

**Observations on the epidemic fever of MDCCCXLIII in Scotland, and its connection with the destitute condition of the poor / [William Pulteney Alison].**

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OBSERVATIONS

ON THE

EPIDEMIC FEVER OF MDCCCXLIII

IN

SCOTLAND,

MEDICAL RESEARCH  
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AND ITS

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CONNECTION WITH THE DESTITUTE CONDITION  
OF THE POOR. 8e

BY

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“ The destruction of the poor is their poverty.”—Prov. x. 15.

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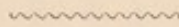
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MDCCCXLIV.

319592




## ADVERTISEMENT.



As some expressions in the first part of the following Pamphlet may appear as anachronisms at the present moment, it is right to state here, that that portion of it was finished and laid before the Royal Commissioners on the Poor Laws in October last, although, for the reason assigned in the beginning of the Postscript, its publication has been delayed until now.

EDINBURGH, *13th May* 1844.



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## OBSERVATIONS, &c.

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I PROPOSE, in the following pages, to lay before the public some facts regarding the recent extension of contagious fever in Edinburgh, and its connection with the destitution of a large portion of the people; which appear to me to indicate, as clearly as facts and figures can do, the inefficacy, as regards the poor, and the inequality and injustice, as regards the rich, of the existing provisions for the relief of destitution in this country; and the necessity of a change of system, to enable us adequately to avert evils, which are annually increasing upon us.

I have, on different occasions, adduced evidence to prove,—not that destitution is an adequate cause for the *generation* of fever, nor that it is the *sole* cause of its *extension*,—but that it is *one* cause of the diffusion of fever; of such power, that an epidemic of that disease, invading a community where the provisions against destitution are inadequate, is very generally found to spread, *cæteris paribus*, to an extent remarkably greater than where adequate provisions of that kind exist. Admitting that there are other known causes, by which

the extension of fever is frequently determined,—and admitting also that epidemics of fever, like those of smallpox or measles, arise, extend themselves, and decline, independently of the operation of any known cause—I have stated, and still maintain, that the effect of *this* cause on such epidemics is so great and so well ascertained, that the repeated production and rapid extension of contagious fever in any community, may always excite suspicion of the provisions against destitution there being imperfect; and that where such extension of the disease is found by repeated experience, chiefly to affect the poorest classes of the community, and spread upwards, it may even be held as *a test* of the inadequacy and inefficacy of the measures there adopted, for the relief of that poverty and suffering which, as we are warned by Scripture, and farther instructed by the experience of all nations, are “never to cease out of the land.” And to this principle I have ascribed, and still ascribe, even with increased confidence, the admitted fact, that epidemic fevers have of late years repeatedly spread much more rapidly and fatally in all the large towns of Scotland than of England.\*

\* I am aware that Mr Chadwick, in his valuable Report on the official Inquiry into the sanitary condition of the labouring classes, lately published, gives a decided opinion, as the result of that inquiry, that “attacks of fever are most frequent on workmen in full employment and ordinary health.” (See Sanitary Report, p. 144, *et seq.*) We might object to that statement, as a hasty inference from a limited induction (limited both as to time and place), and as opposed to the conclusion drawn from a much more extensive experience, by many physicians of various countries; but, remembering that his facts are drawn chiefly from the experience of England, and taking his statement in connection with the incontrovertible evidence of the power of destitution, as a predisponent cause of fever, particularly in various Scotch and Irish epidemics, which I have elsewhere quoted, and with that which I shall adduce in this paper, I think it more important to regard this opinion as a striking proof, that where an

It has been said, that, consistently with this principle, a greater extension of fever than actually occurred, might have been expected last winter in Edinburgh, Glasgow, and Paisley; and certainly it may be hoped, that its limited diffusion in all these towns, and its general mildness, where it is now most rapidly spreading, may be held as indications of the virulence of the present epidemic (which has never fully subsided since 1837) being on the decline. But two other facts are to be considered,—1. That in all these towns a very unusual amount of voluntary charity has been called forth, by the distressed state of the population, particularly in the form of work for the unemployed, and thereby provision for their families; so that *for a time* the provision against

effective provision against destitution exists, the influence of this cause on such epidemics,—so great and undeniable elsewhere,—becomes nearly imperceptible.

There is one statement on which Mr Chadwick seems to place much reliance, in answer to allegations as to the connection of fever with destitution, which is of more general application than partial evidence, drawn from the experience of individuals, but involves a manifest fallacy; viz., that “medical practitioners and benevolent individuals are extremely apt to deceive themselves and others as to the fact of destitution, by what they call the evidence of their own eyes,” in illustration of which he quotes a remark of Dr Scott Alison,—“If a stranger went into the house of a collier (at Tranent), he might exclaim, What extreme wretchedness and destitution! when, in fact, they might have received thirty shillings on the Saturday, which, before the Tuesday, *had been all squandered,*” (*Ib.* p. 141.) I reply, that the question before us is not, What are the causes of destitution, but whether destitution is a cause of fever? Supposing all the destitution which the medical practitioners and benevolent individuals alluded to have seen, to have been the effect of misconduct, still, if they have seen fever spread with unusual rapidity in such families, they are entitled to infer, that destitution (caused by misconduct) is a cause of fever; and if so, why not destitution caused by misfortune?—of the still more frequent existence of which with us, I have given, and shall give, more than sufficient evidence.



destitution in those towns was better than usual ; we know, that by such means alone, above 4000 persons were preserved from absolute destitution, during the whole of last winter and spring in Edinburgh : 2. That into all these distressed towns, the *immigration* of strangers, during last winter, in consequence of the dearth of employment, and the limitation of the charity-labour to those who had a legal settlement, was certainly much less than usual ; and we know, that strangers, newly arrived at any town, are always persons peculiarly adapted for the reception and extension of epidemic disease.

But, in accordance with the principles which I have stated above, and which are exactly the same as stated formerly (Management of the Poor in Scotland, 2d edit., p. 10), it will be at once perceived, that the relation which I maintain to exist between destitution and fever is not simply that of cause and effect, but that of *predisposition*, favouring the effect of another cause, *which is essentially variable*. Where destitution exists, it prepares victims for fever, but the fever "*bides its time*." It springs from a specific contagion (at least that is the only source from which we are sure that it springs), which rises and falls in intensity from various causes, known and unknown ; but when, in the course of these fluctuations, it invades a community where there is a large amount of misery and destitution, its extension there is, *cæteris paribus*, much greater than elsewhere.

According to this view of the subject, it might naturally be expected, that when the charity-work for the unemployed was discontinued, and when they, or their families, from different towns, were obliged to wander about the country in search of work, the fever, still

lurking in this and other towns, would begin to extend itself more rapidly, or if extending from other causes, would make rapid progress; and this, accordingly, has taken place to a degree unprecedented at any season, but more especially remarkable, as occurring at this season of the year, the months of July and August being usually those in which there are fewest cases of fever in Edinburgh.

I am aware of an ambiguity, of which those who are anxious to avoid the practical conclusions which I have in view, will endeavour to lay hold, but which they will find to fail them. The fever of this summer has, very generally, peculiar characters, and hitherto, on the whole, a very small mortality, so that several observers are of opinion, and state very reasonable grounds for the belief, that it is a fever *sui generis*, proceeding from a peculiar specific cause. Now, although, for my own part, I still incline to the belief of the "identity of the continued fever of this country, under all its forms and modifications," I am quite willing, in the present discussion, to adopt this opinion. It is sufficient, for my present purpose, that it is a febrile, always very debilitating, and sometimes rapidly fatal disease, proceeding from some local and temporary cause, spreading extensively (it is not essential for my argument that it spread by contagion, although of that I have seen much and unequivocal evidence), and to which a strong predisposition is given by destitution.

The following Table shews the progressive diminution of the number of families maintained by means of the charity-work in the Meadows, and the nearly corresponding increase of the number of fever patients admitted into the Infirmary, during the last seven months. I add a column for comparison, shewing the

average number of fever cases in the same months for nine years before 1840, which years, it will be observed, include the great epidemic of 1837-38-39:—

	No. of Men employed by Charity Fund.	No. of Fever Pa- tients admitted.	Average for same month.
End of February, ...	933	74	90
„ March, ...	556	83	93
„ April, ...	320	96	77
„ May, ...	119	133	87
„ June, ...	35	161	79
„ July, ...	25	251	70
„ August, ...	0	392	75

And during almost the whole of August, there were nearly 300, and by the middle of September, above 400 patients in fever in the Infirmary and Fever Hospital, and from 30 to 50 daily applicants, who could not be accommodated. On the 5th October, these numbers had increased to 460, accommodated in the hospitals, and 84 applicants who could not be admitted. This occurrence is, I believe, unprecedented in Edinburgh; certainly nothing like it occurred in the epidemics of 1817-19, of 1826-28, or of 1837-39. Fortunately, the general character of the disease is at present remarkably mild; but it is impossible to judge, whether, or how soon, it may assume a more malignant form. I have seen several cases which prove, that even at present, malignant and rapidly fatal cases may proceed from intercourse with the same individuals as the mildest cases; and we know, that the same epidemic, which is mild among the poor, is often much more fatal when it reaches the higher ranks.

But in order to draw any legitimate inference from these numbers, as to the point now in question, it is necessary to inquire farther, to what extent destitution exists among this rapidly augmenting number of fever

patients. For this purpose, inquiries were addressed by myself, and Dr Murray and Mr Wardell, friends on whose accuracy I could rely, to a number of the Infirmary patients in fever, or recovering from it, on July 22d, and 11th August; again, to a larger number by Dr Peacock, the late accurate and indefatigable Superintendent of the Infirmary; again, to a smaller number, the patients in my own wards, by myself, 15th September; and lastly, to a larger number, at the end of September, by Mr Wardell. Those patients only were excluded from inquiry, whose age or state of disease, rendered them unable to answer questions. The results are as follows:—

	Patients Interrogated.	In regular work ( <i>i. e.</i> themselves or the heads of their families).	Out of work, or with scanty occasional work.
22d July, . . .	177	50	127
11th August, . .	150	60	90
Patients admitted between 10th July and 16th August, .	319	127	192
September 15, .	56	17	39
September 30, .	330	146	184

These numbers would have corresponded more nearly, but for the circumstance that a considerable number who were in full employment at the time of their seizure, stated that they had suffered much from want of work up to a short time previously; and might be as properly ranked in the third column as in the second. If such persons are ranked as destitute, I believe the statement of the 22d July may be regarded as the most

accurate expression of the connection of this epidemic with destitution.\*

From much personal observation of poor families, now or lately affected with fever, but not taken into the Infirmary, I can add, with perfect confidence, that the proportion of destitution among them is at least as high as among the Infirmary patients. I hold it, therefore, to be fully ascertained, that at this moment the unemployed and destitute poor, although they must be only a very *small minority*, probably hardly 1 in 20 of the population of Edinburgh and its neighbourhood, † fur-

\* Those returned as in scanty or occasional work, were always those who represented the profits of their work as "insufficient for support," *e. g.* 1s. 6d. to 2s. 6d. a-week for an adult, or 4d. to 6d. a-week for each member of a family. Those absolutely without employment, for periods varying from one month to two years before seizure, were, in some of the returns, about one-third of the whole, viz., 54 out of 150 in one of Dr Peacock's returns; 60 out of 150 in one of Mr Wardell's; 95 out of 330 in the other. Dr Halliday Douglas, who has lately taken charge of one of the Supplementary Hospitals, found this class of the destitute actually a majority, 19 out of 37 of the patients first admitted there. In other instances, however, this proportion has been less, one-fourth to one-sixth of the whole.

If it be said, that the testimony of the patients themselves as to their previous condition is not to be relied on, I answer, that as to the fact of destitution, the state of their clothing, and the places from whence they came, amply confirmed their assertions; and that as to their previous want of employment, they had nothing to gain by deceiving us; and in very numerous cases inquired into by myself, it is quite certain that they did not deceive us. Dr H. Douglas, who is a dispensary physician, has made many inquiries with the same result. See, also on this point, the evidence of Mr Johnston, quoted below, p. 16.

† The whole district sending fever patients to the Infirmary comprises about 200,000 people, and at this season, when all the field and garden labourers are employed, there can hardly be 10,000 of these, of age for admission to the Infirmary, and destitute. Dr Peacock ascertained that of 408 fever patients admitted from 1st May till late in July, 68 "came into town labouring under the disease, or were sent from neighbouring towns, these being almost exclusively in destitute circumstances."

nish a *large majority*,—usually from three-fifths to two-thirds,—of the fever patients; many of whom ascribe, I believe with perfect truth, their liability to the disease, to the privations which they have endured. I am certain, also, that a very large proportion of those in regular employment, or in better circumstances, who have taken the disease, have been obviously infected by intercourse with the destitute. The last entry in the above table may be thought to indicate that the disease is now, as might be expected, making its way upwards to the more comfortable classes.

Another simple proof of the connection of this fever with destitution, is drawn from the localities to which it has been throughout the summer nearly confined. The following statement on this point is contained in a Report made by the Physicians of the Infirmary to the committee charged with subscriptions for the New Fever Hospital, and as it was not drawn up by me, may be fairly quoted here:—“On whatever element of  
 “ destitution its diffusion more particularly depends,  
 “ the fever which now prevails is *unquestionably con-*  
 “ *nected very closely with circumstances peculiar to the*  
 “ *destitute part of the population.* In proof of this, the  
 “ undersigned have simply to state, that while the dis-  
 “ ease abounds among the inmates of low lodging-houses,  
 “ and in districts inhabited chiefly by the poorest of  
 “ the people, it is comparatively little known where  
 “ the more comfortable of the labouring classes chiefly  
 “ reside, and has not been seen by many of the medical  
 “ practitioners of the city, whose practice lies chiefly  
 “ among the better classes.” This document was signed by all the physicians in attendance at the Infirmary when it was written, *i. e.*, 26th August 1843.

To the same purpose I find it stated officially at Greenock, where the cases of fever began to increase

immediately on the soup-kitchen being given up, and had increased from 42 in May to 311 in August, that “hitherto the malady has been chiefly *confined to the wretched and destitute*, to those who inhabited the narrow lanes and wynds of the town.”\* I have information from Ayr exactly to the same purpose.

By the kindness of Dr Couper of Glasgow, and of several of his friends, permission was obtained for my young friend Dr Murray, to inquire into the circumstances and condition of a very considerable number of patients in the epidemic fever, in the Infirmary of Glasgow, in the Havannah district of that city (where they were under the charge of the district surgeon), and in the Hospital at Greenock. The following are the results, quite in accordance with those in Edinburgh:—

	Number Examined.	In full work when attacked.	In partial work “insufficient for support.”	Wholly out of work.	Total destitute.
Glasgow Infirmary, }	197	69	85	43	128
Havannah District, }	163	53	83	27	110
Greenock Hospital, }	76	13	52	11	63

I have been favoured by a communication from Mr Watt of Glasgow, pointing out a very high mortality among the poor of Glasgow this summer, as indicated by the number of burials at the public expense, and tracing it, with at least great probability, to the indirect effect of

\* See Speech of Mr Fairrie in the Greenock Town-Council, in *Greenock Advertiser*, September 15, 1843.

the fever now prevalent there. The deaths from fever, he states at 14.94 per cent. of this mortality among the poor; and adds,—“The Fever Hospital has continued full of patients since early in May; and although the deaths from that disease have been comparatively few, the length of time adults labour under the disease, and the long period which elapses before they are again able for work, have been the means of throwing an immense number of families into a state of the most wretched destitution, which may be, in a great measure, the cause of so many being cut off by other diseases.”

