedies found most serviceable, under these circumstances, were tepid ablution, and the repeated exhibition of purgatives, in large doses. Calomel, or a mixture of castor-oil with oil of turpentine, were those most used in such cases, and with them were joined stimulating clysters, and frictions of the belly, with oil of turpentine and olive oil, together with long-continued warm fomentations. Under this treatment the tumefaction and tenderness of the abdomen gradually subsided, and large quantities of dark-coloured and hardened feculent matter were discharged, whilst rapid improvement took place in the other symptoms.

When subsultus tendinum occurred, unaccompanied by hiccough or petechiæ, it was often relieved by the exhibition of camphor, in doses of five grains every second hour, either in form of bolus or emulsion; but, when combined with these symptoms, it was very difficult of removal. Hiccough always indicated extreme danger, and frequently resisted every means attempted for its relief; laudanum, ether, and musk, with blisters to the region of the stomach, were the remedies usually prescribed in these cases, but they often proved of little service. In two patients, where the hic-

cough had resisted these medicines, it was removed by the effervescing draught, given every half-hour; but this also failed in most instances.

Neither the mottled appearance of the skin, nor the reddish petechiæ, were found to denote any unusual danger, and merely required the employment of free ventilation, and cold acidulated drink; but the very dark and well defined petechiæ always excited considerable apprehension; and when, at the same time, blood oozed from the gums, or was discharged by stool, the danger was still more imminent. In cases of this kind, which, however, were of comparatively rare occurrence, the remedies on which the greatest reliance was placed were fresh lemon-juice, yeast, and the mineral acids. When lemons could be procured, an ounce of the juice was given every two hours, without causing any uneasiness in the stomach or bowels, and it often seemed productive of considerable benefit; but, as they could seldom be had in sufficient quantity, in the treatment of the few cases that occurred in the hospital, yeast, and cold drinks acidulated with vitriolic acid, were substituted. The yeast was given, in doses of a table-spoonful, every third hour, mixed with ale or wort. The only effect observed from it, was that of keeping up the regular action of the bowels, so as to render unnecessary the administration of any laxative medicine. But, when the patient's sense of taste was

not quite blunted, it became often difficult to induce him to persevere in taking it for any considerable length of time, as it seemed to offend the palate more than medicines which might be supposed to prove much more unpleasant. The acidulated drink was always extremely grateful, and its use was not confined to those alone on whom petechiæ appeared, as it was given to the hospital patients in every stage of the disease.

Yeast was much used, throughout the district, for every variety of fever; and, if implicit credit could be reposed in the accounts given of its efficacy, it would hold a very high place among our remedies. So far, however, as my own observation enabled me to form an opinion respecting its powers, it had little effect, except that of a mild laxative, in which way it was certainly beneficial.

When the strength was much reduced, in the advanced stage of the disease, whilst, at the same time, no local affection was present, to contraindicate the use of stimulants, wine was given to the patients in private practice, and ale to those in hospital. In the milder cases nothing of this kind was required, as the strength was speedily restored by light nutritious diet; and, unless when great debility existed, wine or malt liquor rather seemed to retard than hasten recovery. A good deal of caution was necessary in placing the hos-

pital patients on full diet. This was seldom done till they were able to quit their beds, as the small allowance of animal food, amounting only to six ounces daily, was often found to bring back the febrile state. When it was judged necessary to give wine, the quantity rarely exceeded six or eight ounces in 24 hours, and a quart of ale was given in its stead to the hospital patients. In some cases, however, where the pulse fell off in strength, while its frequency was much increased, and the temperature of the skin sunk to that of health, or even below it, whilst all the powers of life seemed rapidly failing, wine was given in much larger quantities, and diluted alcohol and ether were also used. Blisters were applied to the scalp, or between the shoulders, and the strength was supported by liquid nourishment, in as large quantities as the patient could be made to take. Wine-whey, or gruel mixed with port wine, were chiefly used with this intention; and, so long as the power of deglutition remained, no relaxation was permitted in the efforts to save the patient, as recoveries sometimes took place when the appearances were such, as almost to preclude any hope of a favourable result.

During the whole course of the epidemic, but more especially since the commencement of the present year, few cases occurred with symptoms of typhus gravior; and even in these few, the disease, during the first week, was usually attended

with increased heat of skin, and strength of pulse. A tendency to inflammatory affection of some of the cavities, more especially of the chest or abdomen, was observed in many, soon after the febrile state was completely formed; and the poor were particularly subject to attack of this kind, although, from their previous starvation, they might have been supposed, in a great measure, exempt from any disease of an inflammatory nature. These symptoms were easily subdued by a moderate use of the lancet, after which the fever usually soon terminated favourably. But when the local inflammation was neglected, as happened too generally throughout the country, from a prejudice which for some time existed against bleeding in this epidemic, as being often followed by fatal consequences, a diseased state of some of the viscera was frequently induced, which eventually caused the death of the patient.

The cases of typhus gravior were infinitely more numerous among the rich and well fed, than among the poor; and with them also the head was most frequently the seat of diseased action. This seemed owing in a great measure to the extreme dread of fever, which existed among this class; so that, from the commencement of the attack, the patient often anticipated a fatal issue, whilst the mental sufferings were much increased by anxiety respecting the losses sustained in his business, owing to his

confinement, or the distress in which his family would be involved, in the event of his death. From this distress of mind the poor were usually exempt. Having no regular mode of earning a livelihood, they seemed contented if they could meet the wants of the passing day, aware that their families, far from being exposed to increased privations, from their illness, would be perhaps better fed by the charitable exertions of their neighbours, than they had been before sickness visited them; nor did they seem to have at all so great a dread of death, as was often witnessed among those in easy circumstances. Mental agitation, therefore, had, with the poor, little effect in causing increased determination to the head, whilst exposure to cold and damp, or inattention to the state of the bowels, caused the chest or abdomen to become the seat of disease. These seem the most probable causes of the singular exemption of the poor from the symptoms indicating a diseased state of the brain, few cases of this kind having occurred in the hospital, unless amongst those who were brought there in the advanced stage, and who, till their removal, had been confined in close and dirty cabins, with little or no medical assistance, and without having received even the common attentions. That patients so situated should often labour under the worst symptoms of fever is not to be wondered at: it is only surprising, that so many should have escaped them.

They in whom the febrile symptoms ran high, at the commencement of the attack, usually recovered in a shorter time, and in a much greater proportion, than those who at first complained little of pain of any kind, whilst the febrile state crept on slowly. Cases of the latter description occurred most frequently among the better sort; and it seemed as if congestion in the blood-vessels of the brain, producing an oppressed state of that organ, with diminished energy of all the functions, delayed the re-action, and rendered the sensations of the patient less acute. From whatever cause it may have proceeded, it is certain, that of those affected in this way many died.

The bad cases were in much smaller proportion than had occurred when the disease was prevalent in former years. This is in part attributable to the previous state of exhaustion of the greater number, from deficient nourishment; in part also to their being unable to procure for the sick the various stimulants which had been formerly given, under the erroneous idea of supporting their strength; but it was, perhaps, still more owing to the removal of the prejudices against fresh air, cleanliness, and the use of purgatives, in the treatment of fever. When the dispensary was first established, on visiting any of the lower order ill of fever, they were usually found laid near the fire, whilst every care was taken to guard them from cold, by excluding, as much as

possible, the external air. The bed or body linen was seldom changed, even among those who had the means of doing so, lest the patient might take cold; and so great was the fear of damp, that, before a shirt was thought fit to be put on the sick, it was frequently worn for a day by a person in health. Since that period, these prejudices have gradually given way; and so large a proportion of the poor throughout the district has experienced the good effects of the cooling treatment, since the commencement of the present epidemic, that they are now almost completely removed, and fresh air, cleanliness, and due attention to the state of the bowels, are generally admitted to be of service. Even the cold affusion has ceased to be regarded with the horror which its first introduction excited, and is now frequently used, more especially in the febrile complaints of children, without consulting a medical practitioner respecting the necessity for its employment.

Blood-letting was not used as a general remedy in the treatment of fever. It was only had recourse to when symptoms of inflammation in any of the cavities appeared, and, in these cases, I never had reason to regret the employment of the lancet, whilst the extended experience of its utility makes me wish that I had at first used it still more freely. Instead of rendering the convalescence more tedious, the patients, who were bled early, recovered their

strength even more rapidly than those who had not been blooded ; as by lessening the violence of arterial action in the first stage, it prevented the subsequent sinking in the advanced period. Indeed, evacuations, whether by bleeding or purging, were in general productive of evident advantage, whilst it was always necessary to use stimulants with extreme caution. In the better classes I have found the pulse raised from 70 to 100 beats in the minute by an allowance of eight ounces of wine in 24 hours, and relapses so often occurred among the patients in hospital, when placed on full diet, that I found it necessary to keep them on lower fare, till they had been able to quit their beds for a few hours each day.

I regret much, that I cannot give an account of the appearances observable on dissection, as I was not permitted to open the bodies of any who died of the disease. The examination of morbid bodies having hitherto been little practised in this part of Ireland, the prejudices against it are consequently very strong, so that few are willing to subject their deceased relatives to a measure so repugnant to the general feeling. Some of the fatal cases in hospital were friendless strangers, whose bodies I might no doubt have opened : but I felt that any information, which could thus have been obtained, would be more than counterbalanced by the dislike it would have excited, in the minds of the poor,

against removal to the hospital, which then afforded the only hope of checking the rapid progress of the disease; and they who are at all acquainted with the acute feelings of the lower order on this subject, will be aware that a serious personal risk would be incurred by any attempt at obtaining this knowledge by a clandestine examination.

No establishment for the relief of the sick poor existed in Strabane till the year 1812; when, chiefly from the exertions of the present Bishop of Ossory, who then held the living of Urney, a dispensary was opened, towards the support of which the late Marquis of Abercorn contributed liberally during his life, and the assistance has been continued by his lordship's executors. Few districts stood more in need of such an institution, there being, probably, as large a proportion of its population in distressed circumstances, as in any other country circuit of equal extent. The expenses of the establishment are defrayed by voluntary subscriptions, little exceeding 100*l. per annum*, and by a yearly presentment on the county equal in amount to the subscriptions. Small as the fund is, it has been found sufficient, in ordinary years, not only to meet the usual expenses of the institution, but even to afford pecuniary aid to some

patients in circumstances of peculiar distress. All who bring a recommendation from a subscriber, receive advice and medicine at the dispensary, on two days in each week; and those who labour under complaints of a dangerous nature, or who require surgical aid, are visited by the medical attendant, at their own houses. The establishment is managed by a committee of twelve, annually elected from among the subscribers. The medicines are purchased from a druggist, and compounded at the dispensary. A fixed salary is paid to the medical attendant, and no perquisite of any kind allowed.

The annexed return of the number of patients relieved in each year, since the opening of the institution, shews the extraordinary increase of disease in 1818, as compared with the four preceding years.

From May, 1812, till February, 1813... 756

Year ending February, 1814 1,108

Ditto ditto 1815 1,132

Ditto ditto 1816 1,096

Ditto ditto 1817 1,332

Ditto ditto 1818 3,931

If we consider the sufferings to which the poor are subjected, when from sickness or acci-

dent they are rendered unable to pursue their usual avocations, and the protracted confinement often caused by ailments, from which they would soon have recovered, under timely medical assistance, it will be evident that in no other way could so much relief be afforded, at so small an expense to the community.

After the dispensary had been established for some time, it was found that much benefit would result from having a few beds, for the reception of patients residing at a distance from town, whose cases required surgical operation; and with this view the governors had resolved to fit up two beds in the Dispensary, when a contagious fever broke out in the town and spread widely amongst the poorer classes, to whom it was chiefly confined.

On my recovery from a severe attack of the disease, caught by attendance on the poor in their cabins, I stated to the inhabitants the advantages likely to result from an establishment for the reception of fever patients; and, the measure being generally approved of, charity sermons were preached in the different houses of worship, for the purpose of raising a fund to defray the expenses of building and fitting up a small fever hospital. A grant of 200*l.* was obtained for the same object out of the fines

levied off town-lands for illicit distillation, half of which fines belonged, by law, to the county infirmary, of which the different dispensaries are regarded as branches; and this, with the proceeds of the charity sermons, enabled the governors to build a fever ward and dispensary, the site of which was granted, free of expense, by the Marquis of Abercorn. As no law then existed empowering Grand Juries to present for the support of fever hospitals, it was supposed that the expenses of the establishment must have been defrayed out of the Dispensary fund, and on this account it was judged advisable to erect the building on as small a scale as possible. Two wards were accordingly fitted up, each intended to contain four beds. The house was opened in April, 1816, for the reception of patients, and as, during that year, the beds were not at any time all filled, it was hoped that by immediately removing the sick to the hospital, and by employing the usual means of destroying contagion, the town might be preserved free from fever. Although the building is likely to prove sufficient for these purposes, in seasons not more than usually unhealthy, it was found very inadequate to receive all the poor who laboured under fever, in the summer of 1817, so that in July the house was filled, although two additional beds had been fitted up in each ward. As it was no longer possible

to employ the means of prevention which till then had been practised, the disease soon spread widely among the paupers, who were crowded together in the different lodging-houses; and as they crawled about in search of food, whilst their strength allowed, the contagion was in this way widely diffused, and soon communicated to many of the higher classes.

