

**Sanatory inquiry-towns in Scotland. Report on the sanatory condition and general economy of the town of Tranent, and the neighbouring district in Haddingtonshire / Made to the Poor Law Commissioners.**

**Contributors**

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## SANATORY INQUIRY—TOWNS IN SCOTLAND.

### REPORT

ON THE

SANATORY CONDITION AND GENERAL ECONOMY OF THE  
TOWN OF TRANENT,

AND THE NEIGHBOURING DISTRICT IN HADDINGTONSHIRE.

Made to the Poor Law Commissioners by S. Scott Alison, Esq., M.D.

3, Trelleck Terrace, Pimlico, London,  
6th August, 1840.

GENTLEMEN,

I have received your circular letter and queries requesting information as to the sanatory condition of the labouring population in the towns in Scotland, and have endeavoured in the following Report to give all the information which was required. The statistical account of Scotland has afforded some of the information contained in this Report. I trust the following details will enable those in authority to amend the condition of the labouring classes of Scotland, and more particularly of those of Tranent, in whose welfare I am more especially interested.

The parish of Tranent is situated in the county of Haddington, bounded on the north by the Frith of Forth; on the east by the parishes of Gladsmuir and Pencaitland; on the south by Ormiston and Cranstoun; and on the west by Inveresk and Prestonpans. Its area is about nine square miles. The valued rent of the parish in the county books is 10,781*l.* 9*s.* 1*d.* Scots, and the present real rent is nearly 12,000*l.*, exclusive of minerals, which yield about 4000*l.*

The town of Tranent stands upon the edge of a ravine. The ground has a rapid descent to the north. The soil in some places is loamy, in others very clayey, and is retentive. There is little or no wood in or around the town.

The population of the parish of Tranent was, in 1831, 3620, and is composed chiefly of colliers, fishermen, farm servants, and labourers.

The various forms of continued fever prevailed to a very great extent for several months in each of the seven years I was in practice in Tranent. The total population over which my charge extended I compute, on the whole, at about 4000. During the six years, from the 1st of January, 1834, to the 1st of January, 1840, 536 cases of continued fever occurred in my district, and came under my charge. The proportion of those thus affected each year is, to the entire population, as 1 to 44. In 1835, the whole number of fever cases for that year was 121, and the proportion of those so affected was to the entire population as 1 to 33.

These cases of fever occurred in all parts of the parish of Tranent, and in some parts of several adjoining parishes. No part of the country over which my practice extended could be said to be exempt during the whole of that time from a visitation of fever. Fever prevailed, on the whole, in some parts more than in others, but it prevailed in no particular parts, either of the country or of the town of Tranent constantly.

Situation of  
parish of  
Tranent.

Valued rent.

Population.

Amount of fe-  
brile diseases  
in the district  
of Tranent.

Places in  
which fever  
prevailed.



or even every winter. It was usual for it to prevail in one particular season, to a much greater extent in one particular part of the country or of the town than in others, but this was, in general, in one season or winter only. It was usual for fever, after prevailing to a very great extent in one quarter, and in one season or winter, to continue absent, or only making a very partial appearance in the same spot, for several years, and in the mean time to break out and ravage a different quarter every season or winter, to be, in its turn, wholly or nearly exempt from another visitation for several years.

Persons  
affected.

Fever prevailed every winter in Tranent, and likewise in rural districts inhabited by farm-labourers only. It prevailed among colliers, day-labourers, and destitute persons, and likewise persons enjoying ample domestic comfort; farmers, master tradesmen, and that respectable and temperate class of persons, "hinds," those farm-labourers who are paid by the half-year, are supplied with comparatively comfortable cottages, and who have, in many instances, cows maintained at the expense of the master.

Locality.

The parts of Tranent in which fever is most prevalent, and where it is in general most severe, are the "Coal Neuk," "the Abbey," and several tenements forming three sides of a square, called "Dow's Bounds." These quarters are chiefly inhabited by the most improvident and dissipated colliers; are remarkable for the absence of almost everything that can conduce to the comfort and health of the inhabitants. *The houses in these parts are so ill constructed, and so very badly repaired, that they are accessible to the wind, or are so close, on the other hand, as to prevent due ventilation.*

Small-pox, scarlet fever, and measles, prevail occasionally in and around Tranent, the same as elsewhere. Scarlet fever prevailed to a considerable extent in 1836, attacking the children of all classes in equal proportions. In that year 75 were attacked, or more than 1 in every 53 of the population.

Measles prevailed epidemically on two occasions in 1837 and 1839.

Small-pox was rife in the summer of 1834, and towards the close of the year 1837, 1 in every 105 of the population underwent this loathsome disease. It again broke out in 1838, but to a less extent than in the preceding year.

Seasons at  
which febrile  
diseases pre-  
vailed most.

The seasons at which these diseases are most prevalent vary in respect to the different diseases; continued fever, during the six years already specified, prevailed to the greatest extent during autumn, winter, and two first months of spring. In some years the greatest amount of fever took place in winter, but in other years autumn and spring were the seasons marked with most cases. In four summers scarcely a case of fever occurred, but in the other summers—in those of 1838 and 1839—fever prevailed to a considerable extent; but in the following winters and springs to a less extent than occurred in the corresponding seasons of the other four years. The following table will show the proportion in which fever occurs in the several months of the year.

Of the 536 cases of fever above referred to, 88 occurred in					January
"	"	"	73	"	February
"	"	"	44	"	March
"	"	"	26	"	April
"	"	"	20	"	May
"	"	"	27	"	June
"	"	"	14	"	July
"	"	"	11	"	August
"	"	"	23	"	September
"	"	"	100	"	October
"	"	"	59	"	November
"	"	"	54	"	December.



In investigating whether fever was connected with times of particular privation and suffering, I have met facts which will not permit me to say more than that fever bore, on the whole, some relation to the severity of the season, and to destitution,—I mean that destitution which arises from public calamities or suffering, and different from that privation which is constantly experienced, and is the result of improvidence and dissipation. It is not consistent with my experience to go further, and to state that fever broke out wherever and whenever destitution of the ordinary comforts of life was experienced, that fever became less prevalent whenever and wherever food and money were distributed amongst a fever population, or to state that fever did not make extensive strides amongst that class of people who had a reasonable share of the comforts of life, who were well fed, well clothed, and inhabited good houses.

Since I was requested by the Commissioners of Poor Laws to furnish this Report, I have made an analysis of my fever cases, which has given a result somewhat different from what I had expected, and goes to show that fever is nearly as prevalent among the comparatively comfortable farm-servants as among the destitute and improvident colliers.

In October, 1834, 45 colliers and 3 hinds took fever. Computing the collier families, amongst whom this fever prevailed, at 250, and the families of hinds, or farm-servants, at 80, the amount of disease experienced by the colliers beyond their proper proportion over the hinds is as 5 to 1. But in October, 1839, 1 collier and 13 hinds were attacked with fever; and computing the collier families at 350 (a large colliery having been added to my charge), and the hinds at 80, it will then appear that the collier population were comparatively exempt from fever during that month, whilst the hinds on the other hand suffered in an immense inverse ratio.\* Last winter, out of about 45 persons on the farm of Riggerhead, 41 or 42 were attacked with fever.

Fever prevails as much among hinds or farm-servants as among colliers.