The following are the number of burials at the public expense, from the Infirmary, and by the Town's Hospital, or Poor-House, in June, July, August, and September 1843, compared with the numbers in the four worst months of “the year of the highest mortality in Glasgow,” 1837:—

1843.		
	Infirmary.	Town's Hospital.
June, .....	25	138
July, .....	25	148
August, .....	24	210
September,.....	28	250
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	102	746

1837.		
	Infirmary.	Town's Hospital.
January, .....	117	235
February,.....	67	108
March, .....	85	105
April, ... ..	70	85
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Total,	339	533

To shew how greatly the mortality among the poor-



est classes, chiefly at home, has exceeded the average this season in Glasgow, it is only necessary to add the numbers during the corresponding months of last year :—

1842.		
	Infirmery.	Town's Hospital.
June, .....	11	76
July, .....	17	85
August, .....	15	77
September, .....	10	61
	<hr style="width: 50px; margin: 0 auto;"/> 53	<hr style="width: 50px; margin: 0 auto;"/> 299

In the Hospital at Dundee, to which my friend Dr Kemp was admitted, by the kindness of Dr Arrot, he found 41 patients labouring under fever, on 12th September, and capable of answering questions,—of these only 9 belonged to families which had 10s. a-week, or upwards, of income; the average weekly earnings of the families of the remaining 32, were 6s.; but he did not find at Dundee any cases of absolute destitution.

I beg it may be observed, that in this, as in other instances, I do not assert that destitution is the sole cause of this remarkable extension of fever; but I believe that a very simple calculation of chances is sufficient to *demonstrate*, that the above results could not have been obtained from so large a number of cases, unless the circumstance of destitution had been *one of the conditions* on which their taking the fever had depended.

It may, indeed, be said by those who believe that fever originates from putrescent animal and vegetable substances, or by those who believe that it proceeds from concentrated human effluvia, in close crowded rooms,—and will be repeated by those who would mystify the subject in order to escape the practical conclusion,—

that it is the air of certain localities, inhabited by destitute people, and not the circumstance of destitution, that causes the extension of the disease ; but although I think we have unequivocal evidence to shew that both those opinions are erroneous, I shall refrain from any such discussion at present. It is sufficient to put the question, What imposes on those persons, who thus successively fall down in fever, the necessity of living in this polluted air? The answer is given by the late Dr Cowan—"The poorest of the people have no choice of localities. Their state of destitution binds them firmly to one description of residence."

If any one supposes, that he can purify the air of the rooms in which the destitute inhabitants of such a town as this (and in this climate) live and sleep, otherwise than by relieving the state of destitution which brought them there, and crowds them together there, I believe that a very few trials will convince him of his error.

The opinion above stated, therefore, is not a denial of the *fact*, but only a hypothetical (and I believe erroneous) explanation of the *mode*, of the influence of destitution in extending fever.

I may add, that I have had many opportunities, in this as in other epidemics of fever in Edinburgh, of observing, that there is no kind of locality to which the fever particularly attaches itself. The highest stories of some of the highest houses in the High Street and Canongate, and the lowest stories of some of the lowest in the Cowgate and Grassmarket, have been equally affected. I have named almost all the closes, stairs, and lands, in which the fever has chiefly prevailed, before I saw any of the patients there (although many of these are changed since former epidemics), simply from knowing, that these are inhabited by the

poorest of the people ; and from the conviction that this fever, like others that I have seen in Edinburgh, and like those described by Dr Cowan in Glasgow, and Dr Sym in Ayr, would “ fix on the destitute wherever it found them.”

It is unnecessary for me to enter into details in proof of the existence and extent of destitution from want of employment in Edinburgh, during the late spring and summer. The charity-work in the Meadows, continued during the most inclement season of the year, and paid at the rate of from 3s. to 5s. a-week, to men with families, was a sufficient “ test of destitution,” even without the rigid scrutiny into their circumstances by which it was accompanied. After it had been almost entirely discontinued, I was informed by the Secretary of the Fund, that he had applications from 330 men with families (comprising, probably, 1500 individuals), who were duly certified as being domiciled in Edinburgh, out of employment, and enduring all manner of privations. The families of many others, employed in that way during the winter, and afterwards wandering in search of work, remained during the summer, utterly destitute, in town. There were also a large number of labourers out of employment, but not domiciled in Edinburgh ; and all this is independent of the large number of unemployed females, who were, as I think improperly, excluded from all participation in the funds in question, and for whom a very partial relief only was obtained by a separate subscription, originating in the benevolence of Councillor Macaulay and a few others. All this is independent, likewise, of the large number of aged and partially disabled persons, widows, and orphans, who, by reason of the inadequate allowance from the Poor’s funds, are in a permanent state of destitution in Edin-

burgh. For all this mass of human suffering, there is no public institution now in operation, excepting on the most limited scale. It is from this mass that the fever is now continually fed;\* and from this it extends upwards in society; and the surprise of all who study

\* It need hardly be added, that this amount of destitution is likewise continually and largely increased by the fever. The general mildness of the disease does not present this with us, any more than in Glasgow, or in the epidemic in Ireland, reported on in 1821 by Dr Cheyne. "Although the disease was generally mild and short among the poor, yet it was productive of great misery, from its disposition to spread through families, and from its tendency to return."—(*Barker and Cheyne on the Epidemic Fever of Ireland, &c.*, vol. ii. p. 143). Nor has the usual mildness of the disease prevented it from being fatal in many cases of persons previously injured by privations. For example, I find that, in three widows' families whom I pointed out to the Royal Commissioners last spring as receiving very inadequate allowances, there have been, since that time, the very unusual number of five deaths out of eleven children by fever.

One of these cases affords subject for serious reflection. She is a widow of delicate habit, who struggled through last winter, with three young children, on the usual pension allowed by the West Church parish, 4d. a-week for each child, and nothing for herself. I recommended her for an increased allowance, but the application was, as usual, refused. The Court of Session decided, unanimously, last winter, in the case of another widow, with a number of children, that 6d. a-week for each child unable to work, with 6d. for the mother, was much too small an allowance, and ordained, that in that case a better allowance should be given. Still there was no increase of the allowance to the widow in question; and I am therefore entitled to say, that the Managers of the poor in that parish withheld from her the allowance which the highest legal authority had virtually pronounced it to be their duty to give her.

This being the condition of this family, the epidemic fever appeared. The poor woman herself was the first who took the form of the disease now prevalent, in a very populous common stair, at the top of which she occupied a miserable room; and two of her children were the first victims. The fever spread through the different rooms in the highest story of this building, attacking almost every individual; and from thence it spread downwards to the lower stories, inhabited by people in better circumstances. Above sixty inhabitants of the stair have been affected, nearly half of whom have been taken into the Infirmary, and eight

the condition of this part of the population must be, not that it is prone to disease, but that human nature can be sustained, and human feelings can endure, under its circumstances; but the only notice taken of it by the law, consists in the frequent imprisonment of those who endeavour to procure relief from their sufferings by “the nuisance of street-begging.”

have died. I believe it was from this tenement that the fever spread chiefly to the opposite side of the street, where it has committed still greater ravages; and the records of the Infirmary and of the Destitute Sick Society will prove, what expense has been, and still is, entailed on the charitable inhabitants of Edinburgh, by the extension of the disease in Nos. 327 and 270 Canongate, Coull's Close, Hume's Close, and Bell's Close, and in other places which I know to have been infected from thence.

Now, if this woman had had the reasonable allowance granted to herself and children, which I had recommended, and which the decision of the Court of Session had proved to be her due (suppose 3s. a-week, instead of 1s. for herself and her children), I do not of course deny, that the epidemic fever would have found victims in that house; but of this I am quite certain, that *she* would not have been there. Under such an administration and farther improvement of the law, many others of the destitute inhabitants of that tenement would have been *separated* from each other, and maintained in comparative comfort, and in a condition much better fitted both for religious instruction and for useful industry; and the evidence which I have stated here and elsewhere, as to the connection of the fever with destitution, entitles us to conclude, that the visitation of the fever there would have been comparatively light,—as light as experience has shewn, that it has uniformly been, during the last forty years, among those of the inhabitants of every town in Britain, who have enjoyed an adequate legal protection against destitution.

In like manner, the first case, of the present epidemic, which I can ascertain to have occurred in the stair, 270 Canongate, was in one of three utterly destitute women, who had been dismissed from the Infirmary, afflicted with incurable diseases, and only partially relieved, who inhabited a small wholly unfurnished room at the top of that stair, and for whom I in vain attempted to procure regular parochial aid. These women, also, I pointed out to the Royal Commissioners, as examples of the practical operation of our system. They are all since dead.

Again, I am aware that there are some speculators on this subject (still anxious to avoid the practical inference), who think it sufficient to set aside all such statements as to destitution, here or elsewhere, by the general reflection, that all proceeds from the follies and vices, and especially the intemperance, of the poor; but for which, they suppose, that they might all be employed. But (admitting that the destitute poor have their full share of the infirmities which all classes of human society present, and for which some of the other classes can plead less excuse) I would here first ask, Supposing their characters to be thoroughly purified, where are they to find employment—the essential condition of the problem to be solved being, that there is no demand for their labour? If they are forced into the service of employers of labourers, others must fall out of that service, and take their place as destitute from want of work.

I maintain, however, that the unfortunate condition of these persons is not by any means generally referable to misconduct of any kind; and, in evidence of this, I quote the statements of two gentlemen who know at least as much of the circumstances of the unemployed poor as any persons in Edinburgh.

Mr Johnston, chairman of the committee who took charge of the last subscription, says, in a letter dated April last,—“During the last five months, I have had the best means of ascertaining the amount of poverty and destitution amongst the industrious poor of this city; their privations from want of food, clothing, and household furniture, greatly exceed the belief of those who have not the same means of knowing them.

“I have known many instances of *sober and industrious* tradesmen, of all kinds, who, after having sold or pawned every article within their dwellings (their

fire-grate not excepted), were driven at last to apply to the committee for a scanty supply of bread or meal to appease the cravings of hunger, many of them urging the plea (which their emaciated appearance too truly confirmed), that for eighteen, twenty-four, or twenty-eight hours, they had not tasted food.

“ On all occasions I have found the men most grateful for the smallest pittance, willing to undertake any kind of labour at any price the committee might please to give, and always more thankful for bread and meal, or for money in return for labour, than when given them by way of alms. Their conduct has at all times been characterized by the utmost respect for those interested in their welfare; they were easily reasoned with and guided, and in every instance they frankly and freely communicated their present and past history, which, with very few exceptions among the thousands of cases tested by the committee, have always proved correct.

“ I never knew the bounty of the committee abused by the exchange of rations for spirits, nor that amongst the generality of the unemployed, there existed a great anxiety for intoxicating drinks.” “ I have, in addition, often stated, and now repeat, that, in my humble opinion, no one who takes the trouble to inquire thoroughly into the distresses of the poor, can arrive at any other conclusion than that their privations must be traced, in general, to *causes over which they have no control*, and that nothing short of compulsory assessment, and a better regulation as to parochial settlement, will ever meet the evil. The cry that drink is the sole cause of distress, comes only from those who wish some kind of an excuse for withholding their means; it could never come from those who have taken the trouble to investigate its causes.”

Councillor Macaulay says,—“ A large quantity of clothes was collected for the poor of both sexes, in the inclement winter of 1837-38, which being in many cases a great deal worn, it became necessary to have them repaired before they were distributed; and as I was convener of the clothing committee, I set about the arduous task. A few females were at first employed, but so great was the demand for work, that in a short time no fewer than 180 were employed. The apartment was small, and crammed almost to suffocation, but had it been large enough, I am quite sure, from the constant applications for admission, that three or four times that number would have been employed. Sixteen tailors, and an equal number of shoemakers, were also employed. The pay of females was 4d. a-day, and that of the males, I think, 8d. or 9d. That some of both sexes were not of the best character, I had sufficient proof; but notwithstanding, *the disposition to industry was so strong*, that the dread of dismissal caused them, while under my superintendence, to behave with exemplary propriety. Small rewards were given for cleanliness, and such a change from rags and filth took place, that the whole of them appeared as neat and clean as any class of the community.”

It may be easily conceived, that, in the circumstances which I have stated, there is a continual drain on the private charity of those citizens who choose to interest themselves in these matters; but, setting aside entirely the question of humanity, I beg particular attention to the amount of the occasional, but frequently recurring *public* burdens, which the voluntary provision, inadequate as I have shewn it to be, against this extensive destitution, imposes on the charitable portion (certainly



not the most numerous portion) of the inhabitants of Edinburgh.

Even in ordinary times, a large part of the expenditure of the Infirmary, and of all the Dispensaries, and almost the whole of that of the Destitute Sick Society, Strangers' Friend Society, House of Refuge, Lying-In Hospital, Senior and Junior Female Societies, Old Man's Society, Society for Incurables, &c. (all supported by voluntary charity only), is applied to precisely the same objects as are provided for in England, and other countries where there is an efficient Poor Law, by the funds levied by assessment from the whole inhabitants. At such times as the present, the expenditure of these societies, and especially of the three first, is greatly increased, and they make urgent demands on the public.

Since spring 1840 (*i. e.* in little more than three years), we have had, besides, *four* general subscriptions for the relief of extensive suffering, resulting chiefly from want of employment, and for which no provision existed in the ordinary charities. The first amounted to about L.800, and was distributed chiefly in the form of clothing, in 1840; the second was the fund raised on occasion of the birth of the Prince of Wales, and amounted to above L.2700, distributed in the end of 1841; the third was required by the number of unemployed labourers in 1841-42, and was applied in maintaining many of them in out-door work from April till October 1842; it amounted to about L.1800; the last and largest, was commenced in October 1842, has amounted in all to above L.5000, and its expenditure has only just ceased. During the same time, it has been found necessary to institute and maintain two additional charities, the Night Refuges for

the Houseless Poor, which at this moment have nearly 150 inmates ; and, in fortunate anticipation of such an extension of fever as we now witness, to erect an additional Fever Hospital, which cost L.1600. A large additional Lunatic Asylum has been required during the same time, by the deficient provision for pauper lunatics, and has likewise been founded, in a great measure, by voluntary subscription. The necessities of the Infirmary called forth, in the early part of last year, an extraordinary subscription to reinforce its funds ; and now, immediately on the cessation of the extraordinary exertions which had been made for many months past, for the relief of the unemployed poor, we are visited by an epidemic, the extent of which is clearly traced to the destitution of that portion of the people, and another extraordinary subscription, which amounted to L.2000 before the end of the first week of September, for the indispensable object of hospital accommodation for the fever patients, is required.