In the performance of my professional duty I had full proof of the miseries endured by those who laboured under fever, and of the risk to which the inhabitants at large would be exposed, if active measures were not speedily adopted to arrest its further progress. I pointed out the necessity of opening a temporary hospital for the reception of the sick; and the danger was so pressing, that a sum sufficient to meet the first expenses of such an institution was soon subscribed. Convinced that, if the hospital were once established, there would be little difficulty in procuring the money required for its support, I undertook, with the assistance of my brother, who had served for some years as Surgeon in the Navy, to fit up an hospital for forty patients, although the first subscriptions hardly amounted to eighty pounds. Our greatest difficulty was to procure a house of sufficient size, in an eligible situation, as the

dread of fever was so great that none of the inhabitants could be prevailed on to give any building for the purpose, lest the disease should spread from it on all sides; I was at last permitted by the magistrates to occupy in this manner the house where the quarter sessions of the peace are held, on giving a written assurance that it should be restored to its original state, and freed from contagious matter on the removal of the epidemic. It was very generally wished that an application should be made to the Government for a loan of some tents, which might be pitched on a hill at a short distance from the town; but to this I was very averse, being convinced that they could not be used as an hospital, without exposing the patients to imminent danger from cold, if, as was likely to happen, the disease should continue during the winter.

As it may suggest some useful hints towards fitting up similar temporary establishments, should they again become necessary, a short account of the arrangements and internal economy of the hospital is here given.

The house is situated at a short distance from the town, and is quite detached from any other building. It contains a large hall, sixty feet square, surrounded by a gallery, and vaulted

underneath. The bench, council-table, and dock, occupied a considerable part of the hall, and the room for the jurors was separated from the gallery by a partition of boards. To fit it for the intended purpose, the bench, council-table, and dock, were removed, and the hall divided into two wards, one for male and one for female patients. The partition forming the jury-room was taken down, and the whole of the gallery set apart for female patients, who were always much more numerous than the males. As there was no fire-place in the hall, a small stove was put up, when the weather became cold, around which the convalescents sat, when their strength permitted them to leave their beds. The washing and cooking were carried on in the vaults, which have no internal communication with the hall, so that from these the patient did not suffer any annoyance.

The beds were formed of deal-boards placed on edge, having between them a space of two feet and an half, and, by putting a bed in every alternate space, the patients were not too much crowded together. Our chief difficulty would have been to procure a supply of bedding, as our small fund would have proved insufficient for this purpose alone, had there not then been fortunately in the barrack-store a quantity of cast military bedding, which it is customary to

sell by auction at stated periods, and on application to Mr. Peel, the Chief Secretary for Ireland, representing the distressed situation of the poor and the necessity for such a supply, immediate orders were given that they should be brought to sale ; and we thus obtained, for a few pounds, an abundant stock of bedding and every other furniture required, as so general was the wish to facilitate the opening of the hospital that no competitors appeared at the sale.

The superintendence of the establishment was intrusted to the person who had been porter to the Dispensary since the opening of that institution. He purchased every thing wanted for the hospital, and saw the medicines administered and the food distributed to the patients. The receipts for the different payments were examined monthly by the Dispensary committee, who were so well pleased with the correctness of the superintendent, that, on the closing of the institution, the sum of ten pounds was voted him in addition to his salary of ten shillings per week ; a reward which he certainly well merited, as I feel confident that the unusually small mortality in the hospital was much owing to the extraordinary attention paid to the ventilation of the house, the cleanliness of the patients, and the regular administration of the medicines, all which matters were chiefly intrusted to him.

The establishment consisted of the superintendent, four nurse-tenders, a cook, and washer-woman. Two men were engaged for conveying patients to the hospital, carrying water for washing and culinary purposes, white-washing the houses from which patients had been brought, and removing heaps of manure, or other nuisances. The sick were carried in a sedan chair, so constructed that they might either sit upright, or if too weak to bear this posture, recline at length. When the patient was lodged in the hospital, the carriers returned, and white-washed with quick lime both the inside and outside of his house. The straw or chaff, which had served as bedding, was burnt or thrown into the river, and the bed-clothes rinsed in cold water. The doors and windows were then thrown open so as to cause a free circulation of air through the house. The clothing of the patient was taken with him to the hospital, where, after being washed and dried, it was labelled and put by till the time of his dismissal, so that he returned to his home without risk of carrying infection.

On the admission of a patient to the hospital, he was thoroughly washed with soap and water, his hair was cut close, and hospital linen put on him. This, as well as the bed-linen, was changed twice a week, and in bad cases much

oftener. The blankets and coverlids were changed every fortnight, but were not washed so often, as the want of a drying-house obliged us to rest satisfied with exposing them freely to the air.

Great difficulty was at first experienced in procuring nurse-tenders; and for two or three weeks we were obliged to admit for this purpose some friends of the sick, on condition of their affording assistance to the other patients. This however soon ceased to be necessary, as many of the convalescents were anxious to be retained in the house, rather than return to their former state of wretchedness.

The diet-table was as follows:—

Low diet.—Two quarts of oatmeal gruel.

Half diet.—One quart of oatmeal porridge, one pint of sweet milk.

Full Diet.—Two quarts of oatmeal porridge, one quart of sweet milk, and a quart of soup, with six ounces of fresh beef from which it was made.

For some time after the hospital was opened no animal food was used, and the patients who laboured under considerable debility, on the decline of the fever, were allowed a quart of ale

daily, but it was found that they recovered strength much more rapidly from the general use of animal food, and giving ale only as a cordial in bad cases. It was indeed to be expected that such would be its effect on patients, very few of whom had tasted flesh-meat for twelve months before, except at the soup-kitchen.

As it was found impossible to enforce the cleansing of infected houses, and the removal of nuisances, with as much strictness as was desirable, we endeavoured to have district committees established, who would take care that these important duties should be properly performed, as well as that those attacked with fever should be immediately removed to the hospital. For this purpose the town was divided into six wards, in each of which three of the more respectable inhabitants undertook the office of inspectors; but so great was the dread of contagion that few of them would venture into the cabins, even after the process of cleansing had been completed, so that the only advantage derived from their appointment was the having the earliest intelligence of the appearance of disease in their district. Indeed it was hardly to be expected that persons not obliged by their professional duties to visit the sick, would expose themselves to so serious a

risk as might be incurred by an efficient discharge of the office of inspector.

None of the measures employed to stop the progress of the disease seemed to have so powerful and immediate an effect as the suppression of street-begging, by allowing a small sum weekly to such as were judged proper objects of charity, and preventing the influx of beggars from the surrounding neighbourhood. For the accomplishing of this a subscription was entered into by the inhabitants, amounting to nearly thirty pounds per month, and out of this fund payments were made to the begging poor proportioned to the number of their families, and their powers of contributing in any manner towards their own support. The weekly allowance varied from fifteen pence to two shillings and sixpence; and by this means eighty-four families, who for many months or years before had subsisted by begging, were kept at home, and obliged to look to the produce of their own labour for at least a part of their subsistence. This plan still continues to be acted on, but as considerable difficulty is now experienced in collecting the subscriptions, it is feared the poor must be soon again permitted to prowl upon the Public.

As nothing seems more likely to encourage the general adoption of the measures required

for the suppression of fever, than their certainty of being attended with a comparatively trifling expense, I have given an account of the money raised for the support of the temporary fever hospital, and of the various items of expenditure, to shew how small a sum has proved sufficient, in Strabane, for accomplishing all the objects already detailed. The original fund was raised by private subscription, and amounted only to 66*l.* 17*s.* 3*d.*: when this sum was nearly expended, a sermon was preached in the parish church, and a collection made in aid of the fund, amounting to 103*l.* 5*s.* 9*d.* These, with 80*l.*, received at different times from the committee appointed by Government to give assistance to the Fever Hospitals throughout Ireland, proved nearly sufficient to defray the expenses of the establishments, from their opening, on the 22d of August, 1817, till the 1st of December, 1818.

RECEIPTS.

Amount of private sub-			
scriptions	£	66 17 3	
Collection at Charity			
Sermon	103	5 9	
Grants from Govern-			
ment	80	0 0	
Cash paid from Dispen-			
sary Fund	50	15 6	
	—————	£300 18 6	

EXPENDITURE.

Provisions	£ 140	6	1
Fuel	24	11	11
Candles and Soap....	8	10	11
Superintendent's Wages	12	10	0
Nurses' Wages	39	7	11
Paid for removing Patients, carrying Water, and White- washing	19	18	0
Bedding.....	6	11	2
Furniture	6	3	5
Straw	8	14	11
Lime	9	2	10
Sundries.....	14	16	4
Gratuity to Superin- tendent	10	0	0
	<hr/> £300 18 6		

From the above account, it appears that the expenditure has amounted to little more than eleven shillings for each patient, their number in that period having been 535, a sum much less than might be supposed requisite, when it is considered that it does not alone include the care of the patients, but the expenses of the preventive measures so extensively practised.

Fever had become very prevalent in town, when the Soup-Kitchen and other measures

adopted during the spring, for the relief of the poor, were discontinued, the fund raised for these purposes being exhausted. From this cause, the numerous strangers who had, till then, been supported, in a great degree, by these means, were obliged to return to the places of their former residence; and, as many of them were only recovering from fever, and others, although not yet confined, had received the contagion, they communicated the disease wherever they went. To this cause is chiefly to be attributed the rapid increase of fever observable about this period in the surrounding district; for although, during the spring, many cases had occurred among the poor throughout the country, who had suffered from cold and hunger to a still greater degree than those in town, it had not till then been so general as to excite alarm. The lower classes were attacked by it in much greater proportion than those in better circumstances, but it was by no means confined to them, as many were infected who had not suffered privations of any kind; and although, from their situation in life, they must have had more care and attention than the cottiers around them, they died in much greater numbers. The disease at last became so prevalent in all the surrounding country, that, about the middle of October, Sir John Burgoyne, the agent for the Marquis of Abercorn's extensive

estates in this country, thought it expedient to lay before his Lordship a full representation of the sufferings endured by his tenantry from this cause; in consequence of which, immediate orders were given to employ every means likely to prove useful in alleviating their distress, and in checking the further spread of the disease. For these purposes, the following plan was adopted.

The estates of his Lordship include nearly the whole of Camus and Leck, and a considerable portion of Urney, and, as these are within the Dispensary limits, it was not thought necessary to have any other medical establishment in them; but a considerable part of the estate lying beyond these bounds, a dispensary was established in each of the manors so situated, where a medical man attended, two days in each week, to give advice and medicine to the tenantry ill of fever. A superintendent was appointed in each manor, to enforce attention to cleanliness, ventilation, &c., and persons chosen to fill these situations were pensioners, who had formerly been serjeants in the army. These were preferred to any of the inhabitants of the district, as being more likely to act strictly according to the instructions given them, and less liable to be influenced by private attachment in enforcing obedience to the rules laid down.

Before the Dispensaries were opened, the most accurate information was obtained respecting the state of each district, and to this end the superintendents made out returns, shewing the population of each manor, the state of every dwelling-house, with respect to dryness, ventilation, cleanliness, and supply of bedding; the number of farmers and cottiers, and the trade of each cottier, with the nature of his holding—whether what is called a take, or only his cabin; the number ill of fever from the commencement of the epidemic to the date of the return; the number then ill, and the deaths that had taken place. The farmers were called on to put the roofs of their cottiers' houses into sufficient repair; to supply them with fresh straw for bedding; to remove the heaps of manure to some distance from the dwelling-houses; and to put casements, capable of being opened, into the cabins where they were required. Quick-lime and brushes were furnished at his Lordship's expense, for white-washing the houses in which any person had been ill of fever; and, the better to ensure the accomplishment of these objects, two of the most respectable inhabitants, who were denominated conservators, were appointed in each town-land, to enforce attention to the instructions given. The superintendents were constantly employed in visiting the different parts of the manors committed to their charge, to see

that the directions were complied with, and that the conservators discharged properly the duties of their office.

The following directions were printed, and widely circulated throughout the country.

“ To the Tenantry on the Marquis of Abercorn’s Estates.

“ You are earnestly requested to attend to the following rules, by a strict observance of which you may escape the fever now so common around you ; or, if any one in your house be attacked with it, the disease may be prevented from spreading through your families.

“ 1st. Keep your House well aired.

“ If your windows admit of being opened, this should be done every day, when the weather is dry ; but if not, one or two panes should be taken out of each, and the openings may be closed at night.

“ 2d. Keep your Houses free from Damp.

“ For this purpose, a trench should be dug round the house, lower than the floor, with a sufficient fall to carry off water. The roof should also be made perfectly water-fast.

“ 3d. Let your Families sleep as much apart as possible.

“ Do not crowd them all, as is often done, into one close room. The sleeping-rooms should be well aired, and the bed-linen often changed. Out-shot beds, from their great closeness, are particularly unwholesome.

“ 4th. Keep all your Family very clean.

“ Their clothing should be often changed, and their bodies washed, once or twice a-week, with soap and water.

“ 5th. Avoid violent Exercise, or Excess in the use of spirituous Liquors.

“ They are succeeded by weakness, which will render you much more liable to infection than you would otherwise be.

“ 6th. Remove the Dung-hill to some distance from your Dwelling-House, and fill up the Pit with Earth.

“ Nothing injures the health so much as breathing foul air, which must always be the case in your house so long as you have a heap of manure, or a pool of putrid water, close to your doors.

“ 7th. Do not lodge Beggars, unless in an Out-House.

“ Their clothes and persons are almost always in a very filthy state, and infection is often conveyed in the blankets they carry with them.

“ 8th. Do not visit your Neighbours who are ill of Fever, nor permit any of your Family to go to Wakes.

“ General Rules for the Treatment of Persons in Fever.