Cholera prevailed to a very great extent in and around Tranent at the time of its general prevalence in 1831 and 1832, and proved a most dreadful calamity. Few places suffered so much as Tranent, and its visitation, with all its attendant horrors, will long be remembered in that district. I have applied to the chairman of the Board of Health, and to one of the surgeons who attended, for the number of cases and deaths. The disease prevailed most among the low and dissipated portion of the community, but it spared neither rank, age, nor sex: 283 cases occurred in the parish, and 79 proved fatal.

Cholera.

About five years ago cholera broke out in the neighbouring village of Ormiston; 18 cases occurred, and 7 died.

Recent visitation of cholera in Ormiston.

It is usual with the colliers, day-labourers, and other humble persons who live in Tranent and the neighbouring villages, to allow ashes, cinders, fulzie, and animal and vegetable materials to collect in heaps before their doors and windows. In winter, and in wet weather throughout the year, small collections of water are observed in the same situation, and this favours the process of decomposition. A cavity is generally dug in the ground in order the better to retain and define the heap, and, I presume, to retain water, in order to promote the corruption of the collected materials. This heap of putrefying materials is made the source of pecuniary returns, and is therefore carefully preserved and

Practice of allowing putrid materials to collect at the doors of the cottages.

\* The collier's family—an average family, of a man, his wife, who works, and two children, working—will make from 30s. to 40s. per week, if industriously employed throughout the week. The hinds get much less, but are far more comfortable. When fever breaks out among them, the house being close and small, the atmosphere becomes very impure indeed.



augmented. The colliers and others sell these materials for sums varying from 1s. 6d. to 4s. the cart-load. They are sold when it suits the convenience of the seller, or when he thinks he has a cart-load; and it is removed when it is convenient for the purchaser. In some instances the proprietor "cotters" this manure: this means that he gives it up to the farmer in return for the use of a small piece of ground for the growth of potatoes, &c.

Stagnant collections of water before the houses of the poor.

In some parts of Tranent, and of most villages in the vicinity, there are stagnant collections of putrid water before the houses of the poor. This is chiefly during the winter, and in wet weather during summer. But these are observed in some places throughout the whole year, unless the weather is very hot indeed. These collections of water proceed from various sources; from water and other impurities thrown out by the inhabitants; from rain which has no provision for being carried off; and also, in some places, from water trickling through the soil from the higher grounds. They often contain impurities from the houses, evolve effluvia of a very offensive and unwholesome nature, render the houses damp, and on many occasions, and in many situations, support a luxuriant vegetation on their surface.

Loch in Tranent.

There is a loch in Tranent into which, I believe, water is constantly running. It is provided with an outlet, which communicates with the water-courses of the village. I do not think it was the cause of any of the fever cases which came under my care, but it is calculated to render damp some of the houses in the neighbourhood.

Means used for cleansing the streets.

I do not think any means are used in Tranent and most of the neighbouring villages for the purpose of removing impurities from the streets, with a view to the health of the inhabitants. In Tranent, the manure and rubbish which collect in the streets are let for a sum of money to a farmer or some person who has occasion for them. I am not quite sure by whom this rubbish is let, but I think it is by the proprietor of the Tranent estate, and I am not aware that the money so obtained is applied to any public purpose. The streets are thus cleaned, not with the view of cleaning them as a public service, but as a source of gain; and it very generally happened, while I lived there, that the public carriage street or road, and the various footpaths, were kept in a most filthy, and on some occasions even abominable condition; so much so, indeed, as to offend the very senses, and to shock the delicacy of passengers. One man is employed for the collection and removal of these impurities; and when I left Tranent, the depôt for their accommodation was within the town, and in front of several houses. In some of the villages no scavenger is employed, and in all, cleanliness is little observed, saving the village of Ormiston, which is inhabited chiefly by genteel families.

Want of sufficient drainage in Tranent.

There is nothing like an efficient system of drainage in Tranent and the other villages in the district. There is a piece of drain here and there, but it is very inefficient. There is not even a sufficient water-course in the main streets of Tranent; and it frequently happens, during and after a heavy fall of rain, that the carriage-road is covered with water, and that some of the lower class of houses are inundated. In a few parts of the town the water-course is covered with stones or flags. These occasionally fall in, and openings are made. These openings are generally left unrepaired, and are not filled up. People frequently get hurt by stepping into them when it is dark. I have myself met with an accident; and serious mischief would very frequently occur did people not pay particular attention to avoid them.

Personal dangers incident to the absence of sanatory regulations.

A great gutter or water-course, about four feet deep, passes before Seton Lodge. Some years ago it was quite open. Captain Hutcheson, the proprietor of the house, covered it over at his own expense, finding that the road trustees refused to repair it. In the course of a little time



the flags broke under the weight of a cart passing over them; the gap remained open for a long time, to the great danger of the people passing during the night. Captain Hutcheson, at his own expense, repaired the drain, but it was again broken in the same manner as previously; and when I left Tranent, I am pretty sure there was a considerable gap, and the probability is that it remains to this day. This water-course, immediately above this spot, is totally uncovered for about a hundred yards. The depth varies from two to three feet, and its breadth is about three or four feet. The channel has evidently been formed by the current of water; the appearance of the bed is that of a considerable stream. During heavy rains the mass of water is so great as to be sufficient to carry away and drown children. This is in the heart of the town, and is totally undefended.

The effluvia which arise from putrid materials and stagnant ditches would, if not dissipated and diluted by the winds, constantly produce, in a very marked manner, very great mischief, probably some form of fever, and depopulate the district. But the winds are generally pretty strong, and, by affording fresh supplies of pure air every instant, and by constantly carrying off the effluvia as they arise, prevent, on ordinary occasions, great and striking calamities. The wind readily gets admittance into Tranent, by that village standing on the edge of a ravine, and on high and sloping ground. Ventilation forms a preservative of health of a very powerful character, and fortunate it is that indifference and filth cannot effect its exclusion, else I doubt not the consequences would be terrific.

Malaria.

Accidental antiseptics.

Febrile diseases, usually designated contagious, have prevailed in all classes of houses in and around Tranent; but the greatest amount of these maladies are experienced in the houses of the labouring population. Fever sometimes breaks out in the cottages of the hinds, and sometimes all the members of the family are attacked. These cottages contain in general only one apartment, used for sitting, eating, and sleeping, by both sexes. The apartment generally is provided with a good dry floor, composed of composition, one window in front, sometimes a smaller one behind, and with a large fire-place. The cottages on some farms are very comfortable, well built, and kept in good repair. They are likewise well furnished, clean, and altogether very comfortable. The cottages on the farm of Greendykes are particularly comfortable; and, did they contain two apartments instead of one, would be good patterns for cottages of a like character that may be built in future. The floors are almost universally too low; some are on a level with the ground outside, while others are considerably beneath it.

Construction of the houses of the working-classes.

The cottages on the farm of Winton Hill have been recently built, and possess two apartments, which, I believe, were obtained at the request of Mr. Howden, the tenant, who proved to Lady Ruthven, the proprietrix, that it was very desirable. Her Ladyship's example is well deserving of being followed, for landlords could not confer a more wholesome or a more acceptable kindness upon their good servants than by giving two, instead of one apartment.