The whole of this extraordinary burden on the charitable inhabitants of Edinburgh must have amounted to about L.20,000 in the last three years ; and it is plain, from what has been stated, that all has been ineffectual in preventing an immense accumulation of destitution and misery, and disease consequent thereon. It is already obvious, that before the end of this year farther subscriptions for the support of the unemployed poor will become necessary.

All this, it must be observed, has taken place in a city where there are hardly any manufactures, and but little fluctuation in the demand for labour,—which, in the condition of its principal inhabitants, resembles Bath, Oxford, or the cathedral towns of England, rather than any of the great commercial or manufacturing towns. When we see the amount of exertion which has

been found necessary to relieve the distress existing *in this community*, the inadequacy of the relief afforded, and *the rapid extension of destitution and disease immediately on that exertion being relaxed*, it is surely time to ask, whether we can reasonably look forward to a continuance of those efforts and sacrifices, inadequate as they have proved, by which these evils have hitherto been met ; and whether objects of such importance to the body politic can wisely or safely be longer intrusted to the voluntary efforts of individuals ?

This question becomes more urgent when it is remembered, that under the voluntary system all this burden falls, in fact, on a portion of the community, and that the portion which has already voluntarily taxed itself the most heavily, for the support of the ordinary charities of the city. This fact was strongly and justly insisted on by Mr Simpson, in evidence given before a Committee of the House of Commons on education. " I have heard," he stated, " from a gentleman, better informed on the subject than myself, that he can almost name the subscribers to all the charities in Edinburgh, and that they do not amount to 1200, in a city of nearly 150,000 inhabitants. There is here so inadequate a source of support, that even if there were no injustice in it, to trust to it would be preposterous. It is not the best way to encourage charity to oppress 1200 persons who have the misfortune to be benevolent, while all the others look on, and refuse to touch the burden." The number of persons assessed for the poor in the ancient and extended royalty, was last year 6657, and as the population of that part of Edinburgh is only about two-fifths of the whole town, there cannot be less than 15,000 persons liable to assessment in Edinburgh. And when it is farther remembered, that of the 1200 charitable persons alluded to by Mr Simpson, a large

proportion are of the privileged class, who pay no assessment, it appears obvious that the proportion of the persons liable to assessment, who really support the ordinary voluntary charities, can hardly be more than one in fifteen. The subscription of last winter was the most liberal, and great pains were taken to make it the most general, of any that has lately been raised ; but I find from Mr Miller, the Secretary of the Committee, that the number of individuals who subscribed L.1 or upwards was not more than 1246.

I beg it may farther be observed, that all the sufferings, difficulties, and dangers now in question, result mainly from the present state of the *able-bodied but unemployed poor* ; and that no modification of the existing laws (not even of the law of settlement), which shall leave them unprotected, will touch the evils which I have endeavoured to describe. Lamentable as is the inadequacy of the provision allotted here, as in other parts of Scotland, by the Kirk-sessions or other guardians of the poor, to aged and disabled persons, widows and orphans, and heavy as is the burden which that inadequate provision throws on those of the higher ranks who interest themselves in the concerns of the poor, it is the absence of any public provision for *the unemployed* which has imposed on us the necessity of those sacrifices and exertions, and entailed on us, notwithstanding, those evils and dangers, to which I have adverted. In the present system of the management of the poor, therefore, it is practically found in this, as in other parts of Scotland, that the greatest extent of suffering, the widest diffusion of disease, the heaviest burden on the charitable, result from the condition of that great class of the poor, *for whom the existing laws make no provision whatever.*

This being so, it is time to put the question, why

should the *unemployed* poor be a burden on the *charitable* inhabitants of Edinburgh, or other towns in Scotland, exclusively, any more than the aged or disabled poor? I shall here recapitulate, as briefly as possible, the only reasons which I have heard urged on this point, and the answers to them, which I confidently maintain to be decisive; premising only, that I take the question to be one which admits of answer only from experience, and especially from such experience as can be exhibited *statistically*.

1. Some of our citizens—some even of those whose charitable disposition leads them to submit to the heaviest voluntary taxation “for the relief of the uncharitable,”—seem to be sufficiently comforted by the reflection, that they thus escape the infliction of the English Poor Law. But have these gentlemen compared the amount of the Poor Rate in England, with that which (in addition to their contributions to all the voluntary charities) they actually pay under the present law in Edinburgh? Although the Scottish Poor Law takes no cognizance of the able-bodied poor, and although it does so little for the objects which it admits to be entitled to its protection, as to leave the greater part of their wants to be supplied by private charity, or by such voluntary associations as the Destitute Sick Society, Strangers’ Friend Society, &c.; yet such has been the concentration of poverty in this as in other large towns, in consequence mainly, as I maintain, of the defective state of the law for its relief elsewhere, and the faulty law of settlement, that its infliction on the higher ranks, in the ancient and extended Royalty of Edinburgh, is not only equal to, but *very considerably greater* than, that of the dreaded English Poor Laws on many extensive districts.

The sum expended on the poor, in the way of legal

relief, in that part of Edinburgh, last year, was, L.11,725, and the population being 56,336, the amount of the annual taxation is above 4s. 1d. a-head on the population; and as we know, that about one-fifth of the income of the city escapes this taxation by the privileges of the College of Justice, it is evident that the burden on those who pay this tax must be about one-fifth more than this, *i. e.*, that it must be fully 4s. 10d. a-head on the population. Now, the expenditure under the Poor Laws, in various large districts of England, is under 4s. a-head on the population; nay, in various parts, particularly in the town of Birmingham, and in the whole county of Lancashire, it is less than 3s. a-head on the population.

As the accuracy of this statement may be questioned, I subjoin a table, shewing the population by the census of 1841, and the sums expended on the relief and maintenance of the poor, in some of the English counties, in 1841, as published by the Poor Law Commissioners (Seventh Annual Report, p. 542).

Counties.	Population.	Money expended on the Poor.	Proportion per head.	
			£	s. d.
Northumberland, ...	250,268	64,416	5	2
Warwickshire, .....	402,121	109,522	5	5
Nottingham, .....	249,773	53,407	4	3
Staffordshire, .....	510,206	92,835	3	7
Yorkshire, } West Riding, } ...	1,154,924	217,217	3	9
Lancashire, .....	1,667,064	239,491	2	10*

\* See Appendix, No. I.

It is true, that the average in England is 5s. 9d. a-head on the population (viz., L.4,315,214, raised from 14,995,508 people); but let it be observed, that for this sum a right of relief (unknown with us) is given to the able-bodied unemployed poor, who, accordingly, form more than one-fourth of the whole paupers relieved (407,575, out of 1,429,356, in 1842)\*—the whole charge of medical attendance and relief to the sick poor and to their families during their illness, here provided for by the voluntary medical charities, and by the Destitute Sick Society,—is defrayed,—and permanent allowances are granted to the aged and disabled poor, widows and orphans, on a scale about three times greater than is done with us.

All that has been said, or can be said, of the necessary tendency of a legal provision against all kinds of destitution, to increase and multiply indefinitely, and become an intolerable burden, falls to the ground before these simple facts, drawn from the history of a country, in which such a provision has existed, and been regularly enforced, for two centuries. And I think I may add, that all that has been said of the advantages of the Scottish system, is upset by the evidence I have adduced to prove, how burdensome, on such a town as Edinburgh, that system may become, and yet, how ineffectual it proves.

2. Although in point of economy it is plain that the system adopted in Edinburgh can claim no advantage over that adopted in the English towns, it will be said that we restrict the number of paupers, and so maintain the *independence* of our poor. Here, again, the defenders of our system fall into an error, which is easily exposed by reference to figures. It is not the mere

\* See official Table, in Journal of Statistical Society, August 1843, p. 257.

circumstance of being made a *pauper, i. e.*, receiving *parish* relief, which destroys the independence of the recipient ; but the circumstance of receiving *any* relief, for which no equivalent is given in labour. He who “of necessity must live by alms,” has equally lost his independence, whether he is made a pauper, or is provided for (however inadequately) under one form or other of mendicity. Nay, I confidently assert, that the latter mode of relief is much more injurious to his moral character than the former. In order to judge, therefore, what proportion of the people of either country have lost their independence, we must compare the English paupers, who average 9 per cent. of the population (including the able-bodied, who are nearly one-third of the whole), and are hardly more than this in any of the large towns,—not with the Scotch *paupers* only, of course excluding the able-bodied poor, who are 6 per cent. in Edinburgh, but with the *destitute and dependent poor* of Scotland, whom I have proved, particularly by reference to the records of the Prince of Wales Fund, to amount, at certain times of the year, to more than 16 per cent. of the population of Edinburgh.\* The 10 per cent. of *excess of the destitute and dependent poor over the regular paupers* is, in fact, that part of our population which is physically and morally the most dangerous, in which there is, perhaps the most sin, certainly the most suffering ; and I cannot think that any one who reflects on the subject can suppose, that it is an advantage to any country to have an excess over another of this kind of population—destitute and de-

\* See Farther Illustrations of the Scottish Mode of Management of the Poor in Statistical Journal, 1842. This includes, not all who received aid from that fund, but those only who were found by the visitors distributing that fund in such a state of destitution, that it was necessary to supply them altogether gratuitously.



pendent, but unprotected by the law, and because unprotected, neither subject to the inspection, nor amenable to the regulations, of any legal authority.\*

3. It is said again, in defence of our system in Scotland, that however much the sufferings of this portion of the population may be lamented, they serve as warnings to others, and answer the beneficial purpose of repressing the growth of a similar population in future, and therefore should not be made an object of public attention. But this is, unless I am egregiously mistaken, the greatest and most fatal of all the errors which have been committed on this subject; for I have shewn, by reference to the experience of many countries, and the different parts of our own especially, that the destitute poor, unprotected by the law, *multiply much more rapidly* than paupers. I consider this to be proved statistically, and I think it is explained practically, by observation of the reckless and improvident habits of those

\* I have thought it unnecessary to recapitulate the evidence, formerly adduced, to prove, that the English poor are by no means deficient in the love of industry and the desire of independence; but, in farther illustration of that point, I shall quote a few words from the Report of Messrs Power and Twisleton on the general character of the operatives engaged in the cotton-trade at Stockport, the part of England which suffered most severely last year. “When  
 “ in the enjoyment of prosperity, they avail themselves to a great extent of the advantages of provident institutions; and partly from  
 “ this, and partly from other circumstances equally creditable to their character, they avoid almost altogether dependence on poor rates.  
 “ On the occurrence of general distress, we find them neither a pauperized mass, nor readily admitting pauperism among them, but  
 “ struggling against adversity, beating far and wide for employment, and in many cases leaving their country for foreign climates, rather  
 “ than depend on any other resources for subsistence than their own industry and skill. Those among them who have not been able or  
 “ willing to leave the place, have been found enduring distress with  
 “ patience, and abstaining, sometimes to the injury of health, from  
 “ making applications for relief.”—(Report on the Population of Stockport, p. 67.)

young people who are brought up without domestic comforts; and the truth of the statement has not been denied, *nay, it has been admitted and avowed*, by those who have opposed my practical inferences. But if this be so, it is obvious, that this excess of destitute poor over paupers ought in all countries to be regarded as fraught with continually increasing danger, not only to the present but to future generations.

The following extract from a letter from Mr Farn, the able author of the Medical Reports annexed to the Reports by the Registrar-General, on the results officially obtained by the late census, as to the increase of population in England and Wales, shews how completely erroneous had been the speculative idea, that under a system of effective provision against destitution in that country, early marriages and population were injuriously fostered:—

“The facts (ascertained by the censuses) that one-fifth of the people of this country, who attain the age of marriage, never marry, and that the women, although certainly nubile at 17, do not marry, on an average, until they have attained the age of 24.3, nor the men until they are 25.5, prove, that *prudence, or ‘moral restraint,’* in Mr Malthus’s sense of the term, *is in practical operation in this country to an extent which had not been conceived, and will perhaps scarcely be credited when stated in figures.*”—(Fourth Annual Report of Registrar-General, p. 136.) This is quite in accordance with the statement I have elsewhere quoted from the Report of the Commissioners on the Poor-Laws in 1830, that there does not exist in England any “real or general surplus of population beyond the average demand for employment throughout the year.” I believe that any facts which might be thought to be in contradiction to this statement, will be found to depend, not on the population, in England,

having really exceeded the demand for labour, but on the demand for labour itself, having undergone great and unforeseen variations.

But I need hardly say, that in Ireland, and in the most destitute parts of Scotland (where there is practically no public provision for the poor, and therefore no paupers), this matter is very differently managed. Dr Griffin ascertained, that in Limerick 50 per cent. of the marriages are below the age of 21. Generally in Ireland, according to the observation of Mr Nicholls, “Boys and girls marry, literally without habitations or means of support;” and in the Western Islands of Scotland, according to the observation of an intelligent eye-witness, whom I have elsewhere quoted, “the greatest of all evils is the custom of marrying young.”

From all these facts and considerations, I infer, that it is quite necessary for us to lay aside all preconceived notions (whether we call them prejudices or early impressions) on this subject, and carefully consider how our institutions differ from those of other countries, where the evils in question are less felt, or more effectually met and controlled; and from a review of the institutions of several such countries, I have been induced to propose the following remedies for the state of things which I have described.

1. We ought to avert the sin, and scandal, and danger, of unrelieved destitution, by giving, as our neighbours in England, Holland, Flanders, and all over Germany do, a *right to relief* to all who are ascertained to be truly destitute, from whatever cause their destitution may have arisen,—*i. e.* we should extend the interpretation of the terms of the old Scotch law, enjoining relief to all “who of necessity must live by alms,” to what seems to me (with great submission to the *dicta* of the legal profession) to have been their original and genuine

meaning. I perfectly agree with Mr Sadler in the observation, that the history of many nations proves, that nothing short of this recognition of the *right* of relief\* has been practically found sufficient to prevent, in any civilized country, a vast and constantly increasing amount of unrelieved misery; and I only add, that this concession of the right of relief naturally involves the *counter right* of inspection, by duly qualified and *responsible* agents, acting on a uniform system, and provided with the means of applying such tests of destitution, and enforcing such checks on fraud or laziness, or on the misapplication of charity, as experience has proved to be effectual.