“ As soon as any one is taken ill, he should be laid in the coolest and best aired part of the house; his linen should be changed very often, every day if possible; he should take light drink in large quantities, and may use it slightly warmed, so long as he feels chilly, but when he grows steadily hotter than natural he should take his drink cold. Whilst the skin continues very hot, and there is no sweating, he should be washed every evening with cold water, unless he has a cough, with pain in the breast, and, when he is not much warmer than in health, he may be washed every day with lukewarm water. If the head-ach be very severe, the hair should be cut close, and his head often washed with cold water, or a cloth

wetted in cold water may be constantly applied to it.

“ A gentle vomit should be given as soon as the complaint begins, and a dose of physic some time after the vomit has operated. A little gentle physic should also be given when the sick person has, at any time, been twenty-four hours without a motion in his bowels. You will get these, and all other medicines required, by applying at the Dispensary. When the complaint is removed, the chaff, or straw, on which the sick person lay, should be burnt; the bedding washed; and the house white-washed with quick-lime, which will be given you at the Dispensary, for that purpose.”

If, in addition to the measures now detailed, it had been practicable to supply the patients, who stood in need of such assistance, with a change of bedding and linen; if a small hospital had been erected in each manor, to which such of the sick as resided in very populous hamlets, might have been removed, or who were prevented by poverty or other circumstances from receiving those attentions which their situation required, whilst some plan had been devised for putting a stop to the crowds of beggars who wandered through the country,

and seemed the chief means of diffusing the contagion, the exertions made throughout the Marquis of Abercorn's estates would have been productive of still more decided benefit; indeed, by such measures, a confident hope might be entertained of eradicating the disease in a short time from any country district.

But, although in the present instance the complete removal of fever has not been accomplished, the good resulting from the measures adopted has far exceeded what could reasonably have been anticipated. In a district containing above thirty thousand inhabitants, one-fourth of whom had been attacked by fever in the short space of six months, and nearly one-twelfth of the sick had perished, the disease was rendered so much more mild, by the means now detailed, that of those affected by it, from the time of their adoption, not more than one in twenty-five died; whilst, after they had been persevered in for some time, the sick were found scarcely to amount to one-fourth of the number ill of fever when the plan was first introduced.

The Returns from which the following abstracts are taken, were made with the utmost care. That of each town-land on the Marquis of Abercorn's estates was examined by the

persons appointed to act as conservators, whose local knowledge enabled them to discover the slightest inaccuracy. They are, therefore, valuable, as presenting an authentic record of the extent to which the disease prevailed in a country district, which, from having been subjected to no peculiar cause of fever, may fairly enough be regarded as a standard for judging of the prevalence of the disorder throughout the province.

ABSTRACT of Returns of the Dispensary District, shewing the Number ill of Fever from the Commencement of the Epidemic in the Summer of 1817, till the end of September, 1818, the Numbers labouring under Fever at that Date, and the Mortality caused by the Disease.

	Population.	Number ill of Fever from the Commencement of the Epidemic.	Deaths.	Number now ill of Fever.
Town of Strabane	3,896	639	59	13
Parish of Camus..	2,384	685	61	37
Ditto Leck...	5,092	1,462	96	57
Ditto Urney..	4,886	1,381	86	42
	16,258	4,167	302	149

A RETURN of those Parts of the Marquis of Abercorn's Estates not within the Dispensary District, shewing the Population; the Number ill of Fever, from the Commencement of the Epidemic; the Number ill on the 1st of October, 1818; and the Mortality caused by the Disease.

MANORS.	Population.	Number ill of Fever, prior to 12th November, 1817.	Deaths from Fever, prior to 12th Nov. 1817.	Number ill from 12th Nov. 1817, till 1st Oct. 1818.	Deaths from 12th Nov. 1817, till 1st Oct. 1818.	Number ill 1st October, 1818.	Total Number of Sick.	Total Number of Deaths.
Magavlin and Lismulmughray }	5,548	1,130	79	440	22	96	1,666	101
Donelong	3,126	753	54	402	17	62	1,217	71
Derrygoon	2,568	652	66	370	24	193	1,215	90
Part of Strabane	2,796	681	58	267	17	42	990	75
	14,038	3,216	257	1,479	80	393	5,088	337

These Returns afford a most satisfactory proof of the efficacy of preventive measures in checking the progress of the epidemic, and in lessening the mortality attendant on it. It is much to be lamented that the benevolent nobleman, under whose auspices, and at whose expense, they were carried into execution, did not himself live to witness their beneficial effects; but it may reasonably be hoped that his example will call forth the exertions of other landed proprietors, towards freeing their tenantry from a disease which has proved a source of incalculable loss to themselves, and entailed upon the community at large a degree of suffering and distress almost without parallel in these kingdoms.

	1800	1801	1802	1803	1804
Part of Stirlingshire	14,038	3,510	281	183	28
Dumfriesshire	3,788	625	625	225	60
Dumfries	3,150	227	227	227	24
Wigtownshire	8,248	1,130	130	130	07

OBSERVATIONS,

&c.

PART II.

HAVING already cursorily mentioned, in my account of the epidemic, the causes which chiefly contributed to its extensive diffusion throughout the district, I shall now endeavour to state more in detail those circumstances which seem to render the inhabitants of this country peculiarly subject to contagious diseases, and make their suppression a matter of much more difficulty than it is found to prove in the neighbouring kingdom; as upon a full acquaintance with these must be founded any general plan for the prevention of fever.

Of the causes which chiefly conduced towards subjecting the poor to the influence of contagion, the most powerful seemed to be depression of mind, occasioned by the general privations under which they laboured. The despair to which they were reduced could not be more strikingly exemplified, than by the

apathy very generally manifested on the death of their children or relatives. They who under other circumstances would have deplored it as the greatest misfortune, almost rejoiced in being released from the pain of witnessing the distress and suffering endured by those most dear to them, whilst they were incapable of affording the slightest alleviation ; and the selfish feelings engendered in the minds of many, yielded a gleam of hope, by inducing them to suppose that every diminution in the number for whom it was necessary to provide sustenance, might be regarded as a positive good to themselves. Nothing short of extreme misery could have wrought so sudden and complete a change in the feelings of a people, whose attachment to their offspring and relatives is proverbial. The extent to which this cause operated is hardly to be calculated, as it is probably below the truth, when it is stated that one-fifth of the whole population was reduced to depend on charity for subsistence, after having sold their furniture, cattle, and most of their clothing, to purchase food. Under these circumstances even the return of plenty could hold out but remote prospects of replacing them in the state of comfort they enjoyed at the beginning of the famine ; they therefore abandoned themselves to the despondency which their situation was too well calculated to produce. The energy of mind,

among the lower classes, being thus diminished, their bodily strength was still further reduced by deficient nourishment. Labourers seldom eat more than one meal in the day, generally consisting of oaten cake with buttermilk, and of these they often had too small a quantity to satisfy the cravings of hunger. Their children, who could worse bear the want of food, sought for help throughout the neighbourhood, and were prevented from suffering to so great a degree as their parents, by the humanity of all who could spare any thing towards their support; still their emaciated frames and sunken features shewed plainly the extent of even their privations.

Persons thus debilitated became peculiarly susceptible of the contagion upon the slightest exposure to it. A casual visit to a neighbour labouring under the disease, or the slightest offices of friendship performed for the sick, were almost certainly followed by an attack; and this was so well ascertained among themselves, that none, but near relatives, could be prevailed on to attend on the sick; and considerable difficulty was for some time experienced in procuring the removal of patients to the hospital, although a liberal reward was offered to those who would undertake the conveyance of them.

The influence of depressing passions, and want of sufficient nourishment, may be regarded as the chief predisposing causes of the disease. Those tending to generate the contagion of typhus were much more numerous, of which neglect of personal cleanliness appeared to be the chief. This is at all times too little attended to among the lower orders, but in seasons of scarcity, when they are constantly engaged in a struggle for the means of existence, it ceases altogether to be observed. The clothing and persons of those received into the Fever Hospital proved clearly the total inattention of the poor with regard to these points. Their bodies were often so bronzed with filth that the natural colour of the skin could hardly be perceived. Their hair was filled with vermin, and the smell of many was so offensive, as to render it a very disgusting office, on the part of the nurse-tenders, to free them from the accumulation of dirt with which they were loaded. Their clothing was often in so foul a state that it was thought more economical to destroy it, and supply its place with new, than to attempt cleansing it, as it would in many instances not have been worth the expense of washing. This statement is applicable in the fullest extent to the begging poor, who formed a large proportion of the patients in hospital; but, with somewhat less strength of colouring, it will serve for

most of those received into that institution, except in the instances of servants brought there from the houses of persons of respectability.

Although the lowest classes in this country are at all times badly clothed, the families of tradesmen and mechanics, for a considerable time previous to the termination of the war, had dressed in a much better manner than they had formerly done, and were probably as well clad as people of the same rank in any other part of the empire. A perceptible falling off, however, in this respect took place, soon after the restoration of peace, in consequence of the distress resulting from diminished employment, low wages, and more especially the fall in the value of linen yarn, by the profit of which the females throughout the district had, till then, been enabled to clothe themselves even better than their situation in life would seem to warrant. From these causes an holiday suit had become rather rare among the working classes, even prior to the deficient harvest of 1816; and when the pressure of famine began to be felt, every article of wearing apparel, which could be dispensed with, was disposed of, to provide for their immediate wants. It was on this account no longer possible to change their clothing as often as formerly, or to continue to pay attention to neatness of dress, for which a taste had

become very general; so that when contagious matter had been once imbibed, it was retained for a great length of time, and tended powerfully to increase the extent of the epidemic.

The scarcity of bed-clothes had a still greater effect than that of wearing apparel, in communicating the disease. I have frequently found all the members of the family laid in the same bed with a patient labouring under fever, owing to their having but one or two blankets. Under such circumstances escape was impossible, and every inmate of the cabin soon became affected. As on their recovery the bedding could not be spared, even for a day, to be washed, it retained the contagious matter, and caused a recurrence of the disease, when, from fatigue, or other circumstance, any of the family became more than usually liable to its action; and the scarcity of bedding contributed still further to extend the disease, from the necessity of using the clothing of the family as a substitute; by which means it became charged with the effluvia arising from the bodies of the sick, and naturally communicated the contagion to those with whom they held daily intercourse.

The sufferings to which the poor are subjected, from want of blankets, are probably greater than those arising from any other cause.

The distress occasioned by scarcity of food, or fuel, is only occasional, whilst this continues, year after year, and as their poverty prevents them from supplying the place of these articles, when worn out, every succeeding winter finds them worse prepared to resist its inclemency. The public sale of bedding, by the Barrack Board, which took place once or twice in each year, during the war, afforded those in the neighbourhood of garrison towns an occasional supply of this article at a cheap rate, though under the disadvantage of being already much worn. Of late, however, such sales had not here taken place, and the distress of those by whom they would have been taken advantage of, deprived them of all power of expending any thing upon this so indispensable an article of domestic comfort. The extent of the deprivations, suffered by the poor generally, from this scarcity must far exceed the conjecture of all who have not pretty frequently witnessed it. I have known a numerous family, residing for many years in the same house, and not peculiarly afflicted by sickness, or calamity of any kind, who yet had only one worn-out blanket, with which the infant was covered, whilst the parents and other children slept under a matting of hay, substituted for bed-clothes.

The bad ventilation of the cottages is also in

part attributable to the same cause. The inhabitants not having the means of protecting themselves from the cold by sufficient covering, are unwilling to sacrifice, in the depth of winter, the only mode in their power of preserving a comfortable degree of warmth in their houses; and as the free admission of air would greatly aggravate their distress, they are at pains to stop every crevice, and put as many of their family as possible to sleep together, that the deficiency of blankets may be supplied by the heat of their bodies. Nor will they be convinced of the evils to which they are exposed by such a practice; as whilst they experience the distress arising from cold, they will not be induced to believe that any means of avoiding it can prove injurious to them.

The effect which the lodging-houses for the reception of beggars had in propagating the disease, was shewn by its prevalence in a far greater degree among the inhabitants of the upper part of the town, where they were more numerous than among those in the lower part, when few of them existed; although the latter were exclusively subjected to the winter floods, and it might be supposed that the consequent damp of their houses would have rendered them more liable to the influence of contagion. These lodging-houses were chiefly filled with

strangers, who came into town during the period when street begging was permitted, and since this has been put a stop to, they have been inhabited by persons in extreme poverty, who, for the most part, possess neither furniture nor bedding, and are so crowded together that, about three months ago, seven patients were removed to the Fever Hospital from a room scarcely nine feet square. All the efforts hitherto made to purify these nests of disease have proved ineffectual, and in two large houses more especially, which have been held for some years by this description of tenants, fever is seldom wanting. The comparative exemption of the others seems attributable to their not having been as yet so long occupied as to contain a great accumulation of filth, but they will no doubt soon become as bad as those. A tolerably correct idea may be formed of the mischief caused by these houses, from the fact of ninety-six patients having been brought from four of them to the Fever Hospital in the last eighteen months.

The conveyance of contagious matter in the clothing and blankets of the begging poor, seemed chiefly to cause the rapid diffusion of the disease throughout the country. As no legal provision for the relief of the poor exists in this kingdom, and by far the greater number

of landed proprietors, by whom alone adequate assistance could be afforded to the distressed residents on their estates, are absentees, all who from any cause are rendered incapable of earning a livelihood, are obliged to travel through the country in search of food, and their numbers were increased ten-fold by the scarcity of the last year. In the winter and spring most of them flocked into the towns, where soup-kitchens were established for their relief. Every lodging-house was crowded, and as no attention was paid to cleanliness, contagious fever, the usual consequence of such neglect, soon began to appear amongst them. When the aid which had been afforded to the poor was discontinued, all who were not permanent residents in town being again obliged to seek for subsistence throughout the country, and their clothing being impregnated with contagious matter, imbibed from the sick, with whom they had occupied the same room, and often the same bed, the disease was thus communicated to the inmates of any house where they procured a night's lodging.