The cottages inhabited by hinds in the county of Haddington are divisible into two classes, a superior and an inferior. The former are constantly increasing, while the latter are as constantly diminishing in number. The old cottages are almost all very inferior, while those which have been recently built are much better finished and more comfortable. The cottages of the hinds are almost invariably the property of the landlords, and are situated on the farms near the offices. A few hinds live in villages adjoining the farms on which they work. A cottage of the inferior class consists of one apartment about 14 feet long and 12 broad. The cottage is formed of the front and back walls, about 8 feet high, two side walls or gables rising pyramidically to the



height of about 20 feet. The roof is composed of thatch or straw, resting upon rafters or beams of wood. There is one fire-place, which is provided with a capacious chimney. The walls are in general substantial, there being plenty of stone on the spot, and lime being abundant in the county. The roof is, in many cases, very inferior. The thatch is often quite rotten, and pervious to rain and wind; and the rafters in many cottages are much decayed. These cottages are not supplied with any ceiling or partition to hide the thatch and rafters, and to protect against the wind and rain that may penetrate the thatch covering when they are given up to the winds. This great defect is remedied in part in the cottages of some of the more respectable and comfortable hinds, by their putting up a wooden ceiling, which they purchase and carry about with them from cottage to cottage, as a piece of house furniture. In other cottages another and cheaper contrivance is adopted. This is the placing of canvass in the place of wood; and when, as is often the case, this canvass covering is whitewashed, it gives the apartment the appearance, if not the reality, of comfort. In some cottages no ceiling of any kind is used. The appearance of the cottage is then very bad: there appears an immense dark and dingy space, bounded above by ugly thatch, and rafters generally covered with much dust and multitudes of spiders' webs. The floor of these cottages is generally beneath the level of the ground outside. For what purpose this arrangement is adopted I cannot understand, unless it is to counteract the inability to keep the cold out, through insufficiency of the door and roof, by rendering the apartment as much like a hole as possible, and thereby to keep the heat in. The walls in the inside are bare, or only whitewashed. There is one window: it is generally about two feet square, and is not provided with hinges, or other appliances, to admit of being opened. The expense, I suppose, is the only reason. The door is seldom well fitted, is frequently decayed, and admits strong currents of air. The superior cottages are, with a very few exceptions, about the same size as those described, have only one apartment, and have the floors below the level of the ground outside; but the walls are plastered and comfortable ceilings are supplied, the doors are well fitted, the windows are constructed so as to open, and the roofs are covered with slates or tiles. The houses of the colliers and day-labourers are mostly the same as the inferior kind of cottages inhabited by the hinds.

The houses inhabited by colliers, day-labourers, and other operatives, are in general very inferior in accommodation to the cottages of the hinds. A few of the colliers' houses are good, but the great mass of them is very bad. The roof is frequently insufficient, admitting wind and rain in wet and windy weather; is sometimes composed of thatch, seldom or never renewed, and resting on rafters. In some houses there is nothing between this roof of thatch and the apartment, and the thatch and rafters are covered with the accumulated dust and cobwebs of many years. In some the rafters and thatch are quite rotten and decayed. I was in one house, shortly before I left, where the rafters were infested with bugs, which occasionally dropped down. In the worst kind of these houses the apartment is ill supplied with light, the windows being only partially supplied with glass, and its place supplied with paper, bundles of rags, and old hats. In some of these houses the windows will not open; and, were the air excluded from admission by the roof and the ill-hung door, there would be little or no ventilation.

In the better houses of the colliers the furniture is ample, and in some is kept with great neatness and cleanliness; but in others, even where the furniture is good, there prevails a shocking amount of uncleanness.

In many of the houses of the colliers there is great want of necessary furniture, and in a good many I have noticed that the chief articles were one or two chairs, a stool, and a wretched bed and bedstead, and



these in the most filthy condition. I have seen in some of their houses straw strewed in the corner of the apartment, serving as a bed for the family. But it is not the mere want of furniture that renders these abodes so wretched as they are: there is a fearful amount of filth, dust, &c., accumulated on the walls, floors, and furniture, which, with dirty persons, unwashed rags of clothes, the hot putrid atmosphere usually present, go far to add to the wretchedness of the scene, and to complete the measure of squalid and disgusting misery.

Colliers' houses.

In some of these houses the females are so lazy, and so filthy in their habits, that they carry their ashes and cinders no farther than to a corner of the apartment, where they accumulate and have their bulk swollen by the addition of various impurities. This wretchedness does not arise from the want of money. These colliers are in the receipt of 20s. and 30s. per week, and I have been informed by their employers that they might earn much more, would they turn out to work on Monday, instead of drinking, as they commonly do on that day, and even on others.

In case of sickness or helplessness the condition of this class of houses is most deplorably filthy. In the houses of the dissipated colliers the wooden floors are so filthy as to convince the spectator that they are never washed. The floors of cottages inhabited by colliers are composed, I believe, generally of common earth. These floors are very filthy, and so uneven as to make a stranger almost fall. It is not uncommon to see holes or depressions in these floors that would contain a peck or two of sand. These holes have been formed in the course of time by various causes, by the wear and tear produced by heavy shoes, the breaking up of coals by the poker, and by the presence of water spilt upon the floor. No attempt in many cases is made to fill up these cavities, although that might be done at very little expense and trouble. The bedstead is generally covered with dust, and with innumerable fly-marks. In summer, bugs in multitudes may be seen, more especially at night when the light of a candle is suddenly thrown upon the bedstead. The odour in these apartments is most offensive and sickening, from the long-continued presence of human impurities. Persons not familiar with such situations will be unable to form the most remote idea of the disgusting nature of this atmosphere; but delicacy forbids a more detailed account.

The internal economy of the houses of the day-labourers is on the whole considerably better than that of the colliers, but is still very inferior to that of the hinds. Many of the day-labourers who are well doing and sober are particularly cleanly in respect to their houses. The houses of these men are not much inferior to those of the best hinds. They are clean, well furnished, and the furniture is arranged in good order. On the other hand, the dissipated and irregular day-labourers, who are very numerous, and form a large proportion of that class, are insensible to the comforts of cleanliness, neatness, and order. The apartments of these people are as filthy, ill-furnished, and squalid as those of the dissipated colliers. I have seen the apartments of these people in the most revolting condition of filth, darkness, and abject misery—containing only a box or case bed, and one or two stools, with a few other trifling articles, such as a jar for containing water, and a piece of poker. With very few exceptions, the condition of the interior of the houses of the hind population is excellent, most pleasing to the eye, and comfortable. These respectable people, in spite of the defective construction of their cottages, manage to throw an air of comfort, plenty, neatness, and order around their homes. I have often been delighted to observe these characteristics, and not less so to mark the co-existence of pure, moral, and religious principles in the inmates, the presence of practical religion and practical morals. When the floor wears away, it is repaired; when the walls lose their whiteness, they are white-

Day-labourers' houses.

Hinds' houses.



washed; and every few days the whole wooden furniture in the house is subjected to thorough cleansing with sand and warm water. The various articles of furniture, and the different household utensils, are kept in places allotted to them; and the earthenware and china, well cleaned, are neatly arranged, and made to serve as ornaments to the apartment. The metal spoons, candlesticks, and pitchers for containing milk and water, are well burnished. The milk taken from the cow may be seen set apart in vessels kept in the nicest order; and beside them lie the churning-barrel and strainer. A fire sheds its cheerful influence over the scene; the kettle never wants hot water; and the honest, frugal housewife is ever discharging some household duty in a spirit of placid contentment, attending to her partner when present, or preparing his meals against his return from the fields.

External  
economy.

The external economy of the houses of the hinds is on the whole very good. The ground in front of the cottages is kept clean and free of impurities. The little garden, which is almost invariably connected with the cottage, is kept in good order, and is in general well cultivated.