2. We should provide, that the burden thus assumed by the community is laid equitably on its different members; which is to be done, as I apprehend that experience has also shewn, in two ways:—*first*, by the right to relief, in any individual case, being given in that part of the country which has benefited the most

\* When I speak of a *right* to relief, I mean such a right as can be enforced in a court of law, accessible to the poor. That we can have no security for the execution of the law under the present system, where the proceedings of the Kirk-Sessions or Managers of the Poor are subject to review only in the Court of Session, is sufficiently proved by such cases as that mentioned at p. 15; and by the fact, that although the allowance which, in the case there referred to, the Court of Session found to be insufficient, is greater than that enjoyed by any poor widow in Edinburgh, it has never been proposed by the Managers of the Poor in Edinburgh, nor, as far as I know, any where in Scotland, to raise the allowance of a single widow, in consequence of that judgment. In like manner, the families of destitute persons who are disabled by fever, or other diseases, may be, and in a few instances are, relieved by parishes or managers of the poor, under the head of Casual Poor; but they have no appeal to an accessible court, if denied this relief; and, in consequence, the aid which is actually granted to this class of the poor, in Edinburgh or Glasgow, even in the present time of extreme suffering and destitution, is so trifling as to be absolutely illusory.

by the labour of the applicant, or of his parents, or nearest connections ; and, *secondly*, by the cost of that relief, which is necessary to avert destitution, being defrayed by means of a well-considered assessment.\*

To give an idea of the effects of such a change of the law, let us consider how it would affect 150 persons who were in the Infirmary in fever, 11th August 1843,—and most of whose families were supported, during their illness, by the voluntary charities. Of these we found, on inquiry, there were—

Natives of Edinburgh.	Of other parts of Scotland.	Of Ireland.	Of England.
50	...	67	...
		25	...
			8

If the English law, which allows of settlement almost exclusively by birth, were established here, and if such relations between the parochial authorities as exist in England were established here, only 50 of these—one-third of the whole—would have been entitled to claim relief for themselves when sick, or for their families during their sickness, in Edinburgh. The remainder would either have been domiciled and entitled to relief elsewhere, or would have been entitled to have the relief, granted to themselves and their families in Edinburgh, reimbursed by other parishes.

I have said, however, that I think a law of settlement by industrial residence is just ; but that the term of years required for a settlement should be considerably extended. Supposing it extended from 3 to 14 years, as was done in Denmark, the number entitled to relief in Edinburgh would have been 80 (30 of those, not born in Edinburgh, having been resident 14 years in it) ; *i. e.*, the burden thrown on the town

\* See Appendix, No. II.

of Edinburgh by their care and maintenance during sickness, would hardly have been more than half what it now is.

But even supposing the law of settlement to remain as it is, but that a right of relief to persons destitute from sickness, and to their families, were enforced by law, in their places of legal settlement, we should have been relieved of 52 out of the 150—more than a third of the whole; for of the 100, not natives of Edinburgh, only 48 had been resident three years or more; the remaining 52 would have been chargeable elsewhere; and we should thus get rid of more than one-third of this burden.

In like manner, Dr Peacock found that, of 408 patients in fever admitted in May, June, and July, 68 were brought into town labouring under fever, and 91 more had not resided three years in Edinburgh. Therefore, if these persons, and their families, had been entitled by law to relief during sickness, even supposing the law of settlement to remain as it is, this town would have been relieved of the burden of 159 of the 408—nearly two-fifths of the whole; and if the law of settlement by fourteen years' residence, or the English law of settlement by birth, had been established, we should have been relieved, in the one case, of nearly one-half the burden, and in the other case, of two-thirds of the burden, as above.

So far as I can judge from the inquiries made on this point by Dr Murray, it would appear that Glasgow and Greenock would be less relieved than Edinburgh (although still very considerably) by such changes in the law of settlement, and of the right to relief. From the patients in fever whom he examined, he obtained the following results:—

	Natives.	Above Four- teen Years Resident.	From Three to Fourteen Years Re- sident.	Under three Years Re- sident.	Total not Natives.
Glasgow Infirmery, }	83	39	46	22	107
Havannah District, }	96	36	27	1	64
Greenock Infirmery, }	30	19	18	6	43

This applies to the relief granted in time of sickness only. As to the effect of the changes in the law, which I have suggested, on the case of the able-bodied unemployed, our best means of judging is to attend to the statistics of the unemployed men, with families, lately relieved in Edinburgh, by the charity work, at the expense of the charitable inhabitants only. This work was granted, however, only to those who had been three years or more resident in Edinburgh; and we learn from its records, therefore, nothing as to that class of the poor, which the facts quoted from the Infirmery Reports shew to be very numerous (generally from one-fourth to one-third of our patients there), and who are occasionally relieved by other charities, or by individuals, at a very heavy expense, but who have not lived three years in Edinburgh. The effect of a right of relief being granted to able-bodied persons, destitute from want of employment, in their own parishes, would be, to rid us almost entirely of this large class of the poor; but the record now in question teaches nothing on that point.

But of 1404 persons employed at the charity-work last winter, only 540 were natives of Edinburgh. The effect of a law of settlement, similar to the English, if carried

into effect generally throughout the British dominions, would have been to give 857 of the 1404 a right to relief elsewhere, and to relieve this town therefore of three-fifths of these destitute persons. It must be admitted, however, that 472 were Irish; and I fear we cannot look forward, at least, for some time, to a law of settlement of the Irish poor. But 356 were Scotch, not natives of Edinburgh, and 33 were English, making 389, or more than a fourth of the whole, who by this law would have been certainly thrown back on their places of nativity for support. The law of settlement, by fourteen years' residence, would no doubt make a part of this number rank as citizens of Edinburgh; but it would cut off about 600 (according to the proportions stated above) of any *right* to claim relief, under any circumstances, in Edinburgh, giving, at the same time, to some of these a right, and to all others such opportunities as the present Irish Poor Law gives, or may give, for legal relief elsewhere; and it is obvious, that such a law would take away a great inducement to Irishmen to settle here, and diminish very greatly that class of applicants to all our charities.

It is not going too far, therefore, to say, that one-third of the burden of the unemployed poor would be removed from us altogether, by the operation of such a change of the law as I have contemplated; even supposing the Irish Poor Law to remain as it is, and to give no legal settlement in Ireland; and if we consider, that the remaining two-thirds would be preserved from destitution by assessment,—and that a still greater abatement of the claims of sick and disabled poor would be effected, and their relief in like manner provided for by assessment,—it is easy to see how much the charitable inhabitants would gain by the change, and how much easier they would find it, to provide for those portions of the poor (chiefly Irish) which such laws would leave,



at least for the present, to the operation of the voluntary principle.

I have only, in conclusion, to express my conviction, that if the provisions for the relief of destitution, which are found effectual (at least in ordinary circumstances) in other countries, were uniformly and steadily enforced in Scotland, the means of securing that object (excepting in the case of certain districts, hitherto grievously mismanaged, and which may probably be gradually relieved by a well-regulated system of emigration), are not deficient. The number of destitute and dependent poor, although excessive in some of the great towns and in certain other districts, is not yet excessive throughout the country at large; the power of religious and moral instruction over the people is great; there is a sufficient body of intelligent persons, in the middle and higher ranks, resident in the country and interested in the subject, to secure the regular inspection and control of any such arrangements as may be wisely planned, and impose on them no excessive burden; and the Sheriff Courts are well adapted for steadily and moderately enforcing the law.

But if the institutions of this or any other country are such as practically to deny the comforts of life to any considerable part of the community, it must be expected that a generation will spring up, careless of those comforts, and prodigal of life itself;—degraded in their habits, reckless in their conduct, over whose general mode of life even religious instruction will have little practical effect, because not supported and enforced (as expressly directed in Scripture) by the civilizing influence of human charity. Men brought up in this state of poverty and degradation will live on little, and work for little; they will recommend themselves, sooner or later,

more than all other labourers, to that influential class of men, to whom the wages of labour must always appear as so much deduction from the profits of stock; and whose interest, to have labour always available, and at the cheapest possible rate, is opposed to, and ought to be checked by, the interest of the community at large, to have poverty and pauperism equitably distributed, and at the lowest possible amount. Gradually they will supplant all other labourers, or reduce them to a level with themselves; they will have, as all experience shews, the high mortality, and still higher reproductive powers, of the most destitute poor of civilized countries; and while they minister to the wealth of certain possessors of capital, they will overspread the whole country with misery and disease;—they will do for it, in fact, just what a long course of neglect of the poor has done for Ireland and for certain northern districts in Scotland, which have been priding themselves on avoiding assessments; *until the number and destitution of their poor have become such, that the argument which they now use against the legal provision is, that to make a decent provision for them would absorb the whole rents of the estates.*

Such degradation of the habits of many poor families, the sure forerunner of a pernicious increase of their numbers, has been, even under my own observation, both a frequent cause and a frequent effect of epidemics of disease in Edinburgh; and to any one who observes and reflects upon its natural consequences, it must appear as a solemn warning, that the sacred injunction on all Christian nations, to “clothe the naked and feed the hungry,” is not to be trifled with, or explained away; that when one system is found ineffectual for this purpose, another should be tried; and that it is peculiarly incumbent on us, as a nation laying claim to a

peculiarly Christian character, to use the faculties which Heaven has given us, to acquire the information, and apply the means, by which the sufferings of the poor, in such a complex state of society as that in which we live, are found to be most effectually and uniformly relieved.

## APPENDIX.

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### No. I.

#### NOTE on the Application of the English Poor Law to the Manufacturing Districts.

It is obvious, from looking over this table (p. 25), that the manufacturing districts in England are not assessed for their poor to nearly the same extent as the agricultural, although we know that it is in the former that the greatest amount of destitution and suffering very frequently exist. I confess that this appears to me to be wrong; and although I wish to express myself with diffidence on a part of this subject, on which I have had little opportunity of practical observation, yet I cannot refrain from stating here a few reflections which have occurred to me on this point.

If the principle which I have always maintained be true, that it is the interest as well as the duty of every state to give to all its members a right of relief from destitution and the attendant degradation, I think it naturally follows, that the burden which is imposed on the community by the assumption of this obligation, ought to be equitably adjusted among its members, and that it is not desirable that any portion of society, or any set of capitalists, should bear less of it than others; certainly not desirable that those whose wealth is the product of labour, which is necessarily attended by much occasional distress among the labourers, should bear less of that burden than those whose wealth is acquired at less expense of human suffering.

Now, although the unhealthiness, as well as the demoralizing tendency of manufacturing occupations have been considerably exaggerated, yet it cannot be denied that the mode of life of manufacturers, and of the inhabitants<sup>s</sup> of towns or populous villages in which manufactories are carried on, and who are attracted thither by the expenditure which the manufacturers require, is productive of much more disease to themselves and their families than agricultural pursuits. It is equally certain, that from various causes, particularly from the variation of fashions, and from improvements in machinery and in the arts, the demand for manufacturing industry must always be much more liable to fluctuation than that for agricultural products. In both these ways it appears certain, that the accumulation of wealth by manufacturing industry, however desirable to a nation, must always be attended with a much greater growth of poverty and suffering, demanding that national aid, which we assume it to be the right of such suffering to demand, than the accumulation of wealth in other ways.

We cannot, therefore, think it just or reasonable that the manufacturing interest should pay less, in proportion to the amount of poverty around them, than other interests in this country; and if it be said, that it is expedient, with a view to the competition with other countries, to relieve the manufacturers as much as possible of such burdens, it may surely be answered, that there is no nation, with which competition can be carried on, which will not be impeded, in the acquisition of wealth in this way, by the same growth of poverty; and which will not sooner or later find it to be its interest to take measures for its regular and effectual relief.

The immediate effect of laying on that capital, which is engaged in manufactures, its full share of the burden, which the growth of poverty, during those manufacturing operations, imposes, will naturally be to check speculations carried on by insufficient capital, and which will therefore break down on slight reverses. In this way, the growth of manufacturing wealth may no doubt be somewhat retarded; but if the principles for which I have contended are true, this is a much less evil to a country than the encouragement of hazardous speculations, involving frequent failures, and the frequent recurrence, therefore, of sudden increase of poverty, inadequately provided for, and therefore,

entailing misery and *degradation*, its natural attendant or consequence, on numbers of the people.

Now if, on these grounds, it appears just and expedient that the assessment in the manufacturing districts, for the relief of the poor, should be equally proportioned to their numbers and wants, as in other districts, it seems to me obvious, that this would be most justly and effectually done in England, by allowing a right of settlement by industrial residence,—not certainly for the short period of three years, but for a period of ten or fourteen years,—proceeding on the obvious principle, that the district which ought to be burdened with the maintenance of an unemployed, or aged, or disabled man, reduced to poverty, or of his widow and orphans, is that which has profited most by his labour during his better years.

If such a law of settlement existed in England, it cannot be doubted that the poor-rate there would be much more effectual than it now is, in relieving the occasional distress in the manufacturing districts. For it is certain, that a very great part of the most urgent distress there existing, is in the families of able-bodied men, who have no settlement there, and who, although they have the right, are unwilling to be sent back to their places of nativity and legal settlement,—where they have lost their connexions, where they know that there is no demand for their trades, and where their places have been filled up by other labourers, so that a permanent residence in the workhouse seems their only prospect.

On the other hand, while it would be just, and, as I think, expedient, to relieve the native parishes of such workmen, of all claim upon them, after a fair period of industrial residence in any other place, I cannot see why the able-bodied artizan, who has not completed such a time of residence, but who is destitute from want of employment, and whose destitution is tested by the approved methods, should not be relieved where he is, and the expense of relieving him charged on the parish where he has a legal claim; just as he would be, according to the usual practice in England, if disabled by disease.\*

\* I am happy to observe, that the principle for which I thus contend is sanctioned by the opinion of the English Poor Law Commissioners, who express themselves as follows:—“ They see no reason for doubting the practicability of “ a system by which *any destitute person* should be entitled to relief in the place

The spirit which prompts a poor man, who has a claim to relief when destitute at home, to look out, and even wander to a distance, in search of profitable employment, is creditable to himself, and useful to his country; and I think it ought not to be checked by any increase of difficulty, consequent on his change of residence, in his obtaining legal relief, when he becomes destitute from want of employment.

It seems to me, that these two changes in the law and practice of relief to the able-bodied, when destitute from want of employment,—allowing them to acquire a settlement by labour, and until they have a settlement, relieving them under suspended orders for removal, as is done when they are sick,—might be made without any violation of the spirit of the existing law; and that if they were made, that law would become much more effective than it now is in relieving distress and preventing degradation in the manufacturing districts.

It is true that, under such a plan, a considerably greater number of able-bodied paupers, than at present, would appear *occasionally* on the lists in England; but we do not get rid of the destitute poor by merely shutting our eyes on them, and repelling their applications; and if the principles which I have stated are true, there is ultimately much more evil to a country in numerous unrelieved and unregistered poor, than in numerous paupers relieved on those plans which appear to have been fairly tried, in England and other countries, and which make such relief always less desirable than the profits of independent labour.\*

It must be admitted, however, that there are cases, frequent in the manufacturing districts, and occasional in the agricultural districts also, in which such an amount of distress, from want of em-

“where he is, without being liable to removal in consequence of his charge-ability.”—*7th Annual Report*, p. 113.

\* I have here supposed that some law of settlement ought to exist. I am aware that some persons whose opinions are entitled to much weight, think the whole system of relief to the poor would be much simplified if there were no law of settlement, and if the funds were raised by a general taxation and apportioned according to the necessities of each locality. It seems to me that there are strong objections to this plan, chiefly as being less fitted for exercising a moral influence or control over the paupers; but I believe it is only by experience that we can judge of its advantages or disadvantages, and probably the experience of Ireland, where there is at present no settlement, may be more useful than any speculation, in guiding opinion upon it.

ployment (resulting from unforeseen causes), is rapidly produced, as it is unreasonable to suppose that any local means can adequately meet. Such a case occurred among the kelp growers in the Highlands and Islands, and has repeatedly occurred of late years in manufacturing towns. Such cases are, in fact, always met, although not always adequately or satisfactorily, by extraordinary subscriptions or donations; and it seems to me, that all that can be required on account of them is, that such extraordinary contributions in aid of the local funds should be put on a permanent and equitable footing. In Austria there is a *reserved fund* in the hands of Commissioners in Vienna, formed originally by the suppression of monasteries, and since augmented by donations, bequests, and grants of public money, which comes in aid of the local funds in any part of the country which can shew an unusual pressure; and it appears to me, that in the circumstances of this country, such a permanent reserved fund, applicable, of course, only when and where the local taxation had reached a certain point, would be peculiarly desirable; and also, that if the public attention were strongly fixed on its importance, there is good reason to hope that it might be raised and maintained, first by a general subscription, and afterwards by donations and legacies.