This source of infection was rendered peculiarly powerful, from the general opinion entertained by the lower classes, that the denial of a night's shelter to the houseless wanderer constituted one of the greatest breaches of moral

duty. Till lately the greater the appearance of sickness or distress, the more irresistible was their claim regarded; but the numberless proofs every day afforded of fever being thus communicated, has at last nearly put a total stop to the lodging of beggars in the dwelling-houses, and for some time it has been as difficult for a pauper, bearing the symptoms of ill health, to procure shelter for the night, as it was formerly rare to be refused it. When any of this class have lately been taken ill of fever, in situations remote from an hospital, a temporary covering has been erected for them behind an hedge, and they were supplied with food by the people around, but neither the sick nor their families were permitted to go to the houses in the neighbourhood. The late summer having been peculiarly warm and dry, this plan was advantageous to the sick, as well as to the community. The former were sheltered from the rain, whilst they were exposed freely to the air, and recovered in greater numbers than they would have done if confined in close cabins; and the convalescents were more speedily restored to strength, as the neighbouring inhabitants supplied them liberally with nourishment, in order to compensate for the apparent cruelty of denying them admittance to their houses. Widely as the disease actually extended, it must have

been still more general, had not this mode been adopted, as the sick poor were so numerous, that fever huts were met with in a ride of a few miles in any direction.

Incautious intercourse with the sick proved also a powerful means of diffusing the contagion. People of all ranks were exposed to its influence, in so many ways, during the late epidemic, that little could be said with certainty respecting the manner in which it was communicated in particular instances. In a few cases, where the disease spread through the families of the more opulent, there was little doubt of its having been caused by the individual first attacked being permitted to associate too soon with the family, after his convalescence, as it seldom happened when the sick were secluded for a sufficient length of time. Among the poor in town, and even among the more wealthy farmers in the country, the disease could frequently be traced from house to house, and among the cottagers it was often observed that when the parent was affected, his children, at service with the farmers around, were generally taken ill soon after, which may be imputed to their frequent visits, and incautious approach to the sick. One of the most striking instances of this kind occurred in the

summer of 1815, at a time when the district was remarkably healthy, and fever did not exist in it.

A beggar boy, from a distant part of the country, was lodged for the night in the house of a cottier in Artigarvan, about three miles from Strabane. He complained of being unwell when admitted, and was so ill on the next day as to be unable to quit his straw, which, as is customary, had been spread for him beside the fire. He was confined for nearly three weeks by fever of a mild kind, and was surrounded by all the family, two of whom caught the disease before his recovery, and all the others, seven in number, were attacked by it within a very few weeks afterwards. The hamlet contains eight houses, in five of which one or more individuals were seized, nearly at the same period. The servant of a farmer living next to the cabin where the disease broke out, was sent, as soon as he became ill, to the house of his mother, at two miles' distance, and before he had sufficiently recovered to return to his employer, three others of his family caught the disease, which spread to the surrounding cottages, as it had done in the hamlet where it first appeared, so that the illness of twenty-seven individuals could here be traced to this begging boy.

A few months afterwards another instance of

the same kind occurred within a mile of Strabane. The mother of a numerous family, two of whom were married, and resided in Strabane, and three others lived in different houses as servants, became ill of fever, and was visited almost daily by all her children. Her son, a weaver, who resided with her, was affected by the disease before she had completely recovered, and one of her married daughters, and two of those at service, became ill about the same period. The disease was communicated to the husband and two children of the one, and the mistress of one of the others. It spread also to the adjoining cottages, so that nineteen persons could be distinctly proved to have received the contagion from that source; but the actual number attacked was probably more than three times this; as the disease, when once introduced into the town, spread so widely among the lower orders as to create general alarm, and led to the establishment of the small fever-ward attached to the Dispensary, of which an account has been already given.

Exposure to damp, or to the miasms arising from animal or vegetable matters in a state of putrefaction are often assigned as the cause of contagious fever; but they appear to have little effect in producing it, unless in so far as by their debilitating influence on those subjected

to them, they create a predisposition to the disease. In addition to the numerous facts adduced by medical writers, to prove that damp alone is incapable of giving rise to contagious fever, it may be added that the portion of Strabane situated almost upon a level with the river, and subject to frequent inundations, contained fewer fever patients than that part of the town inhabited by persons of the same rank, built on highly-elevated ground ; and as it would be absurd to impute the prevalence of the disease to the situation of the latter, which was really caused by greater intercourse with the travelling beggars ; yet their comparative exemption from it corroborates the opinion of low situations not being peculiarly instrumental in generating contagion.

Many of the cabins throughout the district are built in very damp situations, some of them in bogs, where the peat has been cut away for fuel, and the land thus cleared forms the potato-garden of the cottier, his house being often so constructed that the turf bank forms one or more of its sides. The floor is thus some feet lower than the surrounding ground, and is therefore always moist. Here, if any where, contagious fever would be likely to spring from damp ; yet the inhabitants of these cottages were not more liable to it than those living on the

elevated and dry ground in their neighbourhood. It is a singular circumstance that the residents in these bogs are not subject to intermittents, so common in other marshy situations, fever of this description being almost unknown in this province, although there are, in many parts of it, extensive tracts of flat bog, almost as thickly inhabited as the surrounding arable land. This seems attributable to the water being so saturated with the tannin, contained in large quantities in many of the plants growing on these swamps, as to prevent the vegetable or animal matters immersed in it from running into a state of putrefaction.

The facts and observations contained in Dr. Bancroft's work on Yellow Fever, and in Dr. Chisholm's Paper in the Edinburgh Medical and Surgical Journal, seem quite conclusive against the contagion of typhus being generated by the effluvia arising from putrid animal substances, and the following circumstance is stated as an additional proof of the justness of their reasoning on the subject. No police regulations exist in Strabane to prevent the slaughtering of cattle in any part of the town. The butchers therefore, most of whom live in the narrow streets near the shambles, have their slaughter-houses immediately behind their dwellings. The garbage is thrown into a large pit, which is

generally cleaned but once in the year, at the season when the manure is required for planting potatoes, and at this time an offensive smell pervades the whole town, and is perceptible for a considerable distance around. The families exposed constantly to the effluvia arising from these heaps of putrid offal might have been expected to suffer severely from fever; but, on the contrary, they were found to be much less liable to it than others in the same rank of life. This was no doubt owing to their living chiefly on animal food, and thus escaping the debility induced by deficient nourishment, which certainly had the chief share in creating a predisposition to the disease.

Of the numerous causes which deprive the lower classes in Ireland of many comforts which those of the same rank in other parts of the empire enjoy, the excess of the population over what is actually required for the purposes of agriculture and manufactures, as at present carried on, appears the most considerable. The rapid increase of the inhabitants of this kingdom within the last half century, far exceeding what has taken place, during the same period, in any other European state, seems much to be ascribed to the increased supply of food occasioned by an improved system of agriculture, and by the immense extent of waste lands

brought into cultivation, from the period of repealing the laws, respecting tenures, as affecting the Roman Catholics, who constitute the great majority of the inhabitants, as well as to the extension of manufactures; but to no cause, perhaps, so much as to the practice generally prevalent amongst farmers, of parcelling out their holdings among their children; so that, where the father had been enabled to bring up the family in comfort, his sons live in a state little removed from poverty. This, although ultimately extremely injurious to the landlord, by giving him a tenantry of paupers, instead of a substantial yeomanry, has been overlooked by some in the more improved districts, and been encouraged by others, for the purpose of increasing their voting interest; whilst in mountainous situations, where the extensive tracts of heath are brought into cultivation by the spade alone, the proprietors have imagined it their interest to encourage, by every possible means, the subdivision of farms, in order that an increased quantity of land may be employed in raising potatoes, the mode universally practised for reclaiming such soils.

The division of land is so minute, in some parts of this province, as to appear almost incredible. I have been assured by a gentleman who possesses a small estate on the northern

coast of Donegal, that many of his tenants hold a portion of arable land only capable of producing as much oats as furnish one-half or even one-fourth of the straw required for fodder to a milch cow, during the winter, and that by this scale his rents are paid. The inhabitants live throughout the year almost entirely on potatoes which they plant on the bog, and manure with the sea-weed thrown on their shores; oatmeal being considered more as a luxury than a regular article of diet. The division of land fitted for cultivation, throughout the mountains in the interior, is not upon a much larger scale, so that the food of the inhabitants, even in times of plenty, is of the poorest kind which human beings can subsist on; and, in seasons of scarcity, no substitute can be procured. Thus, in an unproductive season, the mountaineer is forced to quit his home, and seek in the lowlands the food which his farm cannot afford him. How far the general distress is aggravated, at such times, by this cause, may be estimated from the fact of many hundred families, holding small farms in the mountains of Tyrone, having been obliged to abandon their dwellings, in the spring of 1817, and betake themselves to begging, as the only resource left to preserve their lives.

The general adoption of the cottier system

tends, more than any other cause, to keep the lower classes always in the most abject poverty, by establishing every where a much greater number of families, dependant for their support on daily labour, than can obtain constant employment by the cultivation of the soil. It is always an object of primary importance with the farmer to secure, at the cheapest possible rate, a supply of labourers equal to his wants. Were he to rest satisfied with effecting this, the mischief would not be so extensive; but the high rents paid, or promised, by the poor for their small holdings, often induce him to erect a number of cabins to let in this way. He receives six or eight guineas *per annum* for a small cottage, with grazing for a milch cow, half a rood of land for flax, and half an acre for oats, which is always allotted to the cottier on a part of the farm where two or three white crops have already been raised; with the privilege of cutting turf in the bog allotted to the farmer, and planting as many potatoes as he can provide manure for. This, however, is not thought to be any sacrifice on the part of the farmer, as he is more than compensated, by the succeeding crop, for the loss of ground, which having been already exhausted, must otherwise have remained for two or three years without yielding grass of any value; as, on the farms where this system is adopted, the land is

not relieved from the plough whilst it is capable of bearing a crop, nor are grass-seeds ever sown.

The description of a farm so managed will afford sufficient proof of the injury sustained from the prevalence of this system, by the public at large, as well as by the proprietors of the soil. A farmer, within my knowledge, who holds fifteen acres of arable land, with nearly an equal quantity of cut out bog, for which he pays 28*l. per annum*, has erected six cabins for labourers. They are built with mud, instead of lime, and are thatched, so that they cannot each have cost more than three or four pounds. For some time he received from three of his tenants six guineas *per annum*, and from the others two guineas each, the latter only holding a cottage and a small garden; but they have been all so reduced in circumstances by the late scarcity, as to be now unable to keep a cow, and for the two last years, have rented their cabins and potato-gardens alone. All the straw raised on the farm would scarcely suffice to keep the houses water-fast, if applied solely to this purpose; so that although this is usually very imperfectly done, notwithstanding an agreement to that effect on the part of the farmer, little remains for fodder or manure. It is evident that so many labourers cannot find

employment on this small farm, and their families are, consequently, at all times in a state of the most abject poverty. This may be looked on as an extreme case, but the annexed return of the number of cottiers on the Marquis of Abercorn's estate will prove that similar instances must be very numerous. In order to be convinced of the great excess of labourers in this district, it should be borne in mind that the farms are in general so small, that the holders require little assistance in their cultivation, and that all the tradesmen, in the rank of cottiers, are accustomed to assist the farmers with whom they live, in planting and digging potatoes, and in reaping the harvest.

Population of the following Manors.	Number of Families.	
	Farmers.	Cottiers.
Derrygoon	368	335
Donelong	243	322
Magevelin and Lis- mulumghray	319	668
Strabane	302	415
Cloughoghal	328	279

The custom of holding land in rundale, or by joint lease, which, till a recent period, prevailed in many parts of the country, besides its injurious effects in retarding every species of improvement, by leaving undefined the boundaries of each man's holding, and making all the inhabitants of the town-land responsible for the rent of any individual among them, had a considerable influence in preventing that attention to neatness and cleanness of dwelling-houses, which, under other circumstances, might have been expected, and in causing the rapid diffusion of contagious diseases, when generated in the hamlet. From this practice the habitations on each joint farm were built in clusters on the best part of the land, and to the space immediately around them, named in-field, cultivation was chiefly confined. This was parcelled out every year among the lease-holders, in proportion to the amount of rent paid by each; the rest of the farm, called the out-field, being generally kept in grass. Although, by allotting to each of the tenants a separate holding, and by the general discontinuance of the practice of granting joint leases, much has of late years been done to remove the evils resulting from this system: some effects, very injurious to the health of the inhabitants, yet remain.

The attachment to the spot of our birth,

which seems to be universal among mankind, has, in most instances, prevented the farmer from changing his residence, on having his portion of the joint property allotted exclusively to himself. They therefore often continue to live in hamlets, as when the land was held in common, although the dwelling-houses and offices must, in general, be very inconveniently situated for carrying on the business of the farm. The space in front of each house in the hamlet being considered as common property, no pains are taken to keep it in order, and the dung-hills are usually piled up close to the doors; or, more frequently, a pit is sunk near the house, which is always filled either with manure or with putrid water, presenting an object offensive both to the sight and smell. When an infectious disease breaks out in such a hamlet it soon spreads through every house, as it is hardly practicable to prevent constant intercourse between the inhabitants, who are usually linked together by the closest ties of relationship and friendship.