The external economy of the houses of the day-labouring population is on the whole much inferior.

External  
economy of  
the houses  
of colliers.

The external economy of the houses of the colliers is on the whole most intolerably filthy and unwholesome. Heaps of putrid materials are collected in front of the cottages and houses; and the gardens which are attached to many of the cottages inhabited by these people are overrun with weeds, and are altogether very much neglected.

No drains in  
houses of the  
labouring  
classes.

The houses of the labouring population are not usually supplied with drains. Where they inhabit houses of a superior order but in a dilapidated condition, which they sometimes do, they may have the advantage of drains.

The land around the dwellings of the labouring population is in general well drained, being in general let to farmers of wealth and intelligence.

Supply of  
water in  
Tranent.

I do not believe there is a house in Tranent into which water is conducted by pipes. There existed great difficulty on many occasions in getting water at all. During the seven years I lived there, the village was, on the whole, extremely ill supplied with water: it was usual for it to be occasionally absent from Tranent altogether. Last summer the supply of water was stopped for several months. The inhabitants suffered the greatest inconvenience from this cause: they could not get sufficient water to maintain cleanliness of person and clothes. It was even difficult for labouring people to get enough to cook their victuals; and I know that many of the poor were, in consequence, reduced to the practice of using impure and unwholesome water. On these occasions water was carried from a considerable distance from the village. Some went the distance of a mile: some used barrels drawn on carriages: some employed children to bring it in small vessels; and, I doubt not, many went without it, when it was highly necessary, from inability or infirmity to go themselves, and from want of funds to employ another for the purpose.

Since the above was written I have learned from a lady, previously resident in Tranent, that, when cholera prevailed in that district, some of the patients suffered very much indeed from want of water, and that so great was the privation, that on that calamitous occasion people went into the ploughed fields and gathered the rain-water which collected in depressions in the ground, and actually in the prints made by horses' feet.

Tranent was formerly well supplied with water of excellent quality by a spring above the village which flows through a sand-bed. The water flows into Tranent at its head, or highest quarter, and is received into about ten wells distributed throughout the village.



The people supply themselves at these wells when they contain water. When the supply is small, the water pours in a very small stream only; and it happens, in consequence, that on these occasions of scarcity great crowds of women and children assemble at these places, waiting their "turn," as it is termed. I have seen women fighting for water. The wells are sometimes frequented throughout the whole night. It was generally believed by the population that this stoppage of the water was owing to its stream being diverted into a coal-pit which was sunk in the sand-bed above Tranent. That pit has been lined with sheets of iron, and the water has lately returned to Tranent in great abundance.

I do not know whether the houses of the hinds are in general supplied with receptacles for filth, &c., but those of the colliers and day-labourers I know to be generally without them. The precincts of the cottages of the hinds are in general clean, but there are many exceptions.

Houses not supplied with receptacles for refuse, &c.

It is not common for two or more families to inhabit one apartment in this district. The families of most of the labouring people are crowded, in consequence of the smallness of the apartment. Where there are many children, it is common for ten or twelve people to inhabit one apartment, and for four children to lie in one bed, both in health and sickness. When a collier has few or no children, he sometimes takes single men and women as lodgers.

There are many regular lodging-houses in Tranent, perhaps from 15 to 20, in which paupers, vagrants, and a few labouring people live. The people reside there for a considerable time. I have known colliers in employment to live in these houses. They are crowded at all hours, but more especially at night. Men, women, and children live and sleep in the same apartment. In one of them I have seen an apartment, about 18 feet long and 10 feet wide, which contained four beds made up constantly, and when the house was "throng," another was added to the number. The lodging-houses are the head-quarters for beggars. The people go about during the day pursuing their avocations, and return home at night to regale themselves with their earnings. These people lie in bed till very late, and, if visited in the forenoon, may be seen sitting beside the fire, roasting herrings or frying meat. They live well amidst their wretchedness.

Lodging-houses.

A great deal of disease prevails in these houses, especially amongst the children; but I do not think fever has prevailed there more than in the habitations of the colliers.

The most worthless class of colliers and day-labourers are uncleanly in their habits. The persons of the colliers themselves are usually well cleaned with soap and warm water, once in the day, after returning from the pit; they would otherwise be most uncomfortable: but the persons of the children, who do not work in the collieries, standing in less urgent occasion of ablution, are allowed in many instances to remain in a state of great filthiness, their faces, hands, and feet appearing seldom or never to be washed, and their hair being allowed to remain in the greatest disorder, and greatly infested with vermin.

Cleanly custom amongst the better class of colliers.

The collier, compelled by the uncleanness of his employment to perform daily ablution, is comparatively seldom troubled with chronic diseases of the skin, while his children, on the other hand, urged by no such necessity, and neglected by the mother, who is perhaps employed at the pit, is subject to a very great number of diseases of the skin, and, with comparatively few exceptions, to some of the varied forms of the disease called scall-head.

I do not think pigs are kept in the interior of the houses in or around Tranent. Pig-houses in many instances are erected near the doors and windows of the poor; but these are scarcely nuisances, the odours being

Pigs in houses.



comparatively sweet and pleasant to those emanating from the heaps of manure and ashes formerly referred to, and even from the people and houses themselves.

Fowls, dogs, and horses, live in the apartments of the working-classes.

In many houses in and around Tranent fowls roost on the rafters and on the tops of the bedsteads. The effluvia in these houses are offensive, and must prove very unwholesome. It is scarcely necessary to say that these houses are very filthy. They swarm likewise with fleas. Dogs live in the interior of the lowest houses, and must, of course, be opposed to cleanliness.

I have seen horses in two houses in Tranent inhabiting the same apartment with numerous families. One was in Dow's Bounds. Several of the family were ill of typhus fever, and I remember the horse stood at the back of the bed. In this case the stench was dreadful. In addition to the horse there were fowls, and I think the family was not under ten souls. The father died of typhus on this occasion.

I visited a house in Tranent in the beginning of this year. The only furniture I observed was an old bedstead with some bedding. I think straw was spread in a corner for a bed, and on one side of the fire-place: on the other side of the fire-place there stood a large horse, sharing the apartment, with its back at no great distance from the roof.

Feeling as to hospitals.

With most poor people there exists an unwillingness to go to hospital; but this has been overcome in most instances where there has appeared urgent occasion for removal. I have seldom failed in effecting removal where I have been convinced of its necessity. The disinclination arises from the distance, the nearest hospital being ten miles distant, the expense and fatigue of travelling, and a feeling of distrust in respect to good usage from the nurses, who bear a very bad character among the poor classes. I have no doubt whatever that gentle persuasion, and the assurance of good treatment in hospital, would effect the removal of 18 in 20 of the fever cases, were an hospital on the spot, with a medical man attached possessing moderate skill, having kindly manners, and bearing a character for integrity.

Localities inhabited by hinds.

The hinds almost invariably live in cottages upon the farms to which they are attached. The cottages are generally placed together; and on the farms in East Lothian, which are in general very extensive, the number of the hinds attached to each varies from six to eight.

Wages.

The hinds are paid in kind, the value of which, I believe, ranges about 25*l.* per annum. The cottage is generally supplied by the farmer to the hind as an equivalent for the latter giving, during harvest, the labour of an individual, generally his wife or grown-up daughter, for a certain number of days, I believe about twenty.

Where cows are kept at the expense of the farmer, the hinds manage to make a little money by the sale of milk and butter.

Domestic condition.