In all the Continental States, a very considerable part of the provision on which the destitute poor can depend, is the result of legacies left by charitable individuals long deceased, just as the endowed hospitals are a great relief to the poor rates in some parts of England. In Edinburgh, of late years, public attention has been more directed to the beneficial effects of education than of charity; and, in consequence, we have seen, within the last 20 years, bequests to the amount of nearly L.500,000 for founding additional hospitals for education in this neighbourhood. Of the probable effects of the application of these funds, I shall only say,—what I have heard from every person familiarly conversant with the management of similar institutions already existing, with whom I have conversed on the subject,—that the benefits to be derived from them are extremely problematical. But it is quite certain that the interest of this sum, wisely expended in aid of local funds in those parts of the country where unforeseen distress might be shewn to be peculiarly urgent, would be both a permanent blessing to the poor, and a great relief to the higher orders; it would, in fact, be more than a seventh part of the whole sum now expended in Scotland in the



way of legal relief. And there is nothing unreasonable in the hope, that when the public mind shall have been fixed for a certain time on the management of the poor, and when the lessons of experience, at home and abroad, shall have brought conviction of the wisdom and expediency of a liberal provision for them, legacies in aid of the legal establishments for charity, may be thought equally meritorious as those in aid of the legal establishments for education.

It is farther to be considered, that in the present state of this country, there are two other resources against the increase of poverty and destitution, particularly in the manufacturing districts, on which much reliance may be placed, viz., *first*, An improved system of emigration, whether by aid of public funds, or of individual speculation,—for it seems to be generally admitted, that there is much room for improvement, particularly as to the regularity and exactness of the information sent to this country, in regard to the demand for labour in Canada and other colonies; and, *secondly*, an improved system of medical police, with a view not only to the mitigation of disease, but to the various salutary regulations as to the health of towns, and the prevention of disease in general, which have been brought under the view of the public by the able publication of Mr Chadwick. By means of such regulations, it may be hoped that many of the *working classes* (who ought always to be carefully distinguished from the *poor*) may be preserved from the operation of certain of the causes of poverty and destitution; and that the burden (nevertheless inevitable) of pauperism, may be lightened and preserved from rapid increase.\*

When these different resources are considered, I cannot think that there is any thing in the state of the manufacturing districts of this country which need make us despond as to the condition of the poor; but in order that these resources may be truly available, it is, above all things, first necessary, that the provi-

\* In many parts of England I believe that the absence of good, religious, and moral education may also be regarded as a powerful cause, continually lowering the working classes to the condition of the poor. I do not think it is so in this part of Scotland. On the contrary, I consider the existence of, and desire for, a good education in the lowest of the poor of Edinburgh, one of the strongest indications that the extent of wretchedness nevertheless existing, is not generally owing to any fault of the poor, but indicates faulty regulations for their protection and relief.

sion for the relief of destitution should be wisely planned, and uniformly and punctually enforced. We must learn to trust to that *vis naturæ medicatrix*,—that natural barrier against improvidence and excessive population, which is raised by the growth of artificial wants in every human being that is preserved from misery and degradation; and while we look forward to the use of many other means of bettering their condition, we must never forget that the good old method of “clothing the naked, and feeding the hungry,”—provided only that it be done systematically and discreetly,—is not only one of the best things that can be done for the poor, but is essential to the good effect of all other means of improvement.

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No. II.

NOTE on the Management of the Poor in Berlin, as explained by Mr LAING in his “Notes of a Traveller.”

THE account of the system pursued at Berlin given by Mr Laing, although deficient in information on a few points, is highly satisfactory on most. It will be perceived from the following abridgment, that it comprises all the particulars which I have inferred, from a review of the institutions of other countries, to be essential to the right management of the poor,—sufficient funds to relieve all real suffering, raised, for the most part by assessment,—a thorough system of inspection of the poor, on the principle of locality, with the aid of a sufficient body of paid officers, who have no other employment; facility of application on the part of the poor, and a *right of appeal* if the requisite relief is not given,—the mode of relief partly in-door and partly out-door, as in England. We know, also, that in Prussia, as in other parts of Germany, there is a right of settlement by residence; and that in all parts of the country, the law requiring the poor to be supported in comfort, is “carefully and uniformly carried into effect.” I beg it may be observed, that in Berlin, where the investigation of the real wants of the poor appears to be carried

to great perfection, and an equitable law of residence enforced, the sum found requisite to relieve those wants, so as to suppress mendicity without inhumanity, is rather more than 3s. 6d. a-head on the population, which, making allowance for the difference in the value of money, is probably somewhat greater than the assessment in Edinburgh, is *about four times greater than that in the West Church, or on the average of Scotland*, and probably nearly equal to the average throughout England; and that the whole machinery required for this proper management of the poor is both complex and somewhat costly. It may be said, indeed, by the advocates of the present Scottish system, that the arrangements at Berlin are on the voluntary principle, because the Poor Directors and Poor Commissioners are unpaid; but I apprehend this can no more be said of them than of the Boards of Guardians in England, who are equally unpaid administrators of the law, but likewise administer it by means of a sufficient number of paid and responsible agents, and have at their command sufficient funds, raised chiefly by assessment, for the strict execution of the law as to the extent of relief given.

Whatever may be the case in Berlin, it is quite certain, that if such a system were introduced here, its efficacy would depend on the constant and active exertions of the paid officers, and on the power of appeal (seldom exercised, but always open to the pauper) from the decision of the Commissioners to a small body of permanently elected and impartial Directors, who have the duty imposed on them of "carrying the law strictly and uniformly into effect." The paid officers, on whom the inspection of the poor and administration of relief, under the commissioners, devolves, appear, from Mr Laing's statement, to be as follows:—

One revising Commissioner.

One paid Commissioner for two districts of the town, inhabited almost entirely by paupers.

Twelve Town-sergeants.

Six District Messengers, employed in carrying on communication between the Commissioners and paupers.

One Master or Superintendent Poor Ward, and twelve Poor Wards, whose duty is to arrest beggars or distressed persons, and bring them to the workhouse, or before the Commissioners or Directors.

Besides these, there is an establishment of Secretary and As-

sistant-secretary, Accountant, Cashier, Comptroller, Clerks, and Office-servants, in all twenty persons, employed in this public office.

“Edinburgh,” says Mr Laing, “with about two-thirds of the population, is very similar, in its means and resources of living, to Berlin. Both cities subsist not by any great trade or manufactures seated in them, but by the concentration of the business of the country,—by the courts of law, and head establishments, —and by resident families of fortune. Both cities, too, are the head-quarters of the poor, and of those verging towards poverty, from all other parts of the country. Yet Edinburgh is overrun with beggars: want and misery are, day and night, abroad in her streets; and her householders complain loudly of their poor-rates. Berlin, with as great an amount of poverty, and as great a burden upon her householders to relieve that poverty, contrives, at least, to make the means fulfil the end far better than Edinburgh, and contrives to *relieve effectually all real distress*, and to suppress entirely mendicity.

“The management of the poor in great towns in Prussia, was in the hands of Government Commissioners until 1821, when it was given over to the municipalities; and these were required to appoint poor directors, each direction to consist of the burgo-master as president, the members of the magistracy, members of the assembly of the town deputies, or town-council, and members chosen by each parish. The magistrates and town deputies are changeable each year, being *ex officio* members, and in Berlin, at least, they amount to twelve, the others, *amounting to twelve also, are permanently elected*. The members of the poor direction receive no pay or emolument. The clergy and the judicial men of the city may be joined to the directors, and the chief of the police, in cities in which the police is not managed by the magistracy, is *ex officio* a member. The duty of the *poor directors* is the general care of the poor in Berlin, and of the poor schools, the Orphan House, the Workhouse, the Infirmary, the Hospital for Old People, and three smaller hospitals. Between 1821 and 1825, they had divided the whole city (of about 280,000 inhabitants) into fifty-six districts, each under its *poor commission*, the commissioners being more or less numerous according to the number of poor usually in their district; but in general being from five to nine, and each commission having within its own district, if possible, its own physician,

“ surgeon, oculist, and apothecary, whose services are paid, and  
 “ are not received gratuitously. The poor commissioners re-  
 “ ceive no pay or emolument, but are benevolent persons, who,  
 “ without regard to their religious persuasion, or to their civil  
 “ occupations, are chosen by the poor directors out of a list pre-  
 “ sented to them by the poor commissioners of the district, as  
 “ vacancies happen to occur, and requested to accept the office.  
 “ Each poor commissioner has a distinct section of his district  
 “ put under his charge and superintendence; and the district is  
 “ so divided, that in general each poor commissioner has not more  
 “ than ten or twelve paupers receiving relief to look after. In  
 “ 1838 the number of poor commissioners was 607 in all, and of  
 “ all classes of citizens.

“ If a pauper desires relief, he must apply to the president of  
 “ the poor commission of the district in which he resides (56 in  
 “ number), who receives the application, inquires into the grounds  
 “ of it, into the situation, family connections, and other circum-  
 “ stances of the applicant, and if it be not so utterly groundless as  
 “ to be summarily dismissed, refers it to the poor commissioner in  
 “ whose section of the district the pauper is living. He sends an-  
 “ other poor commissioner from another section of the district to  
 “ make inquiry also in the neighbourhood, and at the last place of  
 “ residence in the city. These commissioners inquire of the land-  
 “ lord, the neighbours, the last employer, by means of an exami-  
 “ nation-book, containing 25 questions to be put to the applicant,  
 “ and others to be answered by the commissioners themselves;  
 “ and in the monthly meeting of the whole commissioners of the  
 “ district, a report of the result of the inquiry is made, and the  
 “ case decided. In urgent cases, any one of the poor commis-  
 “ sioners of the district may, with the consent of the president,  
 “ grant an immediate relief, but this must be reported at the first  
 “ monthly meeting of the whole.

“ As messengers to the poor commissioners, there are twenty-  
 “ three town sergeants, who receive pay, and who, with twelve  
 “ poor wards, are especially charged with the arrest of beggars,  
 “ and taking them to the workhouse; and as they know the actual  
 “ paupers, and are daily among them, moving about and doing  
 “ the messages of the poor commissioners in each district and  
 “ division, to and from the poor, this certainty of being known  
 “ prevents the pauper from begging,

“ The expenditure in one year, 1838, appears to have been—

For support of 4987 persons and families, . . . . .	L.14,723	0	0
For medical attendance, medicine, food, bandages, and sick expenses, . . . . .	6,161	0	0
Extraordinary or occasional assistance with money, . . . . .	4,853	0	0
Firewood, turf, &c., distributed, . . . . .	1,559	0	0
Support of poor belonging to Berlin in other places, . . . . .	151	0	0
Education of depraved or morally neglected infants, in a particular school established for that purpose, . . . . .	181	0	0
	<hr/>		
Total out-door relief, . . . . .	L.27,631	0	0
The House of Correction or Workhouse, Orphan Hospi- tal, and several hospitals for decayed poor, and having funds in part for their support, and also the Infirmary, . . . . . Total in-door relief, . . . . .	26,801	0	0
	<hr/>		
	L.54,432	0	0

“ Of this sum, applied to the support of the poor, part comes  
“ from permanent funds left for the endowment of the hospitals,  
“ or from legacies left to the poor, part from Government for the  
“ House of Correction and Police, and also as occasional gifts  
“ from the king, part from voluntary contributions of the inhabi-  
“ tants, and from gifts of benevolent persons, *but the greater part*  
“ *of it, in 1838, about L.35,495, out of the general chest of the city*  
“ *taxes.* These municipal taxes are extremely heavy. They are  
“ levied on the value of the house, and the supposed value or  
“ income of the trade carried on by the householder, as estimated  
“ by the commissioners for charging it.

“ To the actual efficiency of the system in the two great points  
“ of *relieving fully, humanely, and economically, all real distress*  
“ —and in the suppression of all street begging, and much vice  
“ and idleness—the most hasty traveller who inquires at all into  
“ the state of the poor, or who even contents himself with his per-  
“ sonal observation as a stranger walking about the town, must  
“ bear the fullest testimony.

“ The whole, according to the sketch given above, consists of  
“ a board of poor directors, and of local boards of poor commission-  
“ ers; the former having the general control, superintendence,  
“ and finance, under its charge; the latter being in the immediate  
“ contact with the poor, dispensing relief, each board in its own  
“ circle or division of the city, and each commissioner in his own  
“ section or sub-division of that circle only, and under the checks

“ in each case of relief, first, of the president of the local board ;  
 “ secondly, of the monthly conference of the members of the local  
 “ board, taking each case into consideration ; and, thirdly, of re-  
 “ gular sifting examination, by means of the examination-books,  
 “ into each case, leaving nothing to the vague opinion, or vague  
 “ inquiry, or individual feelings of compassion of any one com-  
 “ missioner, however correct his personal knowledge may be, but  
 “ placing every item regarding the pauper’s case upon record.  
 “ It was necessary, however, to the proper working of this ma-  
 “ chinery, not merely to know what relief was afforded to each  
 “ distressed person by the poor commissioners of his locality, but  
 “ have a check upon the parties relieved, that they should  
 “ not be receiving relief secretly at the same time from other  
 “ local boards, or from other charitable establishments. The  
 “ board of directors, therefore, took powers from government,  
 “ obliging all public charitable institutions, kirk-sessions, hospi-  
 “ tals, and others, to furnish lists of the persons, and amounts of  
 “ relief upon their fund. They also invited all private charitable  
 “ societies, and charitable persons or families who have regular  
 “ poor pensioners upon their bounty, to furnish similar lists. Out  
 “ of these, and the examination-books, and monthly account  
 “ and vouchers of each board of local poor commissioners, the  
 “ board of directors formed a regular head-book or ledger, in  
 “ which each individual pauper has his account for himself, as in  
 “ a banker’s book, and from which it can at once be seen whether  
 “ the poor commissioners of any district are bestowing too much  
 “ on any individual, or if he is drawing aid from any other charity.  
 “ Many poor, especially aged and infirm persons, are supported  
 “ by the charitable institutions as far as their funds go, and the  
 “ balance made up by the poor directors.

“ The poor directors keep an application room open to the pub-  
 “ lic, at which the assistant secretary attends, and in which a day-  
 “ book is kept of all applications of the poor for relief, and *of ap-  
 “ peals from the decisions of any of the district poor commissions,*  
 “ if the pauper thinks he ought to get relief, and has been re-  
 “ fused ; and at which any petitions or claims they may have to  
 “ make are drawn out, and any advice they require given without  
 “ expense ; and it is also a kind of house of call for work and  
 “ workmen, if any labourers are wanted for such work as the poor  
 “ can do. The poor commissioners find here the information they

“ require respecting applicants for relief in their districts ; and the  
 “ benevolent can learn if the objects they are relieving are really  
 “ necessitous, and to what extent their charity is required.”