To those not fully aware of the mischief invariably resulting from a compulsory provision for the indigent, it might appear that the most efficacious and simple means of removing the evils of poverty would be, by appropriating a portion of the superfluity of the

rich towards supplying the necessities of the poor. The impossibility, however, of accomplishing this object by such measures, is fully proved by the effects of the poor's rates, as adopted in England, when compared with the opposite plan generally practised in Scotland; since, notwithstanding this enormous tax on the industry of the inhabitants, there appears to be more misery among the lower orders in England, than in Scotland, where no law of this kind exists; and the experience of the latter country has proved that in those parishes where the mode of supporting the poor has been assimilated to that which prevails in England, by levying a rate for their relief on the inhabitants, the number of paupers has increased infinitely more rapidly than where no such measure has been adopted. But although any general attempt for the removal of pauperism, by a forced assessment for the poor, must prove unavailing, some means might surely be devised whereby the number of beggars could be much lessened, and habits of industry and cleanliness gradually diffused among the lower orders.

With this view all beggars should be confined to the parishes of which they are natives, where their actual situation would be known by those to whom they applied for relief. This would materially lessen the number of strolling beg-

gars, who, even in plentiful years, travel through the country, accompanied by their wives and families, and are often met with at the distance of forty or fifty miles from their real homes. Many would then be obliged to betake themselves to habits of industry for support, who now subsist by begging, and bring up their children in idleness and vice, thus entailing on the community a permanent burthen. Those really unable to labour would be more certain of procuring relief, as the diminution in the number of mendicants, and the general knowledge of their distressed situation, would ensure them more liberal aid than they can now obtain: a regulation of this kind would also do away the necessity for lodging strolling beggars, which has been already shewn to have contributed largely to the diffusion of fever, as, when confined within the precincts of their parishes, they could always return at night to their own cabins.

The blind, the insane, and those subject to attacks of epilepsy, form a large proportion of the begging poor. These are not only obliged to depend for support on the charity of the Public, but require to be accompanied, in their journeying through the country, by some of the healthy members of their family. In this way the parent is often occupied, who, if relieved

from such a charge, might, by his industry, prevent himself or children from becoming burthensome to the community.

The actual proportion of insane persons in this kingdom has never, I believe, been accurately ascertained. In Scotland they appear to amount to more than one in three hundred and seventy of its population, and it may be presumed that here they do not bear a less ratio. Epileptic and blind persons may be supposed to equal this number, and when we add those obliged to devote their whole time to their care, some idea may be formed of the numbers reduced to beggary from these causes.

Within the last few years the attention of the Legislature has been directed to the necessity for lunatic asylums in this kingdom, and in 1806, an act was passed, empowering grand juries to present for the erection and support of such buildings in the different counties. It is however to be regretted that, instead of regarding lunatic asylums as establishments where patients would be subjected to proper treatment, with a view of restoring them to health, all that in general appears to have been contemplated, in this part of Ireland, was their confinement in a place of security. Thus, in some of the neighbouring counties, they are

either imprisoned in the jail, or in buildings designed for other, and very different, purposes; some of which are more calculated to deprive a rational being of reason, than to restore the lunatic. Thence it has resulted that the poor prefer keeping their friends under their own care, to sending them, as culprits, to a prison; and this will appear evident from the fact of only four lunatics being confined in the jail of the populous county of Tyrone, although a warrant, signed by two magistrates, is sufficient to procure their admission.

To remedy this defect it would be advisable to erect provincial asylums, instead of the present establishments in each county. These should be placed under the control of a physician, properly qualified for the office, and required to devote his whole time to the patients. Such large establishments would prove more useful and economical than a number of smaller ones. Fewer servants would be required to attend on a given number of patients. In the plan of the building every care could be taken to remove as much as possible the necessity for personal restraint, and, in an institution on so large a scale, the physician would be better enabled to employ the moral and medical treatment suited to each individual case. The advantage to the Public would be

still greater, if a part of each asylum were appropriated to the reception of patients, not in the rank of paupers, whose friends could pay annually a sum sufficient for their maintenance.

The reasons which induced the Legislature to authorize the erection of lunatic asylums, apply, with nearly equal force, to similar establishments for the blind and epileptic poor. Both classes are incapable of earning a livelihood, and both are burthensome to their relatives, who have often great difficulty in providing for their own support, and bringing up their other children, who may be considered as their treasure against old age and necessity, and to whom they trust for care and attention, which, to the honour of our lower orders, is very generally paid them; few instances being met with of parents reduced to beggary, whose children possess the means of supporting them. Such establishments might be made houses of industry, where the inmates would be instructed in a variety of manufactures, by the profits of which a considerable share, if not the whole expense of the institution, could be defrayed, and if the blind were received when young, they might be sent out to make room for others, when they had been taught to earn a support by their own labour.

If, to the measures now pointed out, were added some mode of furnishing employment to those who had not the means of procuring it in other ways, all that can at present be attempted with advantage, towards suppressing mendicity, would probably be effected. It may not be easy to point out what method of employment might be best suited to the poor inhabitants of the other provinces; but, in this, the spinning of flax affords an easy and economical one, by which a support might be afforded to a great part of our female population. Such an attempt has already been made in some places, and found to answer beyond the most sanguine expectation. It has the merit of being extremely simple in its management, and in the hope of similar establishments being introduced into other towns, I shall detail the mode of conducting an institution which has existed in Strabane nearly for two years, and afforded employment during the late scarcity, to many, who, but for this relief, must have been reduced to beggary.

In the summer of 1817, a grant of 150*l.* was obtained from Government, towards the relief of the poor in the parishes of Camus, Leck, and Urney. As the subscriptions raised in the town and neighbourhood were thought sufficient to carry on the soup-kitchen, and other means of assistance then in operation, it was judged ad-

visible to employ this money in an attempt to furnish the working classes with permanent employment, rather than to expend it in yielding them temporary relief. With this view, a supply of flax was procured and given, in quantities not exceeding two pounds, to all who obtained the signature of a respectable inhabitant of the town or neighbourhood, as security for the payment of its value, in case the yarn was not brought to the office in a specified time; and the spinner received payment by the hank, proportioned to the quality of the yarn. As much as would suffice to make a web was then given to weavers who found security for the value of the yarn intrusted to them, and they also were required to make their payments within a limited time. They were charged a penny per spangle above the market price; and this, together with the profit on the spinning, proved sufficient to defray all the expenses of the concern. A person well acquainted with the linen manufacture was engaged at a small salary to conduct the business, under the control of a committee nominated for that purpose. The flax was given to the spinners, and the yarn received from them, and distributed to the weavers, on two days in each week. An account was opened with each spinner, and, if the yarn were not brought in at the appointed time, or, if any fraud were detected in making

it up, the spinner was struck off the books, and her security applied to for the value of the flax. The establishment was opened in July, 1817, and continued till May, 1818, when it was suspended for some time, as fever then raged to so great a degree as to have visited almost every cabin in the town and neighbourhood, so that it was found impossible to get in the yarn at the stated period, and the dread of contagion prevented the members of the committee from attending at the office, lest the disease might there be communicated by the persons bringing in the yarn. This fear was certainly not without foundation; as, for some time before the discontinuance of the establishment, more than half the spinners had been ill of fever, and many who brought their yarn to the store had just risen from a bed of sickness. Whilst the institution continued, one hundred and ninety individuals were constantly employed, to whom the sum of 277*l.* 3*s.* 8*d.* was paid as wages for spinning, and the yarn sold, produced 692*l.* 3*s.* 5*d.*, the original capital remaining still undiminished. The business was resumed in the month of September last, and promises to be again productive of advantage equal to what has already resulted from it.

Having mentioned to the clergyman of a mountainous district about ten miles from Stra-

bane, the manner in which we were about to employ the sum received from Government, he resolved to adopt a similar measure, in the disposal of a grant of 30*l.*, which he had obtained in aid of the poor of his parish. But there being there no residents who would assist in the superintendence of such a concern, he thought it advisable to pay to the spinners a little more than the current price of their work,—which, indeed, was then too low to yield them support. The grant was thus gradually distributed amongst the industrious poor; and, before the original capital was entirely exhausted, the sum of 85*l.* was paid to them as wages. Had the money been at once divided among the poor, it would not have purchased for each, food sufficient for one day's consumption, whilst, in the way now described, it afforded constant employment for eight months, to above sixty individuals, most of whom must otherways have remained in idleness, from their inability to purchase a few shillings' worth of flax, and the disadvantage at which yarn is always disposed of when offered for sale in very small quantities. As this is a striking instance of the extensive good which may be effected by small means, when judiciously employed, I requested the gentleman, above alluded to, to favour me with a detailed account of the benefit produced by the plan acted on in his parish; and his letter, in

reply to my application, will be found in the Appendix.

Establishments of this description are not liable to the objection which has been urged against most other modes that have been devised for employing the poor—that, the demand for the manufactured article being limited, for every pauper to whom employment is furnished, an industrious person is reduced to the situation of a pauper, by the diminution thus caused in the value of the produce of his labour. The low rate of wages for spinning linen yarn enables us to rival every other country in this manufacture; and, in making the finer qualities, no machinery has yet been brought to such a state of perfection as to furnish, at a lower price, an article equally good with that spun by hand. The market is thus never overstocked, nor, from the causes now stated, is there a probability of its becoming so.

Moderate attention and encouragement, on the part of the higher classes, would greatly contribute to the general introduction, among the lower orders, of habits of cleanliness, both of houses and persons, which would tend more than any other means to prevent the diffusion of contagion. For this purpose, little expenditure of money is required, nor, except in par-

ticular cases, would it be at all advisable. Were associations of the resident proprietors, formed for this and similar objects, to hold out small honorary rewards to the cottagers whose houses and families were kept in the neatest and cleanest state, the conviction of being subjects of interest and observation to their superiors would have a powerful effect in exciting general attention to these points, as well as in checking those irregularities of conduct which the poor and uninformed are but too apt to run into, when conscious of being unobserved by those whose good opinion must always be valuable to them. In this manner the benefit would be extended to numbers who could have little hope of obtaining the offered premiums, and the children of those who had merited such reward would be preferred as servants in respectable families; the habits of regularity and cleanliness, in which they would thus be proved to have been brought up, operating as a strong recommendation.

The establishment of saving-banks in the different parishes, which can only be effected by such associations, would also tend very powerfully to ameliorate the condition of the poor, as well with respect to morals as to pecuniary circumstances. If the working classes could once be persuaded to save a portion of

their wages, however small, the immediate advantage which would result to them would prove an encouragement to perseverance, and a shilling saved out of their own earnings would benefit them more than a guinea received as a gratuity. The one, by generating a feeling of pride and independence, would stimulate them to still greater efforts: the other, as received avowedly in consideration of their poverty and wretchedness, operates as a bounty to the display of these; and, abusing the humanity which sympathizes in their sufferings, induces them industriously to avail themselves of all opportunities of extorting aid from the open hand of charity.

But this is manifestly an immoral principle, and, rightly to correct it, we must strike at its root. Ignorance is the parent of vice; and, among the lower classes, little real and solid improvement can be expected until impressed with a conviction that they are morally and religiously accountable beings; and every attempt to promote their welfare, or to improve their habits, should have this for its object.

To infuse such feelings, a certain degree of knowledge and information is necessary; and before the errors and prejudices of the lower orders can be effectually removed, better senti-

ments must be implanted. The general education of a numerous and ignorant population is a work of infinite difficulty, far beyond the power of individual exertion, or talent, to effect; but, although difficult, it is not impracticable. The public feeling and attention are now happily awakened on this important subject; and daily and Sunday schools are multiplied, unshackled by religious restrictions, to enlarge the views, and correct the opinions, of an ignorant and benighted people. Their effects cannot well be estimated for some years—they must have time to operate—but they will eventually shew forth, and approve themselves not only morally useful, but even politically so, as the want of mental employment, and the absence of moral feeling, drives many a labourer and mechanic to the ale-house, who would, had he been capable, gladly have devoted his idle hours to useful reading, and have preserved his means for better purposes.

Although it has been endeavoured to shew that the minute division of land has been productive of highly injurious effects, any sudden alteration in the existing system would cause much individual misery, without any corresponding good effect. No manufacturing towns yet exist in this country capable of affording

employment to that portion of population which would be deprived, by the change, of their present means of support; nor is there now in the hands of the farmers, sufficient capital to enable them to embark in agricultural pursuits, on an extended scale, as a much larger sum would here be required for this purpose, than would prove sufficient in England or Scotland, where the expense of permanent improvements is usually defrayed by the landlord, and farms are already well enclosed and in good order :— here, on the contrary, improvement of every kind is made at the sole expense of the tenant, little or no money being laid out for these purposes by the proprietor of any estate with which I am acquainted.

What at present seems practicable is to prohibit the further division of farms, on pain of forfeiture of the lease; and to encourage, by tenure, or otherways, farmers possessed of capital to become purchasers of such tracts, contiguous to their holdings, as should be offered for sale. A considerable change would thus gradually be effected, without any material injury. Farms would be enlarged as rapidly as the augmentation of capital would admit; the younger sons of farmers would be brought up to trades or manufactures, and an obstacle

would be interposed to early marriages among this class, by the increased difficulty of procuring a settlement.