The domestic condition of the hinds is most excellent, and forms a scene quite refreshing to the eye of the casual visitor. The furniture is generally good, sometimes even fine, and almost always remarkably clean. The food of the hind is comfortably dressed, and put down with great attention to cleanliness. Tea is frequently given to their visitors; and on these occasions more neatness and cleanliness is not to be observed in the houses of persons in much higher ranks. I have seen silver tea-spoons in the houses of these people.

I have reason to believe that many of the hinds accumulate a little money for the purpose of meeting the contingencies of old age, and to assist their children on leaving their parents' home. I know that several are possessed of considerable sums of money, which, I am informed, will go as dowries to their daughters when married, and to assist their sons when they get hindings. I know of one woman who received 30*l.* from her father, I believe a hind, as a "providing," at her marriage.



These people are almost invariably comfortably dressed; wear strong shoes, thick worsted stockings, and flannel underclothes. On the Sabbath the dress of the hind family is in good order, clean, and neat. The hind on that day wears a woollen coat, generally black; the wife a cotton gown, always in excellent order. The children are similarly dressed, and look highly respectable.

Dress.

The moral condition of the hinds is such as, I am assured, is equal, if not superior, to that of any class of labouring people in the world. They are religious, attend church regularly, take a great interest in the religious concerns of the district, and regulate their lives, their conversation, and their intercourse and dealings with their fellow men, by the rules of Christianity, as much as any class of people with whom I have ever come in contact.

General character of hinds.

The hinds are in general well informed; have had good plain education, such as reading, writing, and arithmetic. They are civil and respectful in their manners: they are candid, open, and free of guile or cunning, so common among colliers.

They are remarkable for honesty, and are often trusted with considerable sums of money. Some of the hinds are intrusted by their masters to take the grain to market, to sell it, and to receive the money.

They are good-tempered, forbearing, and not easily excited.

Sobriety forms one of the characteristics of the hind. Many of these people seldom taste whiskey; but this arises not from any artificial tie, such as the abstinence-pledge, which they in general despise, but from a horror they possess at the practice of "drinking," and from a lively perception of the mischief it entails upon some of the labouring population, such as the colliers.

They regulate their affairs with great propriety. Frugality and husbanding of their means are very conspicuous, and is attended with marked advantages. They are careful of their means; turn them to the best advantage; they purchase their clothes and food with ready money, and thereby secure advantages seldom enjoyed by other labouring persons.

At each term the hinds' wives may be seen in numbers going into Tranent and other towns, neatly dressed, with baskets on their arms, to make their little purchases. I have been told by an extensive merchant that the hinds are his best paying customers. In my own dealings with those people I have found them particularly honest and honourable. I have attended the wives of many hinds at their accouchements, and I have seldom left the cottage without a fee being put into my hand. This forms a marked contrast with the conduct of the colliers on those occasions: in general nothing whatever is to be got from the colliers. It would be little less absurd to look for gold from the clouds as to expect a fee from the generality of colliers on these occasions. They have seldom even the necessaries so essential to the welfare of the patient. There is, indeed, little provided more than cheese and whiskey.

Destitution is little observed among hind families. There are comparatively few cases of destitution among even the old members of hind families. There are, however, a good many cases in which very considerable privation is felt, and which is not at all, or very little relieved. The reasons which I am disposed to assign for the comparative infrequency of destitution among them are these: by husbanding their means, by sobriety, economy, and industry, they lay past for old age small sums of money: they are sober: they belong to benefit societies, from which they derive assistance when in sickness; they likewise belong to a society which gives them a considerable sum of money in the event of their cows dying. They are good and valued servants, and are generally in possession of the good will and affection of their masters. When they become too old for the "hinding," they are employed at some

Comparative infrequency of destitution of hinds.



easy work on the farm, at which they in general continue till within a short period of their death. When old age overtakes them, it frequently happens that the son succeeds the father in the "hinding," and the son and parents live together, the son on these occasions supporting the parents, either wholly or in part. The son feels this to be a duty; and when the parents die, the son gets the furniture of the deceased, where there has been no parish relief, which is generally the case.

The parents sometimes go and live with their grown-up children, who in general make a point of maintaining them, and attending to their comforts.

The cases of destitution will be mentioned under the general head of destitution.

Condition of  
day-labour-  
ers.

The day-labouring population is less comfortable. These labourers form a considerable proportion of the population. They in general inhabit houses or apartments in villages, are less orderly, less temperate, and less provident than the hinds. They are paid in general by the week. Among them there exists a good deal of disease, and even abject poverty, produced in a great measure by want of industry, and also by dissipation. Many farmers find difficulty in getting a sufficient number of labourers, and I have seldom heard of there being want of employment for these people.

Fisher popu-  
lation.

Along the coast of East Lothian there exists a considerable population engaged in fishing and in seafaring employments. These people I understand are very improvident, and are considerably addicted to dissipation. They are generally in want: live in houses, some of which are kept clean, and some in a state of gross filth. Their earnings, which are occasionally very considerable, are not laid aside, as they might be, for comparative want at other seasons, but are generally spent in the purchase of whiskey. These improvident habits lead to great destitution, and likewise to disease. But there is a source of destitution among these people which is almost wholly independent of their own misconduct. This is, the casualties which are ever and anon occurring at sea among the heads of their families. Boats are constantly being upset, and the fishermen being drowned. It is common for a whole boat's crew to be lost at one time, and there are usually four men in each boat. There are a great many widows residing in Cockenzie, a fishing village in the parish of Tranent, who have lost their husbands by casualties at sea. When the husbands are lost, of course the widows and children sink into still deeper privation than before. I understand it is usual to place these widows on the poor-list of the parish, but of this I am not certain. I rather think the chief assistance which they receive is a small sum of money, which is generally subscribed by the benevolent people in the neighbourhood after the casualty. I have been told by their clergyman, that the fishermen are very charitable on these and like occasions.

The town of Dunbar is chiefly inhabited by a seafaring population, and I have all along understood that the destitution there was very excessive.

Localities in-  
habited by  
colliers.

The collier population of Haddingtonshire is confined to that quarter of the county which lies to the west of the village of Gladsmuir. It forms the larger portion of the inhabitants of Tranent and Penston, a very considerable portion of the population of Prestonpans and Elphinstone, and forms almost entirely the population of several villages, viz., Newtown, Makemerry, Huntlaw, Cross Houses, and Cuttle.

Amount of  
collier popu-  
lation.  
Migratory  
habits of  
colliers.

The number of colliers in Haddingtonshire, including wives and children, I should think was about 3000.

The collier population is very migratory. In most collieries the colliers are constantly going and coming. It is common for them to remain only a few weeks at the same colliery. Some move from colliery



to colliery, and yet do not leave the district; some leave the district, and, after remaining away a considerable time, return again to their old situation and to their old acquaintances. I have frequently visited colliers one day and found matters in their usual state, and on returning next day I have found the house deserted and completely empty. This has happened very commonly even when there has been sickness, and that of a serious nature. Sometimes it was known where they had gone to, sometimes I could obtain no information on the subject. I have been often surprised at the migratory habits of these people, for their changes seldom or never afforded any benefit. I have often remarked to them that it appeared to me it would be better for them to remain where they were than to put themselves to so much trouble and inconvenience for no useful purpose. I attribute this constant changing to several causes. The colliers acquire a roving disposition from the example of their parents and neighbours. They get irritated with annoyances connected with their situation, and think, by changing, to make themselves more comfortable. These people, I believe, are frequently taken from their employers by rival coalmasters, either in the neighbourhood or at a distance. On these occasions the person hiring them pays all moving expenses and likewise advances money. This unsteady, unsettled life is very much calculated to prove injurious; each change is the occasion of excessive dissipation and often of getting into debt to the coalmaster, who keeps him (the collier) by this means in his employment as long as it is desirable. It is also very hurtful to the character of the rising colliers, interfering so effectually as it does with the little and irregular education which they are wont to receive.