I cannot resist the satisfaction of quoting from the same work the account of a small district in Switzerland, where the principle of moral restraint, the true antidote to the evils of redundant population and poverty, appears to be exemplified on a small scale, in the most satisfactory manner :—

“ The parish of Montreux is divided into three communes ; in  
 “ one of these, Veytaux, there is not a single pauper, *although*  
 “ *there is an accumulated poor-fund*, and the village is of sufficient  
 “ importance to have its post-office, its fire-engine, and watchmen,  
 “ and has a landward population around. The parish is one of  
 “ the best cultivated vineyards in Europe, and is divided in very  
 “ small portions among a great body of small proprietors. These  
 “ small proprietors, with their sons and daughters, work on their  
 “ own land, know exactly what it produces, and whether the  
 “ land can support two families or not. Their standard of living  
 “ is high ; they are well lodged, their houses well furnished, and  
 “ they live well, although they are working men. This class of  
 “ people would no more think of marrying, without means to live  
 “ in a decent way, than any gentleman’s sons or daughters in  
 “ England.” So far the facts stated seem to favour the conclu-  
 “ sion, which Mr Laing afterwards deduces from them, that “ the  
 “ parish is an instance of the restraining powers of property, and  
 “ of the habits, tastes, and standard of living, which attend a  
 “ people, on their own over-multiplication,—a proof that a divi-  
 “ sion of property by a law of succession different in principle  
 “ from the feudal, is the true check on over-population.” (P.  
 339–40).

But I apprehend that the true inference is more general than this,—that it is the diffusion of *comforts*, not necessarily of property, which is the true preventive check ; and that this appears even from Mr Laing’s own statement. For he says expressly, that “ *below the small proprietors* there is another class, the mere  
 “ labourers, or village tradesmen, who are *under a similar econo-  
 “ mical restraint*. The quantity of work which each of the small  
 “ proprietors must have, is a known and filled up demand, not  
 “ very variable. The number of the labourers and tradesmen



“ who can live by the work and custom of the other class, is as  
 “ fixed and known as the means of living of the landowners them-  
 “ selves. There is no chance living, all that is wanted is sup-  
 “ plied ; and until a vacancy naturally opens, in which a labourer  
 “ and his wife can find work and house-room, he *cannot marry*.  
 “ The *economical restraint is quite as strong among the labourers*  
 “ *as among the proprietors*. They are clad as well, females and  
 “ males, as the peasant proprietors—the costume of the canton  
 “ is used by all.”

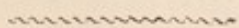
Now, on this I would make two remarks,—*first*, that I apprehend it can signify nothing to these labourers and tradesmen, living by the work and custom of another class, whether that other class consists of small proprietors, or of the tenants of feudal landlords, if the work and custom which they give is equally “ a known and filled up demand,” which it may be in the one case equally as in the other ; and, *secondly*, that if a labourer and his wife were content to marry, as they do in Ireland and in the islands of Scotland, without a prospect of work for more than a few days in the month, they would find house-room, and such work as that, in that parish or neighbourhood equally as elsewhere. It is not that they *cannot*, but that, under these circumstances, they *will not* marry, without a sure prospect of living in comfort. There as elsewhere, the “ habits, tastes, and standard of living,” which restrain the multiplication of the people, spring up among labourers and tradesmen, equally as among proprietors, in a country where there is good religious education, under the influence simply of regular employment and sufficient remuneration ; and if we ask how these habits are acquired, I think that a very little observation of such families will shew, that in regard to this as to other habits, “ the child is the father of the man.” The attachment to comfort, feeling of self-respect, and taste for artificial wants, in adult age, are acquired by the possession of comforts, and the occasional gratification of the principles of emulation and ambition, in the earlier periods of life. In a more complex state of society, where the demand for labour is fluctuating, and where many employments are unhealthy, or attended, from various causes, with a greater mortality than is known at Montreux, it is impossible that such habits can be acquired and preserved in the families of many of the labourers or tradesmen, merely by means of the wages of their own labour or

the profits of their own industry ; but I confidently maintain, that we have sufficient experience to prove, that human Charity,—prompted by the feelings implanted in our nature, stimulated by the urgent exhortations of the Sacred Writings, and so regulated by human experience and judgment, as to aid and encourage, not supersede, the efforts of industry,—is the appointed means by which enough of these habits and tastes may be diffused and preserved throughout the lower ranks of society, to prevent the excessive multiplication of the species. And I hold it to be equally ascertained, and nowhere more decidedly than by the experience of Scotland, that, in the advanced stages of society, a sufficient and adequately regulated application of charity for this purpose, cannot be secured without the aid of the Law.

The simple principle, that the true check on redundant population is the *feeling of artificial wants*, which is always the result of the enjoyment of comfort, particularly in early life,—while, on the other hand, destitution always implies degradation, and degradation a morbid increase of numbers,—is easily comprehended ; and is sufficient to shew, that whatever other objects a nation may propose to attain, or whatever may be its circumstances or policy, a careful and uniform regard for the comforts of the poor is not only, as stated by Dr Johnson, the true test of its civilization, but is an essential element of its prosperity. It is but doing justice to this principle, to keep it entirely clear of all questions in social or political economy, which are of more doubtful solution, regarding the most advantageous distribution of property, or application of capital, or even the mode of imposition of public burdens, whether for this or other purposes.



## P O S T S C R I P T.



*May 1844.*

The preceding pages were printed, and were laid before the Commissioners for inquiring into the practical operation of the Scottish Poor Laws, in October last. But as I have the honour to belong to the Association which was formed for the purpose of obtaining from Government an official inquiry into that subject, and which had promised to abstain from any public agitation of matters connected with those Laws during the continuance of that inquiry, I have delayed this publication until the inquiry should be completed.

I am bound to acknowledge the liberality of the Commissioners, who expressed to me their desire that I should be entirely guided by my own judgment as to the time of publication, thus releasing me from the obligation which, as a member of that Association, I had contracted; but I have thought it best to abstain from any public discussion of subjects connected with their inquiry, until their Report should have been drawn up.

This delay enables me to make some important additions to the statement of facts contained in the preceding pages, regarding this epidemic, and its effects and accompaniments; and the confirmation, thereby given, of the anticipation of recurring and increasing epidemics of fever in the great towns of Scotland, which I formerly hazarded. See Observations on the Management of the Poor, pp. 12 and 26.

I. In continuation of the Table at p. 6, I can now add,

that the cases of Fever admitted into the Infirmary and auxiliary Hospitals in Edinburgh during the last eight months, have been as follows :—

	No. Admitted.	Previous Average.
September, ...	531	87
October, ...	638	98
November, ...	586	121
December, ...	544	130
January, ...	465	129
February, ...	300	90
March, ...	256	93
April, ...	93	77

Thus, in the *six months* ending 31st January 1844, we had 3162 patients in fever admitted into hospital in Edinburgh, averaging about seventeen every day for the whole time; and a very large number during part of these months were refused admittance, for want of room. To shew how much the diffusion of this epidemic has exceeded others, I add another table, shewing the numbers admitted in the other great epidemics within my recollection, when the numbers refused admittance were trifling.

In two years, from Nov. 1817 till Nov. 1819,	...	2470
In one year,	1827,	1837
„	1828,	1862
„	1838,	1994
„	1839, (about)	2400

In farther evidence of the extent of suffering brought on the poor, and of the sacrifices required of the charitable portion of the higher ranks by this epidemic, I may add the statement contained in the Report of the Destitute Sick Society of their operations in 1843.

After stating “that fever has raged, and is raging, among the poor to an unprecedented extent,” the

Committee add, that they “determined to relieve all  
 “the cases that came to their knowledge, although  
 “their ordinary weekly expenditure was *trebled* by the  
 “effort.” “The weekly expenditure of the Society at  
 “present exceeds L.70 sterling, and if an overruling  
 “Providence do not interpose, an amount of outlay will  
 “be imposed on the Society which it is impossible to  
 “calculate; nor is it likely that the public subscrip-  
 “tions will adequately meet the pressing and still grow-  
 “ing demands.” (Report for 1843.)

A similarly increased expenditure has been incurred, in consequence of this epidemic, by other voluntary charitable institutions, particularly by the House of Refuge and the Strangers' Friend Society. The casual poor at the Charity Workhouse have likewise been, of course, much more numerous than usual; and the sum raised by subscription for the maintenance of the Fever Hospitals connected with the Infirmary since November last,—a part of which also has been applied in aid of the funds of the Destitute Sick Society, and House of Refuge,—has amounted to above L.3300, in addition to the L.2000 mentioned at p. 21.

Another urgent call on the charitable portion of the public has been made during this winter, in consequence of the failure of the funds of the former Lying-in Hospital, and the necessity of establishing a new one in Edinburgh; in proof of the want of which, it was stated by the Committee formed for that purpose, in their prospectus, that within a few weeks, “no less than ten  
 “cases had occurred of women (chiefly friendless stran-  
 “gers), actually falling down, and bringing forth in the  
 “streets.”

It is obvious from these facts, and from what is stated at pp. 20 and 21, that on this, as on former occasions,

the charitable portion of the citizens of Edinburgh have made great exertions for the *relief* of extensive suffering, particularly of that which is produced by disease among the poor. But I think it also obvious, that the means adopted for the *prevention* of such suffering and disease have been either lamentably unsuccessful, or, as I maintain, lamentably partial, irregular, and defective.

It is quite certain, at all events, that the number of the destitute poor is so great, that the relief given by all these means to individual cases is always small, and very generally, particularly as to those who have been long unemployed, or long enfeebled by disease, it is utterly inadequate. Of this I have seen many painful examples; and knowing this to be the case, I am not surprised to find, that, notwithstanding these efforts, and the exertions of a strict police, mendicity is at least as prevalent as in any former season in Edinburgh.

The expenses which I have mentioned are, however, a very heavy addition to the burden which I have described, at pp. 20 and 21, as imposed on *the charitable portion of the inhabitants* of Edinburgh within the last few years, by the state of the poor; and that I speak advisedly when I say, that another large portion of the inhabitants escapes the burden altogether, is obvious from the result of a voluntary assessment, set on foot to procure aid for the fund for casual poor at the Charity Workhouse, from the privileged classes in Edinburgh who are exempt from the legal assessment. If they had assessed themselves to the same extent as their fellow-citizens are now assessed by law, this subscription would have produced nearly L.2100; but the whole proceeds of the voluntary assessment, even at this period of urgent distress, have been only L.144. (See List of Subscriptions in Courant of 16th March.)

II. In common with most practitioners, I long hesitated to believe that this epidemic fever, although obviously possessing peculiar characters, is really a "*nova pestis*;" but repeated observation has now convinced me, and, I believe, most of those who have seen much of the disease, that this is really its nature; and that there are at present in Scotland *two specific poisons*, the one producing this peculiar fever, marked by the early crisis, the almost uniform relapse, the severe muscular pains, the absence of the peculiar typhoid eruption, and the presence, in severe cases, of the yellowness of the skin, and even of the black vomit, so frequent in the fevers of hot climates; the other producing that disease which is marked by the frequent typhoid eruption, the longer duration of the fever, the greater affection of the brain, and less of the stomach, and the much less tendency to relapse.

We have now accounts of the new epidemic fever from most of the larger towns in Scotland, and it has shown in all a most striking similarity in symptoms,—the sickness and vomiting, the early crisis and relapse, the muscular pains, the yellowness (without obstruction of the bile-ducts), in many, and the almost uniform miscarriage of pregnant females. The following statement, by Dr Perry of Glasgow, relates probably to the very commencement of the epidemic:—"Sporadic cases of this epidemic began to show themselves in this quarter, from the month of December 1842. *The poor classes of society had, for the last two years, suffered great privations in the comforts of life, so that their constitutions might be less able to resist external influences of an injurious tendency. As the season advanced these cases became more frequent; and*



“ before the real nature of the epidemic was understood, several were admitted into the hospital as cases of jaundice.” “ In many of the cases coming from the poorer localities, livid petechiæ were present.” (Facts and Observations on the Sanatory State of Glasgow, in 1843, &c., by Dr Perry, pp. 5, 6.) This is exactly what happened in Edinburgh about three months later.

That the two poisons are distinct, we judge from this fact, repeatedly and carefully observed, that a well-marked case of either form of fever, occurring in any locality previously unaffected, is followed by a succession of others, within narrow limits of space and time, all presenting the same characters, although occurring in different families, and, of course, in a great variety of constitutions ; which would not be the case if the two forms of the disease were merely varieties resulting from the same poison. And the importance of this observation appears from the farther fact, which we have many times seen exemplified, that neither form of the disease affords any security against attacks of the other, such as attacks of typhus fever generally afford against their own recurrence. Indeed, the instances of the communication of the one kind of fever to convalescents from the other, in the wards of the hospital, have become so frequent, that the Managers have found it necessary to direct that patients in the two diseases should be kept separate ; and we have at this moment wards for typhus, and wards for this “ short fever.” Thus the evils which result from the frequent extension of contagious fever among our destitute population, are *doubled*. The whole of that population are now liable to attacks of two kinds of contagious fever,

instead of one, as formerly ; and the charitable portion of the community (and they only) must expect to be burdened with the maintenance and support of the destitute poor and their families, in frequently recurring epidemics of this new kind of fever, as well as of typhoid fever. The new epidemic has now, as may be judged from the table at p. 56, nearly subsided, but the cases of typhus in several parts of the town continue to be above the average.

The new disease has, fortunately, preserved its mild character in a great majority of cases, although in some it has shewn a truly malignant nature ; and this, as usual, has been most remarkably in persons of the higher ranks. Thus, of eight gentlemen giving assistance in the fever wards, who have taken the disease, six have become yellow, and been obviously in danger of their lives. These have all happily recovered ; but two highly-esteemed practitioners in Edinburgh, Mr Crighton of Stockbridge, and Dr Finch of the Canongate Dispensary, have died of the new fever in the present winter. It has been fatal, also, to Dr Burns jun., of Glasgow, and Dr Moir of Aberdeen, both highly respected practitioners ; and the name of Councillor Macaulay, honourably mentioned in the preceding pages, is to be added to the long list of the charitable inhabitants of Edinburgh who have died of fever, caught in the visitation of the poor. I have seen also two fatal cases of the new fever in persons of the higher ranks, living in the country, far from any of the larger towns ; one of them in a young and strong man, attended with intense yellowness and unusual malignity.