The objections which have been urged to the cottier system apply only where the cabins are let to labourers, as a manufacturer or tradesman can generally pay his rent and live comfortably. Yet it would be much better were land-owners to erect small hamlets, where such persons could procure a cottage and two or three acres at a moderate rent. A large return would be obtained for the capital thus employed, and the comforts of the residents on their estates would be materially increased; whilst their tenantry would be obliged to confine their attention to the cultivation and improvement of their farms, which should constitute their sole employment. The erection of a few such hamlets, in situations affording a plentiful supply of fuel, would soon draw thither the tradesmen now residing as cottiers,—and none others should be received,—whilst an addition to the rent of the farmer, nearly equal to the sums paid by his cottiers, imposed as a fine, would make it his interest to dismiss all those not required for the cultivation of his farm, and induce him to execute a considerable part of his labour by hired servants residing in his house; these would be well fed, well lodged, and, having no other way

of expending their wages, well clad; a better description of agricultural servants would thus gradually be formed, acquiring a taste for the comforts and decencies of life, and, consequently, solicitous not to forfeit them by improper conduct.

Were this plan generally adopted, it would much prevent the breaking out and spreading of infectious fever; as, in building such hamlets, many of the causes to which it is owing, could be completely guarded against. With this view, the houses should be built at some distance from each other; for, although a range of cottages can be erected at less expense than the same number if detached, their neatness and comfort will be much increased, by placing each house nearly in the centre of the small holding connected with it. It would also be advisable to avoid the recesses for holding beds, and the leaden casements now in use, which admit not of being, at any time, opened. Indeed, the influence and attention of landed proprietors would be well employed in endeavouring to remove these from the farm-houses and cottages already on their estates. Were pains taken to point out the bad effects resulting from them, they would, no doubt, willingly submit to a change, in most instances; and when, from any cause except poverty, they

were continued, a landlord would surely be warranted in employing such means as are in his power to enforce compliance with a plan calculated directly to benefit the tenantry themselves.

Much less expenditure would be required to remedy the evils resulting from the farm-houses being built in clusters, than might at first sight appear necessary. Most of the houses so situated are built of stone and mud, and the thatched roofs require renewal every four or five years. The labour of rebuilding such houses would be the chief expense, as the old materials could be employed in the erection of the new dwellings; and this would be amply compensated by having the houses and offices more conveniently situated for carrying on the business of the farm; and here, as in the erection of cottages for manufacturers, care should be taken to avoid the errors which, according to the present plan, contribute so powerfully to generate and keep up contagion.

What is now recommended, could, with little exertion, be carried into effect on almost every estate in the kingdom. The practice of granting short leases, which too generally prevails, and tends greatly to check improvements of all kinds, might be made productive of some little

good, by enabling land-owners to remove tenants who refuse to conform to regulations calculated to contribute to their health and comfort. Were they adopted by even a few individuals, the advantage resulting from them would soon be so evident as to bring them into general practice. All who could not be profitably employed on the estate, would thus be removed from it, and the comforts of those who remained would be much increased; whilst the enlargement of farms, by leaving a greater quantity of disposable produce, would enable the tenant to pay, with ease, a greater rent than is now possible. Nor would a saving in the consumption of straw, for thatching the houses of the cottiers, be among the least of the advantages resulting from the change; as, almost all that is raised on small farms is consumed in this way, the quantity of manure being thereby materially lessened.

The general residence of our landed proprietors on their estates is alone wanting, to bring into practice all the plans now pointed out for meliorating the condition of the poor. The political convulsions which, for so many centuries have agitated this country, and so often changed the proprietors of its soil, have had the effect of placing a large proportion of it in the hands of English and Scottish owners, who,

being also possessed of estates in the sister kingdoms, naturally prefer residing in the habitations of their ancestors, surrounded by a numerous gentry, and a tenantry far advanced in civilization, to dwelling in a country wanting all those comforts of society and neighbourhood so indispensable to the wealthy; and where, in many parts, the inhabitants are yet in a state of rude ignorance and great poverty.

From this cause it must always result that a considerable number of our landlords will be absentees, expending in other countries the revenues drawn from this. Those so circumstanced should, however, contribute liberally towards carrying into execution any plan, having for its object the advancement of the inhabitants on their estates, in knowledge and comfort. Nor should a considerable expenditure on their parts, for these purposes, be regarded as a sacrifice, since the value of their properties will increase in the direct ratio of the improvement of their tenantry in the arts of civilized life. Although the reasons already stated may be sufficient to justify the proprietors so circumstanced in not making this country their permanent residence, self-interest should point out the good which would result to them, from frequently visiting their estates, and endeavouring, by holding out every encou-

agement to improvement, as well as by acts of individual kindness, to convince their tenantry that they feel towards them in a manner which they can scarcely be supposed to do, whilst they are connected by no ties but what might almost be termed those of master and slave; the one receiving a large share of the produce of the other's industry, without making any return, even in acts of kindness, or expressions of good-will. The danger they fear to incur by residing on their estates, from the lawless spirit evinced by the peasantry, is pleaded by many as an excuse for absenting themselves; but it should be remembered that this spirit is the necessary consequence of the gentry being so generally non-resident that many places might be pointed out even in districts highly improved, where, in an extensive circuit, no person will be found qualified, by property or education, to hold a commission of the peace. It can scarcely be expected that a people so circumstanced will feel much dread of punishment for the violation of laws which are seldom executed; nor can we be surprised that, in the absence of every legal means of obtaining redress for injuries sustained, they should so often endeavour to vindicate their own wrongs. To this cause is chiefly attributable the disgraceful scenes which often occur in places so circumstanced, and which are rarely met with where

the proprietors of the soil reside amongst their tenantry, and avail themselves of the powerful influence attached to the possession of landed property, in preserving the peace of the district around them. Outrage of every description is very rare in this province, and it does not fall within the scope of the present work to point out the causes which have led to their perpetration in other parts of the kingdom: *

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* * it may be permitted to observe, however, that when they are fully investigated, it will generally be found that, even on these occasions, our peasantry have been more “sinned against than sinning;” and our few resident proprietors may, with confidence, be appealed to, in testimony that the affections of the lower orders are won by kindness, at least as easily as the inhabitants of any other country. Indeed, the warm feelings of attachment towards those in a higher rank, who take an interest in increasing their comfort and happiness, are so strongly evinced, on every occasion admitting of it, that if proprietors could be induced to reside at home, and exert themselves in increasing the comforts, and bettering the condition, of their tenantry,—instead of resting satisfied with receiving their rents, through the medium of an agent, to spend them in another land, without deigning to inquire into the wants

and sufferings endured by the residents on their estates,—they would experience a more refined pleasure in witnessing the devoted attachment to which such conduct would give birth, than can, perhaps, be derived from any other source.

The benefits resulting to this part of Ireland, from the residence of the parochial clergy of the established church, may be instanced in proof of the advantages to be looked for from the presence of the possessors of landed property. They are, in most instances, the authors of every plan for alleviating the distresses of the inhabitants, or, in any way, improving their condition; and, far from confining their exertions within the pale of their own church, they are equally employed in benefitting those of every religious persuasion; whilst they are enabled, by the accurate knowledge they possess of the wants and circumstances of their parishioners, to afford assistance where it is most required, and in the manner most likely to prove beneficial. They constitute, in a considerable part of this province, the greater number of the gentry; and the influence they possess, from their constant residence in their parishes, seems to contribute largely in producing the general good conduct for which the inhabitants of Ulster are remarkable.

That the present system of tithe often operates as a grievance, none will be ready to deny; but, were it not for the jealousy with which every interference with the property of the church is regarded, it might easily be so modified that, without diminishing the income of the clergy, the objectionable parts could be almost, if not altogether, done away. However plausible the objections which have been urged against the present mode of supporting the established church may appear,—and they have been thought to apply with peculiar force to this country, where so small a portion of the inhabitants profess that religion,—it will be generally admitted by those best acquainted with the distribution of property, and the state of society in Ireland, that the overthrow of the church establishment would be amongst the greatest evils that could befall us. It would at once remove a great portion of the resident gentry, who, be it remembered, spend the whole of their income among the people from whom it is derived, and feel called on, as ministers of the Gospel, to devote a much larger share of their wealth to purposes of charity than is usually expended in that way, by the possessors of any other description of property, to an equal amount; whilst the abolition of tithe, instead of being a relief to the farmer, would advantage the landlord alone, by

enabling him to exact a still higher rent from his tenantry, and thus increase the drain from this country, for the support of absentee proprietors.

The different measures hitherto proposed, if carried into full effect, would probably suffice to protect from fever the inhabitants of country districts, or to confine the contagion within a narrow sphere, if, from peculiar circumstances, it should at any time be generated. But the accomplishment of this object, in towns, would require the adoption of a more comprehensive plan, as well as zealous co-operation on the part of the well-informed inhabitants, to enforce its general observance.

Happily for these lands they have long been exempt from the scourge of the plague, which, in former periods, so often spread desolation through their bounds, and to guard against whose introduction the laws respecting quarantine have been chiefly framed; but it should be borne in mind that plague differs, probably more in degree than in essence, from the fever by which this part of the empire has lately suffered so severely; and that if, by the general improvement which has taken place in the state of society, as well as perhaps by other causes with which we are unacquainted, we have been

protected for nearly two centuries from the most violent form of the disease, it is evident that, in its milder shape, it has lost nothing of its contagious nature, since the returns, inserted in the first part of this work, prove that the people of this country have been affected, by the late fever, in a proportion fully equal to what is usually observed to happen where plague is endemic.

If the public mind were fully impressed with the danger of suffering fever to lurk in our towns, not merely from the risk of the disease being communicated to those who may be exposed to the contagion, but lest it should at any time assume a more aggravated form, and force itself on their attention, when it may, perhaps have acquired such a degree of virulence, and spread to so great an extent, as to baffle every effort which could be directed towards its suppression, less opposition would be made to the adoption of measures already proved to be adequate to its removal; as well as to intrusting individuals with powers which, though certainly in some measure contrary to the spirit of our constitution, are fully justifiable on the ground of the high importance of the object to be effected by their exercise.

The act passed in the last session of parlia-

ment, authorizing the formation of Boards of Health in districts where fever is ascertained to be unusually prevalent, is certainly a great step towards the suppression of the disease ; but the following reasons will, perhaps, prevent it from being productive of all the benefit which its benevolent framer had hoped would result from it.

By the existing law, Boards of Health can only be appointed in places where the disorder has already attained an alarming height. Now, a very small share of the expense and trouble required to free a town so circumstanced from fever, would suffice to prevent the contagion from being generated or introduced ; and, although when no epidemic existed, little difficulty would be experienced in procuring persons of the highest respectability to superintend the execution of every measure likely to preserve the health, or increase the comforts of the inhabitants, few would be willing, when fever was prevalent, to expose themselves to the serious personal risk which must necessarily be incurred by an efficient discharge of the duties of their office. Under these circumstances, if the task be performed at all, it must devolve almost entirely on the clergy and medical men forming a part of such boards, who in the discharge of their professional duties are obliged

to have frequent intercourse with the sick; but, as during the prevalence of epidemics similar to that by which this country has been lately visited, the members of the latter profession cannot spare time from their proper avocations for executing the important trust thus committed to them, little advantage could be expected to result from the contemplated measures, when very imperfectly carried into effect.

In giving to the inhabitants assembled in public meeting, a power of negating the establishment of Boards of Health, it is to be feared that private interest will often operate strongly in preventing their formation; as, when the measure is not a general one, it would proclaim to the surrounding country the danger incurred by having any intercourse with towns so circumstanced. The trading part of the community would thus be subjected to serious loss, and foreign countries be warranted in enforcing quarantine regulations respecting vessels arriving from ports where these measures were had recourse to, which would not be the case if the appointment of a Board of Health under the existing law did not prove that fever was there prevalent to a much greater extent than in the other parts of the kingdom. On these accounts commercial towns will always feel

reluctant to consent to the formation of such boards; and, if from the alarming progress of the disease they were at last instituted, the very height which it had attained would operate in preventing the efficient discharge of the powers vested in them.

It might perhaps be better, if instead of the temporary bodies authorized by the present act, the inhabitants of all towns containing a population of souls were required to elect a Board of Health, the members of which might remain in office for a year, and be chosen at the vestry which is annually held for the election of parish officers. These should be armed with the powers intrusted to the temporary boards under the existing law; as they appear, if properly exercised, fully adequate to effect the object in view.

Crowded and filthy lodging-houses have been uniformly found among the chief causes of the disease in large towns, and the experience of Strabane has shewn that they tend powerfully to generate it, even in small ones. To these, therefore, the attention of the Board should be especially directed; the owners being required to take out a license, entitling them to admit only as many lodgers as their houses were judged capable of accommodating. A fine

should be imposed if they exceeded the specified number, and the Board should be empowered to withdraw the license, if on inspection, the beds were found at any time in a dirty state, or the rooms badly ventilated. The keeper of the house should be required to give immediate notice of the illness of any of his inmates; and, if the disease were ascertained to be fever, the terms of his license should bind him to dismiss his lodgers, and keep his house closed till the proper measures for destroying contagion had been fully carried into effect. The sick should be removed to the fever ward, and the other lodgers accommodated for some time in a house appropriated to this use, and not be permitted to disperse themselves through the town, by which means the disease is now often widely spread. The power granted to the Board of affixing a conspicuous mark on the front of a house when fever is present, might be employed with peculiar advantage in the instance of lodging-houses, as security would thus be afforded to strangers, who, from their ignorance of the existence of the disease, are more likely than constant residents to be exposed to risk of this kind.