The collier makes very high wages. He is paid according to the amount of his work: a single man, I believe, may make about 30s. per week if he is industrious and works six days in the week. A single man, if he has no children, generally employs a boy or a woman to assist him. For this assistance he pays a few shillings per week, but by this arrangement he is enabled to earn much higher wages than if he worked alone. A man, his wife, and perhaps two children, may earn 40s. per week if industriously employed during that time. Wages.

Many colliers do not make so much money, because they are dissipated, and work only three or four days in the week. Some do not work above two days in the week on some occasions.

Several colliers accumulate considerable sums of money. I have known several to be possessed of some hundred pounds and to be proprietors of houses. Several had votes in the election of representatives in parliament. An old collier, commonly called "Black Tom," died a few years ago; he left several hundred pounds in cash, and about four or five houses. He had a vote in the election of representatives in Parliament. Savings.

There was lately in Tranent a young man, a collier, who made enough of money to begin business as a grocer and publican. He worked occasionally at the colliery, and his wife kept the shop in his absence. I understand this man was comparatively rich.

In respect to the great majority of colliers there is no provision for the future. Some become members of benefit societies, which ensures them a few shillings per week in sickness, and a few are frugal and save considerable sums of money, which is either put into the Bank and lent out at interest, or invested in the purchase of houses. There are several who have three or four houses. One man told me that he had 400*l.*; and on my expressing my astonishment at it, he told me that every collier could save the same if he were only industrious and frugal. Provision for the future.

I believe there are several colliers who have money deposited in the banks and elsewhere, unknown to their friends or the neighbours. A



case of this kind was accidentally discovered. About a year and a half ago, when Scotland was threatened with chartism, many weak-minded and ill-informed people believed the country was on the point of revolution, and that the banks were unsafe; one of the colliers, partaking in this fear, went to Edinburgh, withdrew a considerable sum of money from one of the banks, and had his case made public by his being robbed of it by a loose woman in whose company he had been.

Debt.

A very large proportion of the colliers is generally involved in debt, sometimes to their employers, and almost always to their tradespeople: I may with safety say that eight-tenths of the colliers are never out of debt. The money which they receive on Saturday night is not spent in the purchase of articles to be consumed next week, it in general goes to liquidate part of the debt which has been owing perhaps for months and years. I understand the tradespeople to whom this debt is due charge high, in order to meet the loss of interest on the money and to compensate for the many bad debts which they incur by this system of giving credit even to the dissipated and unprincipled. When the debts of the collier become very great, and when his creditors become clamorous, he avails himself of his migratory capabilities, and goes off to some distant part of the country with his family and furniture, bidding defiance to his creditors, and to commence the same iniquitous system in a new field. I have known people to be encouraged to get into debt by tradespeople and others. A publican gave almost unlimited credit to two women actually in a state of derangement from drinking whiskey. A bond was procured on a house belonging to these persons. These women continued to run to the shop of the publican, devouring whiskey voraciously. It was suspected that the publican wished to get the house altogether, but this was prevented by the interference of a respectable party, who assured me that the case was one that would not bear investigation. A man died not long ago who had amassed a large fortune, perhaps 20,000*l.* or 30,000*l.* He rented a colliery, kept a store at which he sold provisions and whiskey to his colliers, and used a coin peculiar to himself in his dealings in the shop with his men.

Domestic condition.

The domestic condition of the great mass of the colliers may be understood from what preceded, and from what will be said under the head of destitution in Tranent. This account of their destitution and wretchedness will apply to the greater part of the colliers, perhaps to three-fourths. On the other hand, I am glad to have it in my power to say, that the internal economy of the houses of several colliers is very good; that I have observed great order, cleanliness, and the appearance of plenty and comfort in the houses of some in receipt of the ordinary wages only.

I have had occasion to observe that medical men, judging from internal appearances of the dwellings of the labouring classes, are liable to be led into erroneous inferences as to the extent of destitution.—The appearance of the place or of the person is no test of the want of means or of the highness or lowness of wages. Filth is more frequently evidence of depravity than of destitution; indeed, in places where the wages or means are really scanty, there is very frequently considerable cleanliness. If any person went into the house of a collier, he might exclaim, What extreme wretchedness and destitution of these poor people! when in fact, on the Saturday they had received 30*s.*, which before the Tuesday had all been squandered. I think medical men, who are not intimately acquainted with the character of people, are often drawn into mistakes.

Dress.

The dress of the great mass of the colliers, of perhaps three-fourths, and more especially of the women and children, is extremely dirty, ragged, and highly disreputable, like that of beggars. Many of the men, on the other hand, dress tolerably well, when off work, and there are several, indeed a good many, who dress like respectable master



tradesmen on Sundays, with clean linen and woollen clothes in excellent order. All these men are in the receipt of the same wages.

The children of the dissipated are very ill clothed ; many have scarcely enough to cover them : girls go about apparently with only a frock, often so torn as to disclose their naked limbs, and without shoes or stockings,

The moral condition of the collier population is on the whole very inferior. A very large proportion of the colliers is remarkable for ignorance, prejudice, and apathy in respect to almost everything, except whiskey, cock-fighting, and the like. The minds of many colliers can scarcely be said to be exercised : they seldom reason more than some of the lower animals ; they judge very precipitately and very erroneously, and they act upon the first impulse however violent.

Moral condition of colliers.

Many may be truly said to vegetate, or, like aquatic plants, chiefly to imbibe, for they are excited by nothing ; they are alive to no considerations such as engage and sustain the attention of other men. They work only because they find it necessary. The chief occasions on which they are roused from their sottish and apathetic condition are riotous dances, lasting, perhaps, with little intermission, for several days, raffles, shooting-matches, cock-fights, and scuffles amongst themselves.

Political, social, religious, and all great and national questions are totally uninteresting to the majority of these degraded men. I have seldom seen them alive to any general question.

But there are, I am glad to say, many colliers who form striking and interesting contrasts to the above picture. Those belonging to Pencaitland Colliery hold a character for sobriety, industry, and superior tone of mind which forms a marked contrast with the condition of the men in all the other collieries of which I had the medical charge. In that colliery there were men possessing sound hearts and heads. Some of them had more general intelligence than I have observed in persons holding much higher stations ; their conduct and conversation was much qualified by religious sentiments, and I believe that they were truly good men. This marked superiority of these men is to be attributed, I think, in a great degree, to a very wise and praiseworthy regulation, made by the lessee, Mr. Andrew Cuthbertson, for the prohibition of the sale of whiskey in the village, which I believe is strictly adhered to. There are likewise good and pious men in the other collieries, but they are unfortunately not numerous.

The chief occasion on which I observed the colliers to be excited by public events was during the attempt made about a year and a half ago to agitate the country and to obtain the Charter. The feelings of several of the men were then highly excited with discontent and a hatred of those placed above them ; and I am prepared to say, that if the banner of Chartism had been raised in Scotland, it would have gained no inconsiderable proportion of its followers from the coal districts. I conversed with several of the Chartist colliers on that occasion. They told me that they paid contributions regularly, and I was shocked to find the vindictive, and I might almost add, the sanguinary, feelings with which they burned to commence the contest and to spoliage the more affluent.