That the poison of the new disease has been less generally fatal than that of typhus, we must ascribe to the mercy of Providence,—certainly not to our popu-

lation being in a state better fitted for resisting this than former epidemics. Enough of the poison of each kind of fever, will no doubt lurk in the poorest parts of our large towns, to furnish the means of exciting future epidemics; and the next that visits us may have the wide extension of that of 1843, with the high mortality of that of 1838, which was 1 in 6 of all admitted to the Infirmary in that year. Nay, we are not to reckon on the comparative immunity of the higher ranks from the visitation of such epidemics, as being uniform or certain. I have myself witnessed a pretty general epidemic fever in the New Town of Edinburgh (in winter 1828-9), consequent on that previously prevailing among the poor in 1827-28, but occurring when the poor in the Old Town were nearly exempt from the disease; and it is well known that one of the most virulent epidemic fevers recorded in history,—that which afflicted France in 1528,—although beginning, as usual, by famine, general distress and indigence, and bands of wandering beggars, soon extended rapidly upwards in society, “want and ill health even affording a kind of miserable protection against it;” and ultimately acquired its vulgar name (*Trousse-galant*) from its frequency and fatality among a part of the population certainly very different from that which has chiefly suffered of late years in Scotland. (See Hecker’s *Epidemics of the Middle Ages*, translated by Dr Babington, p. 235.)

III. In farther evidence, that the new fever is (at least hitherto) equally connected with destitution as the fevers of Scotland and Ireland in former years, I annex the result of another examination of 300 patients, taken indiscriminately, among the inmates of the In-

firmary in December 1843, by my friend and assistant, Dr Davies. Of these there were, at the time of inquiry,—

Fully Employed.	Partially Employed.	Wholly Unemployed.	Total Destitute.
129	117	54	171

Thus, in all, we have had the circumstances of 1768 fever patients in 1843 (all taken quite indiscriminately) examined, viz., 1332 in Edinburgh, and 436 in Glasgow and Greenock; and of these there were only 589, not quite one-third, in full employment; 1179 were either unemployed, or so partially employed that their earnings were generally stated as “insufficient for their support;” and their clothing and condition gave ample evidence of destitution.

The proportion of the fully employed, or working classes, who have been attacked with fever, has been, as might be expected, gradually increasing, even among the hospital patients, and, no doubt, in a greater degree among those who are not sent to hospital. Of 646 in the Infirmary here, in July and August last, only 237 had been fully employed; of 630 in the end of September and in December, 275 had been fully employed. Another important observation is, that the proportion of fever patients who were regular residents in town, greatly increased as the epidemic proceeded. Thus, of 408 patients admitted in May, June, and July last, 68, just one-sixth, were brought into town ill of the disease, being generally strangers wandering in search of work. But of 1005 admitted in December and January, only 37, 1 in 27, were of this description.

The destitute part of the population, dependent, even when in health, on some form of charity, is, I fear, rapidly increasing under the present system, both in

Edinburgh and Glasgow ; and probably I understated its amount, even in the summer season, when I said it might be one-twentieth of the whole population ; but it cannot be supposed, even in winter, to amount to one-fifth of the whole population ; *i. e.*, to *twice* as large a proportion of the population as the comparatively comfortable paupers in England. But, even making this extreme supposition, as to the number of the destitute poor in Edinburgh and Glasgow—if their condition had not been more favourable to the invasion of fever than that of the rest of the community, they would not have furnished 20 per cent. of the fever cases ; whereas we see that *they have furnished fully 66 per cent. of those cases*, during the whole epidemic. Again, those wholly without employment, or ostensible means of subsistence, cannot be five per cent. of the population ; but they have furnished, on the whole, fully 25 per cent. of the fever patients in the hospitals in Edinburgh.

These facts I hold to be proof positive of the efficacy of destitution, as, in one way or other, the main cause of the diffusion of this epidemic fever in Scotland.

I may quote, in confirmation of these statements, that made by my friend, Dr Cormack, one of the physicians in charge of the Fever Hospital here, in his late work on the Epidemic Fever, notwithstanding that it might appear, at first sight, at variance with them. He says, “ It may be stated, as the general impression left on “ the mind by the inquiry” (into the previous circumstances of the fever patients), “ that poverty cannot be “ said to be the cause of the prevalence of the present “ fever, *except in so far*, as by inducing general de- “ bility ; *it predisposes to disease, and especially to any “ prevailing epidemic. The crowding of persons so predis- “ posed into small and unventilated apartments, is, there*

“ can be no doubt, at once *the main cause of the spread of the epidemic*, and also of its confinement, in a great measure, to the habitations of the poor.”

Now, as I have never asserted, and can hardly conceive, that destitution favours the diffusion of fever in any other modes than those here stated, *viz.*, by weakening the constitution, and disposing it to epidemic disease, and then compelling persons thus enfeebled, to crowd together in close and ill-aired rooms, I am justified in inferring, from what Dr Cormack has here said, that the result of his observations on this matter has been in exact conformity with that of my own.

I have received in illustration of this, and have laid before the Royal Commissioners, a curious table, drawn up by Mr Thomas M. Lee, one of the most zealous and best informed of our assistants, which shews the comparative diffusion of fever in the upper stories of one of the common stairs in the Cowgate, inhabited by some of the poorest of the people, and in the lower stories of the same building, where the means of ventilation are necessarily worse, but which are inhabited by people in comfortable circumstances. It illustrates perfectly what I have repeatedly stated, as the result of my own observation in many similar cases, and as clear proof, that the diffusion of the disease among the poorest inhabitants of these houses is to be ascribed, not to the locality which they inhabit, but simply to their poverty, and to that contamination of the air *within their rooms*, which is the natural consequence of their poverty, *and cannot be remedied while that state of extreme destitution exists.*

The general result of this table is, that of 47 inhabitants, in the two highest flats, 37 took fever, and

10 escaped ; while of 50 inhabitants, in the three lower flats, only 5 took fever, and 45 escaped.

The following extract, from an account just published of the epidemic at Leith, shews a similar state of things when it was very prevalent there:—"Great misery  
 " and destitution prevailed at the time among the poor,  
 " adding additional horrors to the disease ; and it was  
 " not at all uncommon to see whole families prostrated  
 " under it, covered with rags, and in want of the com-  
 " mon necessaries of life." (On the Epidemic Fever at  
 Leith in 1843-4. By Dr Jackson, in Edinburgh Medical Journal, 1844.)

The following extracts from the " Facts and Observations" lately published by Dr Perry of Glasgow, will shew how nearly the same conclusions, from the phenomena of this and former epidemics, have forced themselves on those who have seen the most of them in Glasgow and here.

" At present it is the fashion to ascribe every epi-  
 " demic to malaria, arising from decaying animal and  
 " vegetable substances, owing to the want of sewers,  
 " and the scanty supply of water. There are few places  
 " better supplied with water than Glasgow; and I have  
 " observed, on more than one occasion, that the pro-  
 " gress of malignant fever was rapid and violent dur-  
 " ing *intense frost*, when the whole liquid substances in  
 " the streets were firmly bound together for weeks,  
 " without the possibility of putrefaction going on."  
 (P. 6.)

" One striking feature in the circumstances of the  
 " thousands who have suffered most from the present  
 " epidemic, presents itself; that is, the over-crowded

“ state of their houses ; families of 6, 8, or 10, crowded  
 “ into one small apartment, *without a bed to lie on*, ex-  
 “ cept, perhaps, a quantity of long-used straw or filthy  
 “ rags.

“ That there is a superabundance of labour in the  
 “ market may readily be admitted ; and should the po-  
 “ pulation continue to increase as it has done, and our  
 “ markets not increase in a similar ratio, the evil must  
 “ necessarily rapidly increase.” (P. 7.)

“ Some have imagined, that by destroying those  
 “ wretched abodes, pulling them down, and building  
 “ better houses and wider streets, they would remedy  
 “ the evil. This is taking a very limited view of the  
 “ distress, and betrays a lamentable ignorance of the  
 “ cause ; for the poor, *not having the means to pay for*  
 “ *better than they now possess, must still continue to huddle*  
 “ *together in dwellings scarcely fit for pigs.*” (P. 7.)

“ In reflecting on the immense amount of destitution  
 “ and misery that exists, it is impossible to avoid com-  
 “ ing to the conclusion, that there must be something  
 “ wrong in the state of society, where a population,  
 “ acute in intellect, and fertile in resources, is plunged  
 “ into such a state of hopeless misery ; yearly and daily  
 “ increasing in intensity, and extending wider *among*  
 “ *a people formerly noted for their sobriety and industry.*  
 “ It is certain, that ere long the rich will be compelled,  
 “ in some shape or other, to look to the support of the  
 “ poor. Let those, therefore, who have influence, con-  
 “ sider well, if nothing be done soon, what the end of  
 “ this state of things may be.” (P. 8.)

I shall only add, that *not less than 32,000 cases* of fever have been ascertained by Dr Perry to have occurred in Glasgow in the last *eight months of 1843 ; i. e.* that during that time the disease had affected 11.63 per



cent. of the whole population, and in some districts 23, or even 26 per cent.—See Facts and Observations, &c. p. 11.

IV. These principles have received a farther important confirmation from the elaborate inquiries of Dr Watt of Glasgow, into the circumstances and causes of the very considerable increase of the mortality of Glasgow, in 1843 over 1842, depending, in a great measure, on this fever and its consequences. The general result of these inquiries is, that *nearly the whole of the excess of mortality has fallen on that small minority of the population,—the destitute poor.* “There is an increase,” says Dr Watt, “of 2340 burials in 1843 over 1842;” and he then proceeds to investigate the circumstances of those deceased persons, constituting this excess of mortality. “There is an increase of burials at the expense of the Town’s Hospital and Royal Infirmary to the amount of 931, or 39.78 per cent. of the whole increase; an increase of burials at the expense of the Barony parish of 359, or 15.34 per cent. of the whole; and an increase of burials at the expense of the Govan parish, of 137, or 5.8 of the whole increase.” Thus the increased number of burials at the expense of these two parishes, and the two charities in Glasgow, amount to 61 per cent. of the whole increase. Besides this, there was a similar increase of burials at the expense of the Gorbals parish, not specified to Dr Watt, but which convinces him, that two-thirds of the increased mortality of 1843 are accounted for by the increasing burials at the public expense. He then adds, that of the other burying-grounds in Glasgow, the greatest increase for the year is in St Mary’s, which is used almost exclusively by the labour-

ing classes; and that "it is known, that, in the other  
 "burying-grounds, the increase of burials has been  
 "among the poorer classes. So that, on the whole,  
 "there is indisputable evidence, that 1843 was as  
 "healthy a year as 1842, for the wealthy and those in  
 "comfortable circumstances." In like manner, from  
 similar inquiries, it appears that "about two-thirds of  
 "the increased mortality of 1837 fell exclusively on  
 "the poor and destitute."\*

In a subsequent communication, Dr Watt has given me some additional facts, shewing still more unequivocally the much greater proportion in which the mortality from fever, in this as in former epidemics in Glasgow, has fallen on the destitute, than on other classes of the population.

In January 1837, the burials at the public expense in Glasgow, excluding the suburban districts, and deducting the still-born,	were	379
and of these the deaths by fever were		117, or 30.87 per cent.
The whole deaths in Glasgow in that month,	were,	1972
and of these the deaths by fever,		201 or 10.19 per cent.
Again, in four months, beginning June 1843, the burials at the public expense, after similar deductions, were,		1036
Of which, the deaths by fever and influenza, which is the name often given, among the poor, to the present epidemic, were,		518, or 50 per cent.
In the same months, the whole burials in Glasgow were		4425
Of which the deaths by fever were,		1477, or 33.38 per cent.

Now, when it is remembered that fever has never appeared to cause 8 per cent. of the annual mortality

\* See Abstract of Glasgow Mortality Bill for 1843, in Glasgow Herald, 22d January 1844.

in any town in England, during the present century, the fact of an epidemic, of *remarkable mildness*, having caused 33 per cent. of the mortality, for four months, among 275,000 people, and 50 per cent, among the poor of that population,—and this within a few years after former epidemics of fever, extending to nearly 30 per cent. of the population,—is surely enough to justify the observation of Dr Perry, that there must be “some-thing wrong in the state of society there.”

These facts are the more important, as, on a superficial view of the subject, the fact of the increased mortality in 1843; when there was much more employment in Glasgow than in 1842, might be thought in contradiction to the principles I have stated, as to the connection of fever and mortality with destitution. When the circumstances of the sick poor are investigated, *it turns out, nevertheless, that destitution is the fruitful source of their sufferings.* Dr Watt’s statements in explanation of this, are quite in conformity with what I have stated at pp. 3 and 4. “From a document “obligingly furnished to me by Mr Councillor Hope,” he says, “it appears that L.11,644, 4s. 5d was expended “from the Glasgow Relief Fund alone, from May 1842 “till May 1843, in supplying work to the unemployed, “and food to the destitute; parties quite distinct from “those who received the usual parochial relief.” This sum was a clear addition to the usual provision against destitution in Glasgow. Accordingly, Dr Watt adds, “It may safely be said that there were *much fewer* “*cases of unrelieved destitution in Glasgow in 1842, than* “*in any year of ordinary prosperity*” (Ibid.)

In Glasgow, and likewise in Greenock, just as in Edinburgh, the increase of fever and mortality began in May 1843, when, in consequence of the revival of

trade, *the relief to the unemployed was discontinued*; and the statements now made, prove beyond all doubt or possibility of dispute, that, notwithstanding that revival, the condition of the great majority of the people on whom the increased sickness and mortality fell, was one of lamentable destitution.

I can conceive only two objections to the obvious inference from these facts, as to the connection of the disease and mortality in Glasgow with destitution. 1. It may be said that burials at the public expense are not a sufficient "test of destitution." This question I put to Dr Watt, and in a subsequent communication to me, he adds, on this point, "From the precautions taken  
" to prevent coffins and ground from being granted to  
" those who can afford to pay for them, burials at the  
" public expense afford *the most decided proof of poor  
" and destitute circumstances*; and many well authenticated cases have been brought under my notice; in  
" which persons having no claim on the parish, have  
" pawned their clothes to bury their dead;" shewing distinctly that, by adopting this criterion, we rather understate than overstate the amount of mortality connected with destitution in Glasgow.

That so much destitution should exist in a year of returning prosperity, when the whole circumstances of the case are considered, is easily understood. A part of the destitute poor consists of those who are unable for work, or able only for "light work," for which the demand has not increased; another portion consists of persons able for work, but, sometimes from misconduct, sometimes from misfortune, not yet employed,—or belonging to trades in which the depression still exists,—and who, a year before, would have been supported by the charity funds; and a third portion have regained

employment so recently, that they are still destitute of all comforts. Nay, I am informed, that it has often been observed in Glasgow, as I have myself observed here, that upon men weakened by the privations of a long want of employment, the return to their usual habits of muscular exertion has proved the exciting cause of fever.

But, *2dly*, It may still be said, that the destitution which is thus shewn to be the prolific source of disease and mortality, is not the consequence of want of employment, but of the wages of labour being squandered in dissipation and profligacy. I have stated at pp. 17 and 18, what seems to me a satisfactory answer to this assertion, so far as Edinburgh is concerned; and I can now add the result of an inquiry on this point, addressed by Dr Watt to some of the district surgeons of Glasgow.

The questions put by Dr Watt were as follows :

1. Presuming that you must have seen, during the last year, many cases of disease and mortality among the destitute poor, did it appear to you that these cases were chiefly in persons who had full employment, but misspent their earnings, or in persons who had little or no employment?