Such restrictions would at first be regarded as a serious grievance, but the proprietors would soon become reconciled to them, when con-

vinced that by these means their dwellings would be kept free from a disorder, the bare suspicion of whose presence at once puts all their inmates to flight ; whilst we should no longer witness the now too frequent occurrence of persons who came from distant places in search of employment being seized with fever, almost immediately on their arrival, from being put to sleep in a bed, the last occupant of which had perhaps been just before removed to a fever hospital, or fallen a victim to the disease, whilst no pains had been taken even by changing the bed-linen, to protect from contagion the lodger who succeeded him.

There are few towns in this country where the sums annually raised by voluntary subscription would prove inadequate to relieve the really necessitous ; but, unfortunately nothing is generally attempted beyond affording pecuniary aid for the supply of their immediate exigencies, although the utility of relief administered in this way is very questionable, as it too generally either causes a relaxation in the ordinary habits of industry, or is expended in the purchase of food of a better quality than is commonly indulged in ; and thus, except so far as relates to the aged and infirm who are unable to procure by their own labour the necessities of life, every aid in money seems to

prove a direct injury to the receiver. In the disposal of the funds alluded to, regard should be had in an especial degree to their employment in such a manner as would produce permanent benefit rather than afford temporary relief; and in no way could this be so well effected as by endeavouring to introduce a more general taste for cleanliness of person, and to increase their stock of bedding and wearing apparel. How far the latter object could be accomplished by distributing a supply of such articles to those most in need, it is scarcely necessary to inquire; as in this class would be included by far the greater number of the lower orders, whose wants would require for their relief a fund of infinitely greater amount than can ever be appropriated to this purpose. But no objection can be urged against endeavours to improve the state of the clothing already in their possession, by affording every facility to frequent washing, which they have it not at present in their power to accomplish. On this account the erection of public baths and wash-houses would be productive of the greatest benefit. The health of the poor would be much improved by the facility thus afforded to frequent ablution of their whole bodies, which is at present rarely if ever practised by them. It would particularly tend to the cure of the various cutaneous diseases so common among

them, and which, from the want of such establishments, are now so difficult of removal. They would be enabled to have their bedding and apparel often washed, which they cannot now effect, even after they have been used by patients labouring under contagious diseases, and the extensive diffusion of those disorders would thus be powerfully checked.

To render the wash-houses extensively useful, it would be requisite to have a supply of bedding and apparel always in readiness, to give to those who, on bringing such articles to be washed, produced the security of a respectable householder that those lent should be returned, when their own clothing was made clean.

The strongest objection to which the measures now recommended appear liable, is, that by their adoption, a considerable expense would be entailed on the Public. This, however, would be found infinitely less than might at first sight appear necessary. The erection of proper buildings would constitute almost the whole charge, as the current expenditure might be in a great measure defrayed, by requiring a small payment for the use of the baths, and for washing the clothing, if this were not performed by the owner,—which, however, would most generally be the case,—whilst a saving, perhaps to

a greater amount than the expense incurred, would be effected, by the diminution of disease among the poor, and the consequent decrease in the number of applicants for relief.

The closeness of the cabins, in some instances, and the bad state of the roofs and windows in others, have a considerable effect in injuring the health of their inhabitants, and would therefore be well deserving the attention of the Board. Most of the cottages, inhabited by the working classes, are held at will from persons in better circumstances, who engage to keep the roofs in good order, at their own expense; and if they were also obliged to make the few alterations required for promoting ventilation, by which the health of the cottagers would be much improved, it would not, in the end, be any pecuniary sacrifice, as the occurrence of sickness, in families of this class, takes away at once every means of paying rent, their labour being rendered less productive, whilst a considerable addition is made to their household expenses.

With this view the Board might be empowered to levy a small fine on the owners of cottages, who, after being served with notice to that effect, neglected to substitute casements admitting of being opened, for those now gene-

rally used, which, being fastened to the frames, make it impossible to admit fresh air into the chamber of a patient, except by breaking the glass; a measure to which medical men are generally obliged to have recourse, when fever appears in a cabin. They might also be authorized to deduct, from the rent paid by the tenant, a sufficient sum to make the house water-fast. This could not surely be looked on by the proprietors as an hardship, since they stipulate to keep the houses in habitable repair.

The suppression of mendicity would also fall properly under the control of the Board. In commencing the undertaking, it should be the first object to ascertain the number and actual circumstances of those who now subsist by begging. They should then be classed into such as from advanced age, or chronic ailment, are wholly unable to contribute towards their own support; and such as could, in any measure, assist by their labour in defraying the expenses of their maintenance. The former might either receive badges, authorizing them to beg, or be paid a small weekly sum, from a fund to be raised for this purpose by voluntary subscription,—and, perhaps, this would in general be better than to sanction street begging. They who are acquainted with the diet of the poor in this country will scarcely believe that human

beings could be subsisted, at so small an expense, as would here suffice for their support. In Strabane the average allowance to each pauper is 1s. 8d. per week, and it is supposed to be fully equal to what most of them formerly obtained by begging, as the number of strangers who always crowded our streets, before the adoption of the present plan, prevented the native poor from profiting much by the charitable dispositions of their townsmen.

For that class of paupers who could contribute towards their own support, if furnished with employment, it would, probably, be most economical to establish, in large towns, houses of industry, where they could be fed and lodged at the cheapest rate, and supplied with work suited to them. This might not cause any heavy expense to the inhabitants, as the Grand Juries are empowered by law to make presentment for the support of such institutions. In small towns, however, it might be better to employ them in such kind of work as could be carried on at their own houses; and of these, the spinning of linen or woollen yarn, knitting, and, where there is a demand for the article, the preparation of oakum would, probably, furnish the kinds of employment most adapted to them. Such a measure would have the advantage of affording relief, at the same time, to the class

of indigent room-keepers, who have, at least, as strong a claim for assistance as the begging poor, and who, without some such aid, must by degrees occupy the place of the paupers, who, by the operation of these measures, would be removed from our streets.

Where such a plan is adopted as that now proposed, it should ever be kept in view, that the object is rather to afford temporary, than permanent employment; and, on this account, the wages should always be rather lower than can be elsewhere obtained, by the same kind of work, so that no inducement may be offered to neglect their usual means of procuring a livelihood. How much good might be effected in this manner is evident from the account, already given of the advantages resulting from the spinning establishment which exists in this town, and with such an institution, the other modes of employing the poor might easily be combined. Where these measures were adopted, the Board of Health should be empowered to apprehend vagrants and commit them, for a short period, to hard labour; since, without such authority, it would be almost impracticable to put a stop to street-begging, as the poor of the surrounding country would flock into towns, in proportion to the reduction effected in the number of native mendicants.

But the most important part of the undertaking will be left unaccomplished, if, together with furnishing employment to the adult poor, means be not adopted for the moral improvement of their children. These, if left to themselves, will grow up in idleness, vice, and profligacy, of which, in all towns, constant examples are daily presented to them. By the general establishment of schools for their instruction, a most beneficial change would be gradually effected, and the next generation would enter upon the business of life with principles and habits which, by rendering them useful and respectable citizens, would not fail to prevent them from becoming burthensome to society. In Strabane there are three schools established, one for the clothing and education of twelve boys, maintained by a donation, bequeathed very many years ago for that purpose; a day-school for the instruction of seventy-five girls, which is indebted for its formation to the exertions of the lady of the present incumbent of the parish; and a Sunday-school, where 500 children of both sexes are taught. These last are supported by private subscription. Besides the advantage resulting to the children from the religious and moral instruction they receive, habits of cleanliness and order are introduced into the families from whence they come, and

thus an unexpected and general improvement is effected.

In towns where such measures were steadily enforced, there could be little risk of fever ever reaching an alarming height; but, as no precaution can afford complete protection against it, means calculated at once to arrest its progress should be always in readiness. With this view, fever-wards should be established, to which the sick should be immediately removed, and when the duties of the Board of Health were properly performed, wards on a large scale would not be required. A building fitted to contain two or three beds for every thousand inhabitants, would probably suffice to receive all who might be affected with fever; but, in estimating the expense of such institutions, if half the number of beds be assumed as always occupied, it will, probably, exceed what would really be the case. In the Strabane Fever Hospital, although, for the twelve months prior to September last, every bed had been constantly occupied, the expenses of all kinds have not exceeded 10*l.* for each bed; and in other years less would suffice, as during the last season, oatmeal, which constitutes the chief food of the patients, was more than usually dear. So that, if the Hospital were

built and furnished, an expense of 100*l. per annum*, would probably suffice, for a town containing 5,000 inhabitants, and years might occur in which scarcely a patient would require admission.

Were nothing attempted beyond the relief of those attacked by fever, the establishment of an hospital for their reception would alone be required ; but, as the prevention of the disease should be the great object in view, to this the attention of the Board should be chiefly directed. As the early separation of the sick affords the most certain means of effecting this, a small premium should be given to those who brought the first intelligence of any person being attacked by fever ; and the Board should be authorized, as under the existing law, to cause the immediate removal of the patient to the hospital, if his own dwelling did not admit of his being completely secluded from the rest of the family. The bedding, and every article of clothing which had been in contact with the sick, should be taken to the wash-house attached to the hospital ; and, till they were made clean, a supply of similar articles should be lent in their stead. The house should be whitewashed with quick-lime, and the furniture of the room which had been occupied by the patient, washed with warm water and soap. All these measures

should be carried into execution before the supply of clean bedding and clothing was given, so as to guard against their becoming impregnated with contagion; and if all the members of the family were obliged to use the warm bath, as a mean of entitling them to this supply, their chance of escaping the disease would be much increased. As the strict enforcement of these regulations would be of the highest importance, a person should be appointed by the Board to superintend their execution; and if he were paid a fixed sum, for each house in which they were put in practice, the office would only be a charge upon the Public when his services were actually required. Fumigation with the mineral acids might also be employed, but this should never be allowed to supersede the strictest attention to ventilation and cleanliness, which, it seems now generally agreed, are the true antidotes to the contagion of typhus.

The expenses of the Fever Hospital, and those incurred by the Board of Health, should be defrayed by the district to which the benefits of these institutions were limited, and might be conveniently included in the sums laid on at vestry for parochial uses; but, when the accounts were proved to be correct, it should be imperative on the meeting to present a sufficient

sum for their payment. It is true that, by the existing laws, Grand Juries are authorized to impose a tax on the county, for the building and support of Fever Hospitals; but as this is not imperative on them, and, as the gentlemen who compose these bodies are not, in general, sufficiently aware of the high importance of such institutions, it has followed that, except in our great towns, few or no presentments have been made for these purposes; and in these the inhabitants had been already so fully aware of the advantages likely to result from them, that they were built by voluntary subscription, before the levying a tax on the Public, for their support, had been authorized by the Legislature.

CONCLUSION.

FROM the foregoing Statement, it appears that the chief sources of the late pestilence are to be found in the general wretchedness of our lower classes; and that most of their distresses may be traced to causes, which would require for their removal very moderate exertion on the part of the landed proprietors, who, whilst they effected these important objects, would at the same time augment their incomes, increase much the real value of their estates, and materially improve the condition of their tenantry.

It has been shewn that, in endeavouring to remedy the errors in the present system, care will be required not to aim at advancing too rapidly in the career of improvement, as the violent overthrow of habits and modes of living, which have been followed from infancy, would be productive of evil instead of good. In order to prepare the inhabitants for the contemplated

changes, their minds must be gradually enlightened, and the proposed alterations should first be exhibited to them, on a small scale; when, if once convinced that they would prove advantageous, they will readily be put in practice. The obstinacy of the lower orders, and their unconquerable attachment to old habits, furnish a common theme for declamation, and a ready excuse, on all occasions, to those who will not take the trouble of making any attempt to remove them; but the most confident hopes might be indulged that this would be easily effected, if pains were taken to point out their errors, since the prejudices respecting the treatment of the sick—the most difficult of removal, perhaps, of any—are found to yield readily, when the bad consequences of which they are productive are fully explained. Of this, the general adoption, throughout the district, of the cooling regimen in fever, instead of the stimulating plan formerly pursued, affords a striking instance.

But the danger is not least measures for meliorating the condition of the inhabitants of this country should be too speedily adopted; but that few attempts will be made to carry them at all into effect. Yet it might be hoped that they who will not be influenced in employing them, by the desire of improving the situ-

ation of their tenantry, to whose happiness they have it so much in their power to contribute, would not always remain insensible to the advantages, even in a pecuniary point of view, which would result to themselves from exertions of this kind. To want of sufficient encouragement on the part of the land-owners, is alone to be ascribed the present unimproved state of the greater part of this country, which is so far behind the well cultivated districts in the neighbouring kingdoms, that it has been asserted by an eminent agriculturist, that an average expenditure of 5*l.* per acre would scarcely prove sufficient to put them on a par, with respect to enclosures, and a still greater sum would be required for farm-houses and offices. How much less productive an estate so circumstanced must be, is self-evident.

The pecuniary loss sustained by landed proprietors, from the prevalence of fever amongst their tenantry, far exceeds what would suffice to effect all the plans advised, for the prevention of the disease. One-sixth of their rents would, probably, not be too much to assume as lost, by the greater number, in the two last years, owing to the state of poverty to which their tenantry were reduced, from failure of crops, and prevalence of disease. Of this loss how large a share is attributable to the latter

cause, may be inferred from the fact that few houses throughout the country have entirely escaped its ravages, and that the illness of one or two members of a family generally causes a suspension of every kind of domestic industry ; whilst, among those living in badly ventilated dwellings, relapses took place so frequently, that numerous instances occurred of families, who were not exempt from fever for many months, the same individuals being attacked by it three or four times in succession.