I remember one man who spoke of violence being resorted to. I reminded him that there were other people besides the Chartists in the country, and that there was a sufficient army to protect the public. He replied that in a few weeks we would see that the Chartists would be more than able to meet all opposition. A considerable proportion of the colliers belonging to one of the collieries was attached to that class, and I have reason to believe these men formed part of a widely spread organized body. The colliery to which these men belonged was one of the most liberal in its payments.



Attendance  
at church.

Many collier-people never enter a place of worship, and many seldom hear the voice of a clergyman.

Crime.

A great many assaults take place among them, but I have seldom heard of premeditated violence. However, I fear infanticide is common. I have examined the bodies of several infants supposed to have been murdered. Desertion of wives by their husbands is common.

Vice.

Drunkenness is the prevailing vice. It reduces persons in the receipt of high wages to the abject and squalid condition of the most destitute paupers. It is generally supposed that many unmarried females are particularly loose. I was once asked by a man for medicine to produce abortion, and I suspect it was intended for a woman who was shortly afterwards tried for concealment of pregnancy, and was found guilty. Her child was found dead. It was suspected that she had been intimate with her sister's husband.

Marriage.

Colliers in general marry when very young. Many do not provide more funds for this occasion than will cover the fees and afford some whiskey. Their houses in general are furnished on credit. They generally marry among themselves; young women belonging to the other classes seldom intermarry with the colliers. I have known unmarried people live together and have large families.

Industry of  
colliers.

The colliers are in general employed only four or five days in the week. On these days they work hard sometimes for twelve and eighteen hours together. Monday and Tuesday are generally idle days, and are consumed in drinking, lounging, and sleeping. This idleness at the beginning of the week is not in consequence of want of demand for their labour; on the contrary, it is the wish of their employers that they should work regularly. It is the source of inconvenience and also of loss to the coalmasters; and it sometimes happens that they are dismissed for non-appearance at the collieries. When I have heard a collier say on a Monday that he had been working on that day, I used to be surprised, and I concluded he was accumulating money.

Many of the colliers are extremely lazy. Some will not work above a day or two in the week. This happens chiefly when they enjoy pensions, when they draw their rents, and when they have a considerable sum of money coming in by the labour of their wives and children. I have reason to believe many feigned sickness in order to obtain the allowance of a few shillings which is obtained from benefit societies, and to indulge in idleness. I have been asked for certificates of sickness where I could not grant them. I have known these people to spend days in search of charity less in amount than they could have made by labour in one day.

Cruel usage  
to wives and  
children.

Some colliers are very cruel to their children. Chastisement is given in the most intemperate manner. Young children who refuse to work in the collieries are severely punished. I once saw a girl about ten years of age in a state of dreadful terror lest her mother would get hold of her. She had gone to school instead of the colliery. The mother was at the school-door waiting for her child. I was told by the child that her mother beat her, and would not let her go into the house when she went home from the school, and that she had spent several nights in an unfinished house consisting of the stone walls only. This was not denied by the mother, who pleaded in defence that the girl went to the school instead of the colliery.

Wives are sadly maltreated. Women even in advanced pregnancy are kicked and abused. I remember I attended a pregnant woman who was kicked in the abdomen by her husband. There was reason to fear premature labour would follow.

I attended a young married collier under disease produced by debauchery. He was not very able to work, but I have seen old men much worse than he was, working laboriously. I do not think he worked at all for a year or two. The wife of this person was a remarkably strong,



active, and cleanly person. She worked for her husband, who remained at home or sauntered about. She was, I am sure, more industrious than any man in the colliery, and I have heard the superintendent say she was a most valuable servant. I have known this noble woman, after a day's hard toil, to be grossly assaulted by her emaciated but savage husband, whom she was the sole means of maintaining.

A woman in a state of advanced pregnancy received a blow from something falling down the pit. The body struck her on the crown of the head. A compound fracture was produced, and a portion of the skull was so considerably depressed that I could put my thumb into the wound. The skull was trepanned; labour came on in a few days, and so apprehensive was I for her safety, that I did not leave her for a moment till she was delivered. She ultimately recovered; but this woman went down to the colliery again, and I heard afterwards that she was frequently maltreated by her dissipated and worthless husband. She holds her life by a peculiarly precarious tenure, and I strongly enforced this upon the husband.

The population above described is chiefly Scotch. The hinds are exclusively Scotch, and in general belong to the lowlands. Population.

The day-labourers are also chiefly Scotch, but there are likewise a good many Irish, and perhaps a few English; their condition, however, is much alike.

The colliers are chiefly Scotch, but there are likewise many north-country Englishmen. The Englishmen connected with the collieries form a marked contrast to the Scotch. They are much cleaner in their persons, more sober, more intelligent, more religious, more polite, and better informed. The houses of the Englishmen are remarkably clean and orderly.

With the mass, neither the pressing examples of wretched destitution in old age, or decrepitude from accident, or helplessness during sickness, or miserable mendicancy, in widowhood, or the frightful condition of destitute orphanage, has any effect in producing frugality or forethought. I have attended men dying under severe accidents, and on those occasions I have seen their wives in a state of intoxication. When the man has died it has been the occasion of increased intoxication, with the certainty of impending destitution and severe suffering. I have had cases where the wife has injured the wounded husband by falling over him on the bed when she has come in, in a state of intoxication. Where there has been forethought, it is my conviction that it has not been from any such warning, which, though abundant, is evidently lost upon the great mass, but it has been from early good training or education, such as is derived from respectable parentage. Where there has been respectability of conduct there has generally been also respectable parentage. I have observed instances of very respectable men having superior minds, who have arisen out of bad families, but the contrary is the general rule. Neither religious instruction, as at present generally dispensed, nor school education alone will effectually remove, though they may diminish improvidence: it is early training and religious instruction carried home to the hearts of the population, that will eradicate vice. There is much book education amongst the children. Some of the collier children get a little instruction, but it is almost of no avail. All the instruction they get is neutralised when they get home; they see their parents tittle, and they, in a very short time, learn to tittle too; they see their parents quarrel furiously; they perhaps see their father beating the mother, and she, as is commonly the case, throwing things at him in return: they see all this, and in their turn the brothers and sisters practise it.

Destitution  
does not op-  
erate as a  
warning.

With respect to Tranent, and indeed all the collier villages, saving Huntlaw and some parts of Prestonpans, I can speak with precision, having for about seven years been familiar with the condition of almost every family in these villages.



Anterior to the period of my settling in Tranent, I had, for some years, been in the habit of attending among the sick of the poor population of Edinburgh, and had opportunities of observing the destitution of that town. In giving an account, therefore, of Tranent, I have the advantage of having seen destitution elsewhere.

Destitution  
in Tranent.

A very great amount of destitution of the proper means of subsistence exists in and around Tranent, amongst the collier and day-labouring population. I am prepared to say that I have seen destitution in as aggravated forms as I ever witnessed in the metropolis; and I am pretty sure that the proportion of those families suffering greater or less destitution, to those enjoying comfort and plenty, in Tranent, is ten times greater than the proportion of the poor to the rich in Edinburgh. A glance at the town bespeaks the misery of the majority of the inhabitants. The eye of the passing traveller is arrested by the squalid wretchedness of the place, and even daily observation does not altogether remove the painful impressions. The eye even of those who live in the village, and are familiarised with the aspect of filthy streets, impure precincts, drunken men, squalid women and children, seeks with delight the open fields, still untainted by human wretchedness.