2. In the latter case, did the want of employment appear to be generally the result of misconduct, or disinclination to work, or of inability to procure work; either from age or other physical disqualification, or from there being no demand for their labour?

Dr Watt has sent me six answers to these queries from district surgeons; and in all, it is distinctly stated, that the great majority of cases of disease and mortality, seen by them during the last year, women and children being included, were among the *unemployed*.

One gentleman only, Mr Smith of Stockwell Street, says, that the majority of his male adult patients, although in poverty, were employed. All the others state distinctly, that the greater number of the cases which they visited, were in persons who had little or no employment; and that the most frequent cause of want of employment appeared to be either physical disability, or *the want of demand for their labour*. One gentleman, Mr Walker, after making this statement, adds, “ I cannot recollect a single case of *disinclination to work*, where the party was able to perform a day’s work, and could get it to do.”

This seems to me to complete the evidence, that in 1843, not only destitution, but *destitution resulting chiefly from want of employment, or redundance of population*, was the chief cause of the diffusion of fever, and the increased mortality in Glasgow.

Some of the reports made to Dr Perry by the district surgeons, give individual instances of the lamentable extent of misery and disease among the poor of Glasgow, and several of these cases likewise clearly point out, not only destitution in connection with dissipation (which is admitted by all), but destitution, simply from want of employment, as the main source of the evil; shewing, at the same time, that, under the present system, there is practically no discrimination as to the relief given in these different cases. The following are examples:—

“ 100 Havannah Street. A large new land contain-  
 “ ing 34 houses (rooms). *Fever in every one*; and many  
 “ very poor families reside here. Hatter’s Close is  
 “ mostly inhabited by *hand-loom weavers, who are all*  
 “ *very poor*; several of the ground floors are fit only  
 “ for coal-cellars, yet they are all inhabited. Fever

“ has visited *every house*, followed in most cases by  
 “ dysentery. M'Kenzie's Land, Meuse Lane, contains 21  
 “ rooms, inhabited chiefly by stocking-weavers, *all very*  
 “ *poor* ; only three families have as yet escaped the  
 “ fever. In hundreds of cases, the only or chief sup-  
 “ port these wretched beings had, were the penny  
 “ tickets I distributed daily.”—Report from District  
 XI, by Dr A. Brown.

“ In the Bush Tavern Close, about 20 cases occur-  
 “ red, most of them in the families of *tradesmen out of*  
 “ *employment*, or who obviously had not the means of  
 “ providing sufficient support for themselves or their  
 “ families.”—“ A great number of cases occurred in a  
 “ court communicating with No. 13 Bell Street, and  
 “ of a very distressing nature. The families were  
 “ Scotch, and *suffering great distress from want of em-*  
 “ *ployment*, though evidently generally industrious, and  
 “ of sober habits. In this court were a widow and  
 “ four children lying ill of fever. They had no one to  
 “ assist them, and had neither bed, blanket, food, nor  
 “ fire ; they lay on the floor, covered with a piece or  
 “ two of muslin cloth. This was want, brought on by  
 “ circumstances, over which, apparently, they had no  
 “ control.”

“ Perhaps more than half of all the cases were *Irish*,  
 “ *whose means of subsistence are very precarious*, and  
 “ difficult to ascertain. The remainder were Scotch  
 “ tradesmen, or the members of their families, who were  
 “ *out of employment, and enfeebled by want.*”—Report  
 from District XII, by Dr A. Fisher.

“ In close, 102 Rottenrow Street, I have had a con-  
 “ siderable number of fever cases. Here the people are  
 “ cleanly and temperate; the houses well ventilated;  
 “ and I can only account for the prevalence of disease

“ by *their great poverty* ; hence arise insufficient food, fuel, and clothing.”—Report from District XVI, by J. Ross, District Surgeon.

“ The present fever first appeared to any extent in Bridgeton, in Dublin Land, a large building of 28 single apartments, *in an open well-aired space*. The first family attacked consisted of 10 individuals, in a small apartment, with only one bed, made of some straw, and an old coverlet. The father, *who was reduced to mendicity by rheumatism*, lay on the naked floor, with his clothes unchanged.”—“ *Since that time there have been in this property, 90 cases of fever, and 7 deaths* ; one-half of the inhabitants are poor but industrious tradesmen, with large families ; the other half irregular and improvident.”

“ No. 51 Dalmarnock Road is another single building, standing in a free and airy situation, divided into 32 apartments, containing 165 inhabitants. There have been here 107 cases of fever, and 10 deaths. *Eleven of the householders were widows with families ; others were women deserted by their husbands*. Of the remainder, some were *poor weavers, with large families*, or men following precarious employments ; and two or three superannuated persons lived chiefly by begging ; 14 of the houses possessed almost no furniture but the straw-bed, and the smallest possible amount of cooking utensils.”—Reports from Bridgeton, by Dr R. Garraway.

From all these Reports it appears that little or nothing had been done for the families who were thus successively prostrated by fever, in the way of parochial assistance ; and the number sent to hospitals in 1843 was small. I beg to contrast with these the statement of an



equally qualified observer, as to the exertions of the parochial authorities on occasion of fever prevailing in Manchester; in which town I trust it may be remembered, that fever does not appear ever to have caused 8 per cent. of the whole mortality; whereas the proportion in Glasgow was 20 per cent. in 1837; nearly 14 per cent. in 1840; and 33 per cent. during a part of 1843. “The careful attention with which the parochial authorities have always watched over the poor during epidemic fever, and the prompt steps they have usually taken for the removal of infected persons, &c., *have contributed most materially to check the spread of fever, and preserve the health of the town.*”—Report on Diseases of the Labouring Classes in Manchester, by Dr Baron Howard, p. 2.

When we shall have similar statements of the exertions of parochial authorities, on such occasions, in the great towns in Scotland, and shall know that their “watching over the poor,” implies an equally liberal relief of destitution, as in Manchester,—then, and not till then, the known history of contagious fever in large towns will justify the expectation, that such epidemics as we have witnessed in 1837–8, and in 1843–4, will no longer be the heaviest affliction on the lower ranks, and the most serious reproach on the higher ranks, now existing among the Scottish people.

V. A better proof cannot be given of the irregularity and inadequacy of the existing provision against destitution in Scotland, than the fact, that, while an epidemic fever was prevailing so extensively, *and its diffusion proved to be so much connected with the destitute state of the unemployed poor*, the Town-Council of Edinburgh should have felt obliged to come to the resolution, that no far-

ther assistance should be given to this description of poor ; and that “ they must, in future, depend on their “ own exertions.” This was the only answer returned to above 200 unemployed men, with families, who sought relief in the form of work ; and whose circumstances were precisely similar to those of the men for whom, only a year before, every effort had been made to obtain such subscriptions as should give them employment at a low rate of wages.

It is true, that the Council stated on this occasion, that the demand for labour had increased in Scotland. But no statistical evidence was quoted to shew that the demand for any labour, of which these men were capable, had increased ; or that their condition was at all better than that of the unemployed poor of last year.—Mr Johnston’s account of whom I formerly quoted. It is no relief to a tailor, or printer, or book-binder, destitute from want of employment in Edinburgh, to be told that the weavers and cotton-spinners in Glasgow or Paisley are again in work ; or that many farmers are cutting drains in different parts of the country, for which work so many able and experienced labourers are presenting themselves, that he has not the smallest chance of being hired.

Nevertheless, I do not suppose that the effect of this resolution of the Town-Council will be to cause any of these men or their families to die of actual starvation ; but I am fully justified, by the statistical facts which I have stated here and elsewhere, in asserting, that it will condemn them to extreme suffering and privation, and to one form or another of mendicity ; and will render them more liable to fever, of which some will die, and which they will communicate to others ; and farther, that the destitution and consequent degradation of these families will long attach themselves to the children be-

longing to them, and generally impart to them a recklessness of conduct, which will act, *pro tanto*, as a stimulus to an excessive and morbid population, and thus prolong the evil to future generations.

Two other reasons were stated in the Town-Council, for refusing the prayer of these petitioners for charity work. 1. That if it were given to them, it would attract hither other poor and unemployed persons not legally belonging to Edinburgh; and, 2. That the charitable inhabitants of Edinburgh are so exhausted at present, particularly by the demands on them resulting from the *presence* of fever, that it is impossible to raise another subscription for the unemployed, with a view to its *prevention*. I doubt the accuracy of the first of these statements, believing that the scrutiny of the persons admitted to the work last year, and the nature of the work given them, were a sufficient security against the evil apprehended. The second I believe to be strictly accurate. But from the stress laid on both, on this occasion, I draw the inference, that an object which has been shewn to be so important to the whole community, as the relief of destitution from want of employment, cannot be attained in Scotland, without the aid of legal regulations, which shall equitably distribute the burden imposed by it, on the different parts of the country, and on the different members of the community.

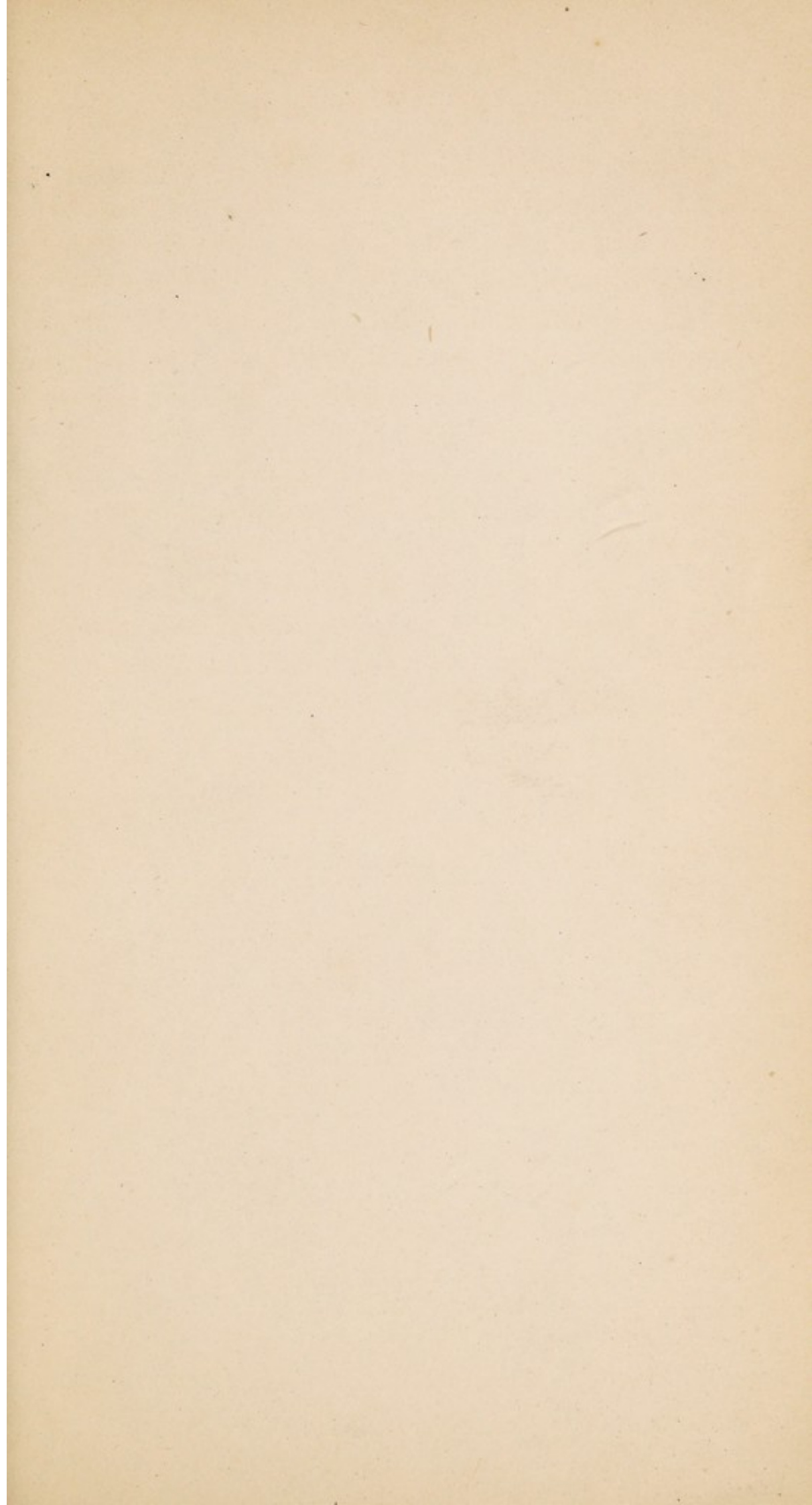
On the other hand, if, disregarding the warning which is given by such facts as have been here stated, we continue to use the Law, only as a means of forcibly repressing the outward exhibition of such destitution and suffering, without making any regular or adequate provision for their relief, we cannot expect to escape a recurrence of those national evils which these suffer-

ings bring in their train. And as we must always remember that there is a large and influential class of men,—whom the world calls wise in their generation,—to whom the word evil conveys no other meaning than one which may be expressed in the simple language of pounds, shillings, and pence, I shall conclude with a statement of matters of fact, in regard to the national effect of epidemic fever, which such men will find worthy of their attention. It is the answer given, from official documents, in a recent and very instructive paper by Mr Chadwick, to the assertion of certain economists, that “ epidemic disorders are among the  
 “ terrible correctives of the redundancy of mankind,  
 “ which lessen the number of inhabitants, without  
 “ lessening the capital which is to feed and maintain  
 “ them.” Any one who has attended to the fact, frequently pointed out, that the mortality, at least by epidemic fever, falls chiefly on the working members of society, will be prepared to perceive its truth; and the comparison of England and Ireland here made, is a farther confirmation, on a scale of such extent, and from documents of such authenticity, as to be in itself decisive of the principle on which I rest the whole argument for a legislative protection of the poor, that *under that protection population makes less rapid progress than where it is withheld.*

“ The facts, when examined, shew that epidemic disorders do *not* lessen the number of inhabitants, and  
 “ that they *do*, in all cases that have been examined,  
 “ lessen the capital that is to feed and maintain them.  
 “ *They lessen the proportion of productive hands, and increase the proportion of helpless and dependent hands.*  
 “ They place every community, new and old, in respect  
 “ to its productive economy, in the position which the

“ farmer will understand from the like effects of epi-  
 “ demics on his cattle, when, in order to raise one horse,  
 “ two colts must be reared, and the natural period of  
 “ work of the one reared is, by disease and premature  
 “ death, reduced by one-third or one-half. This is il-  
 “ lustrated by the proportions of the dependent popu-<sup>2</sup>  
 “ lation in England and Ireland. Thus, in England,  
 “ the population above 15, and under 50 years of age,  
 “ in every 10,000, is 5025 ; and these have 3600 chil-  
 “ dren below 15 years of age dependent on them. In  
 “ Ireland the population above 15 years of age is 4900,  
 “ *i. e.* there are 125 less of adults in every 10,000 ; *and*  
 “ *this smaller proportion of working adults, with eight or*  
 “ *ten years less of life or working ability, have 4050, or*  
 “ *450 more children dependent on them.*”—

\* Journal of Statistical Society of London, vol. vii. p. 19.



*[Faint handwritten signature or initials]*