The loss to the community, from the same cause, may be estimated by endeavouring to ascertain what it must have been in a particular district. In that around Strabane, containing 30,000 inhabitants, above 6,000 have been ill of fever, many of whom suffered repeated attacks; and, at least, an equal number may be supposed to have been occupied in attendance on the sick, so as to be prevented from being engaged, during their illness, in any kind of productive labour. Thus, above one-third of the inhabitants have been kept by it from their usual occupations, for a period equal to the mean duration of the disease, and of the debility consequent on it, which cannot be supposed less than six weeks ; and, during all that time they must have been supported either by funds destined for other purposes, or by the charity

of their neighbours, which was the case in by far the greater number of instances. The Public were thus taxed, for the relief of patients labouring under fever, to an amount of which they were not at all aware : and, of this expenditure, a small part would suffice to effect all the measures recommended for the prevention of the disease, whilst security against it would, at the same time, be generally afforded.

The improvement which would result from the adoption of the measures recommended, as well in the general aspect of the country, as in the state of its inhabitants, would soon be apparent. We should then see comfortable cottages, instead of the wretched cabins in which the lower orders are now lodged ; a population constantly employed in useful labour ; and, by the produce of their industry, enjoying the comforts of life, instead of struggling, as most of them now do, for a scanty supply of the poorest food, and with clothing incapable of protecting them from the winter storm. We should have a resident gentry, spending among their tenantry the income derived from their labour ; and, in return, diffusing among them useful knowledge of all kinds. The people would be attached to their superiors for solid benefits received from them ; and, what would have at least as powerful an effect, from a con-

viction that they have their welfare seriously at heart, instead of the land-owner, as is now too generally the case, being known to his tenantry only by name; ignorant of their wants or distresses, and having no sympathy in their sufferings, but exacting from them the uttermost farthing they are capable of paying, and often, from his ignorance of the real state of his property, diminishing his actual income, by grasping at a greater nominal one than can be drawn from it, and thus reducing to poverty the residents on his estate, on whose wealth his own so much depends. We should no longer see the crowds of mendicants who besiege our doors in towns, and travel in hordes through the country, presenting a most distressing picture of the extreme poverty so generally prevalent, and affording an excuse to many of our higher ranks, whose selfishness induces them, under pretence of being too susceptible of the sufferings of their fellow-creatures, to take refuge in another country, from witnessing the miseries endured in their own; instead of evincing real feeling, by residing in the midst of their tenantry, and endeavouring, as far as in their power, to improve their condition. A stop would be put to the perpetration of those brutal outrages which have cast a stain on the name of Irishman, and might lead those, who will not attempt to investigate the causes from

which they spring, to conclude that the inhabitants of this country are possessed of dispositions and feelings different from the rest of the human race. It would soon appear, however, if proper encouragement were held out to them, that they are not behind any other people in the finest affections of our nature,—that acts of kindness are never forgotten,—and that the appearance of sympathizing in their sorrows attaches them for life. They are certainly very deficient in education, from which they were long debarred by law, and are still too generally excluded by poverty, whilst they exhibit the feelings always found attendant on such a state;—passions easily acted on, either for good or evil,—quick resentment of injuries,—strong gratitude for kindness. All, therefore, whose rank in life enables them to do so, should feel it their first duty to contribute, as far as in their power, to the removal of those causes which so much retard the advancement of the lower classes, and to call into action the valuable dispositions they are possessed of; as this alone is wanting to place them, at no distant period, on a footing of equality, in all respects, with those in the most favoured parts of the British empire.

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APPENDIX.

No. I.

THE following Queries were circulated by the Association for Suppressing Mendicity in Dublin, at the desire of Sir John Newport, previous to the passing of the Fever Hospital Act, in the last Session of Parliament.

The answers subjoined were drawn up and transmitted for his information, by Doctor Thomson, one of the physicians to the Fever Hospital of Belfast.

Quere 1st. How long has the fever prevailed in your vicinity, and to what extent? Is it still prevalent?

Ans. It appears from the records of the Fever Hospital, that fever has prevailed in a greater degree than usual in Belfast, since the month of March 1816.

The accounts of the Hospital are made out annually on the 1st of May, and the number of fever cases

admitted into the Hospital for the year ending the 30th of April 1816, was 102, of which 33, that is nearly one-third, were received in March and April. In the next twelve months ending the 30th of April 1817, 196 cases were admitted into the Hospital, and the admissions continued nearly in the same ratio during May and June; but in the latter end of July the disease increased so rapidly, and was so generally diffused in town, that the commencement of the epidemic may be fairly reckoned from that date.

It happened most fortunately that at this very time, a large hospital, the building of which had been commenced two years before, was so far completed as to be ready for the reception of patients; and, it is conceived that the most satisfactory view of the extent and progress of the disease will be afforded by the subjoined table of the monthly admissions. It is to be observed, that no correct estimate can be formed of the entire extent of the disease; but there is reason to believe that fully two-thirds of the sick obtained admission into the Hospital.

Fever still prevails to a very considerable extent, although the table of admissions shews that it is rather declining.

The highest number in the Hospital at any time was

200, at present there are 160. The population of the town is about 28,000.

Number of patients admitted into the Belfast Fever Hospital in

1817 May 25	1817 Nov. 200
June 29	Dec. 228
July 38	1818 Jan. 193
Aug. 76	Feb. 142
Sept. 164	Mar. 154
Oct. 201	

Quere 2d. What do you consider its pre-disposing causes among the poor?

Ans. I consider the pre-disposing causes of the present epidemic to have been the great and universal distress occasioned among the poorer classes by the scarcity which followed the bad harvest of 1816, together with the depressed state of trade, and manufactures of all kinds. The low condition of bodily health arising from the deficiency and bad quality of the food, the want of cleanliness both in the persons and dwellings of the poor, and the influence of depressing moral causes, most powerfully assisted the operation of contagion, which is indubitably the exciting cause of the disease, and which still continues to keep it up, although the influence of some at least of the pre-disposing causes be

considerably lessened. I consider the contagion to have been rapidly spread by the numbers wandering about in search of subsistence, and also by the establishments for the distribution of soup and other provisions among the poor, where multitudes were crowded together, many of whom must have come from infected houses, or were perhaps even labouring under the early stages of the disease.

Quere 3d. Are want of employment and its consequences, in your opinion, to be considered among the most prominent of these causes?

Ans. This is in part answered in the reply to the preceding quere. I have no doubt that want of employment, both by its physical and moral effects, must at all times greatly favour the propagation of contagious fever among the poor.

In proof of this, as respects the poor of Belfast, I refer to my reply to the first quere, in which it is stated that fever began to prevail unusually in March 1816. Now, at that time provisions were cheap and plentiful, but owing to the recent decline in trade and manufactures, the poor, being unemployed, were worse off than in many former years, when provisions sold at higher prices. The last time that fever attained to any great extent in Belfast, was during the scarcity in 1801. At

that period, however, the poor had pretty full employment, and the diffusion of fever fell far short of the present epidemic, which has been occasioned by a combination of all the pre-disposing causes, acting with a force and universality unexampled in the memory of the present generation.

Quere 4th. What means have been found most effectual in checking the progress of the epidemic?

Ans. The principal mean adopted for checking the progress of the epidemic has been the early removal of the sick into the Fever Hospital; and there can be no doubt that this has had great effect, as the entire number of sick in Belfast appears to have borne a much smaller proportion to its population, than in many other towns where Fever Hospitals were either not established at all, or at least not until after the epidemic had made considerable progress. Attempts have also been made to destroy the contagion in the houses of the poor, by the ordinary methods, which it is unnecessary to specify here; but this part of the plan, although of infinite importance, has been very imperfectly executed, owing to the want of funds, the difficulty of procuring active co-operation among the better classes, and the lamentable apathy and negligence of the poor themselves. The middle and upper ranks in Belfast have been remarkably exempted from the inroads of the disease; and no cause can be

assigned for this exemption, except the concentration of so large a portion of the sick in the Hospital, from the very commencement of the epidemic, by which the various opportunities afforded for the transmission of contagion were much diminished. For, in other towns not enjoying this protection, the disease reached the upper classes very generally, and was found to be very fatal. Belfast has supported a Fever Hospital since the year 1797, being, if not the first, among the earliest established in Ireland.

Belfast, April 2, 1818.

No. II.

Termonomongan, Feb. 1, 1819.

MY DEAR SIR,

I HAVE received your note of inquiries, relative to our little flax trade here, and your apology for troubling me. No apology is necessary on a subject so interesting to every one at all acquainted with the wretched consequences that flow from want of employment for the poor; particularly from you, to whom I am indebted for any little service I was enabled to do them here.

When you turned my mind to the benefit that might be derived from giving out flax to spin, I could not have supposed it possible that every part of your scheme would literally have succeeded so exactly as you described it; and that it eventually failed, I rather attribute to my having given more than was usual for spinning, and having continued it imprudently at an unprofitable season, than to any inadequacy in the scheme to support itself. I am still of opinion that a capital of 50*l.* or 75*l.* would

give employment to all the spinners in this extensive parish, who are unable to procure it for themselves; and that the good effects of circulating 6*l.* or 9*l.* weekly (from 50*l.* or 75*l.* capital,) among the poorest, would be followed by a degree of prosperity at present unknown. My limited experience only enabled me to judge of the good effects that result from giving out flax to be spun; but from your observation to me on the additional advantages arising from employing weavers, in the same neighbourhood, and thereby retaining so much more of the profits of the linen trade within the particular district favoured with such an attention to their interest, I was led to make inquiries as to the past, and have no doubt, had our capital been sufficient to have admitted of any delay in turning the yarn into money, to pay the spinners, and into flax to give them fresh employment, that the result would have been equally agreeable to your expectations; and that by means of it, a class of small farmers, who are also weavers, would have been enabled to keep their houses, without the accumulation of debt that has ruined them, and driven their families to beggary.

Unthinking persons will not take the trouble of considering the great benefit accruing to the public at large, by giving employment to a number of poor creatures, who have no other mode of supporting themselves and their children but that of spinning; and would say, that even suppose some of this description might be kept

from beggary by such institutions as you propose, yet it would only be relieving beggars. Even this would be much. But if you can prove that a very different class of persons is to be enabled to pay their rents and taxes, it will become a matter of more important consideration, and more plainly connected with the prosperity of the country.

I can safely assert that while our little flax trade was kept a going, many families were kept from beggary, who are now without house or home, though the hardships of the times, and the scarcity of provisions, were much greater then than they are now. I hope you intend dwelling much on the great importance of giving employment to the poor, connected with their health, cheerfulness, and cleanliness of their habitations, and their persons; as I would suppose the epidemic fever you had so much experience of was greatly increased, in extent and virulence, by the melancholy attendants of poverty and want of employment,—I regret very much that I happen to have had but one communication with you on the subject, and that not until I had expended 5*l.* of the 30*l.* donation received, and to that single conversation it is owing that the poor of this parish received 85*l.* instead of 25*l.* Had I been able to consult with you, it is possible that our capital might have been saved, and still affording employment to the poor. It would look like flattery if I were to say how much I was pleased with

the warm interest you evidently took in institutions of this kind ; though I did not think, at that time, that so much could be done by individual exertion.

As you only ask my opinion of the advantages arising from this mode of assisting the poor, perhaps I am not called on to say any thing of what appears to me the greatest obstacle in the way of success, in a remote and deserted part of the country, as this is ; the want of an active person or persons, who have time and integrity equal to the task. In a town this could be no objection ; but, in most country parishes, without infinite pains, I fear it would be made less or more a job, by those intrusted with it. It should also be observed, that even trading on so small a capital as 25*l.*, increases the circulation of money in a degree beyond what might be imagined, as in eight months we had occasion to lay out 153*l.* in purchasing flax. We got within the same period 246*l.* for yarn ; adding both these sums to that paid the spinners, namely, 85*l.*, will shew that the sum of money in circulation, in the short period of eight months, from a capital of 25*l.* was 484*l.*

Always, my dear Sir,

Yours, most truly,

W. H.

*Number of Patients received into the Fever Hospitals for
each Month, from August 1817 till February 1819.*

1817.				Brought up				246
August	-	-	-	90	June	-	-	18
September	-	-	-	71	July	-	-	24
October	-	-	-	80	August	-	-	13
November	-	-	-	67	September	-	-	16
December	-	-	-	62	October	-	-	16
1818.				November				8
January	-	-	-	44	December	-	-	10
February	-	-	-	14	1819.			
March	-	-	-	12	January	-	-	8
April	-	-	-	17	February	-	-	8
May	-	-	-	7	<hr/>			
<hr/>								585

Carried forward 246

Of these were dismissed cured 560

Died - - - - - 21

In Hospital 1st March - - 4

585

So that the mortality amongst the patients, in hospital,
has been little more than one in twenty-eight.

THE END.

Of the Publishers of this Work may be had,
Price 6s.,

AN ESSAY ON AGRICULTURE ;

Containing an Introduction, in which the Science of Agriculture is pointed out, by a careful Attention to the Works of Nature; also, the Means of rendering barren Soils luxuriantly productive, at a very moderate Expense, and of beneficially employing the industrious and unoccupied Poor. To which is added, a Memoir, drawn up at the express desire of His Imperial Highness the Arch-Duke John of Austria, on the Nature and nutritive Qualities of Fiorin Grass, with practical Remarks on its abundant Properties, and the best Mode of cultivating that extraordinary Vegetable.

BY WILLIAM RICHARDSON, D. D.