Those who experience the privations of destitution form a varied body. Some are reduced by dissipation, some by laziness, some by old age, some by accidents, which have maimed them; some by disease incident to their employment; some by the loss of natural protectors, as the widow and the orphan; and others by the desertion of husbands and of fathers.

There are many old men and women, the latter being far more numerous, who are unable to work at remunerating employment, whose only regular means of subsistence are derived from the parish. This relief is usually a shilling per week; sometimes it is increased to one shilling and sixpence, and sometimes to two shillings. This is the only legal provision which is made for these people, and they supply themselves with a home and with food the best way they can. Such persons would inevitably die of starvation, or perish through exposure, did not benevolent persons, to whom their case is known, and neighbours, generally working people, assist with money and food. The neighbours generally send a little food, and with other casual aid of this nature, the struggle against premature death is still maintained.

The children of day-labourers are much wanting in a sense of filial duty. They are in general unwilling to support their parents; often leave them, go to a distance, and are not again heard of.

It is quite common for collier lads who are the sole support of helpless parents to leave them without any intimation. I remember an old, infirm, and dying collier, who was so left. His son went off during the night. The poor man was ordered out of the house, but death, within a few days, arrived to the relief of the sufferer, before the order could be enforced.

The old men who are so situated are chiefly decayed day-labourers and journeymen tradesmen, few colliers living to old age; and I am not aware that any frugal habits on their part could possibly enable them to avoid comparative want in their old age.

The old women are the widows of colliers, day-labourers, and journeymen, and even master tradespeople, unmarried women, who have been unable to save any part of their earnings, and, by reason of old age, unable now to provide for their subsistence.

There are many able-bodied women in Tranent who have lost their husbands by disease and violence. These are expected to support themselves. If they have children at tender years a small allowance is made for them, and they remain with their mother. The allowance is perhaps about one shilling and sixpence for each child. The mothers of these children in general go to work in the collieries, in order to earn money to maintain themselves and children, for the allowance

The amount  
of allowance  
and of earnings.



made by the parish for the children will not suffice for their maintenance. They may earn perhaps 8s. or 10s. a-week. The children are left at home, the eldest taking charge of the younger, for which task they are often quite inadequate. Accidents are constantly befalling children thus neglected; and I have been called to several who were severely scalded, and to others who have been so severely burnt as to die shortly after. These poor children are kept in the most disgraceful state of filth, and, in short, run quite wild. Cats and dogs belonging to respectable people are incomparably more cleanly in their habits, and look infinitely more respectable.

State of destitute children.

Many families experience great privations, even of the necessities of life, in the following manner:—The father of a family, while yet comparatively a young man, becomes unfit to follow his occupation as a collier, in consequence of various diseases induced by the very unwholesome nature of his occupation, which in a great many instances brings on premature decay, and carries him to an early grave: or in consequence of serious bodily injury, inflicted upon him by machinery, the rending of ropes, the falling in of the roof of the pit, and various other accidents, so that he is no longer enabled to maintain himself and family. Many men are thus reduced by disease and accident; but so slender are their means of subsistence, and so urgent their distress, that many of them, even in this frail state, go out to the colliery, and do a little work. Some who do this are fitter for a workhouse than for the violent occupation of a collier. I have known men so situated suffer serious injury in consequence. I have known several people so situated work occasionally until within a day or two of their death, and I have little doubt that the lives of many are shortened in consequence.

Colliers unable to work in consequence of disease.

When a collier is thus reduced I do not think he gets any relief from the parish, unless he is very ill indeed. His chief support is a small sum which he derives from a benefit society, and this is continued for a time only. For the first few weeks he gets four or five shillings; it is then reduced, and I think it ceases altogether at the end of the year, that is, at the end of December. To have the benefit of this society he would require to join again; but he is prevented doing this, as none are admitted as members who are in bad health. When the allowance is withdrawn the family becomes destitute indeed, and the case having become thus urgent, his wife leaves her domestic duties, her husband is left alone in a sick bed, to minister to his wants himself, the children, if they have been still kept at school, are taken from it, and the family goes down into the collieries to assist in procuring that subsistence which can be procured in no other manner.

These poor men generally die at an early age, and leave families totally unprovided for, and the privations consequent upon this event can be readily conceived from what has been already stated.

In order to show the early age at which colliers in general die, I shall here mention one of the results of a statistical inquiry which I made into the duration of life and into the diseases of the colliers. This inquiry was made among the colliers of Pencaitland colliery, and illustrates, in a particular and striking manner, the unwholesome nature of their occupation.

Short life of the collier.

Statistical inquiry.

The houses inhabited by these colliers are situated in a healthy part of the country, on soil comparatively dry and well open to ventilation. The parish of Pencaitland, in the statistical account of Scotland, is said to be remarkable for longevity. The men belonging to this colliery form an exception to the great and general body of colliers, for they are remarkable for sobriety, cleanliness, and for a superior tone of mind; and they are therefore exempt from many sources of disease to which other colliers are particularly exposed; hence the manifest shortness of life must be greatly owing to the unwholesome nature of their occupation. The aggregate age of the male heads of 35 colliers' families is 1192 years, which gives the very low amount of 34 years only for each

Average life of male heads of collier families.



male head of a family. The ages of these people were derived from themselves.

By the same inquiry it appears, that a great many of these male heads of families are in bad health, suffer from difficulty of breathing, cough, with expectoration of a black colour resembling ink, and are affected with greater or less emaciation.

Large proportion of widows.

There is still another result connected with which, as it readily permits the formation of some idea of the sufferings of that respectable body of people, I will add it likewise. In the 35 families already referred to, and taken without selection, there are no less than ten widows or nearly one in every three families. In that society where it is usual for one-third of the young families to be deprived of their fathers, and where in 35 families there are ten widows, there must be great suffering, and it can require no effort to suggest to the mind how much occasion there must be for some liberal and permanent relief to mitigate the sufferings of that people.

But so abject is poverty elsewhere, so importunate are the destitute and depraved in other quarters, that those people who are not thought to be in distress, have no exertions made in their behalf, and receive little or no parish assistance. I do not think more than five shillings per week of parish money is spent upon the whole of these 35 families.

I have not inquired into the duration of life among the colliers of other places, but I doubt not that the results would be even worse; for, super-added to the unwholesomeness of the occupation, which is common more or less to all, are all the sources of disease incident to a course of dissipation the most complete it is possible to conceive.

Aggregate age of 35 male heads of farmer families.

The aggregate age of 35 male heads of farmer families living in and around Tranent, and taken without selection, amounts to 1715 years. It was impossible to ascertain precisely the age of each, but there is no doubt that on the whole the computation is correct.

Average age.

The average age of each male head of farmer families is thus 51 years and 10 months. This affords a striking contrast with the duration of the life of colliers. This calculation was made strictly in the manner in which the calculation of collier life was got up.

Destitution consequent upon intemperance.

Destitution of another kind is experienced, to a very great extent indeed, in Tranent and the several villages in that district. This is the destitution produced by drunkenness, which throws its victim into privations as great and as destructive to health as those produced by absolute and unprovoked poverty. Drunkenness causes its votary to be deprived of the usual comforts of a home, which are so essential to health. He is deprived of the advantages of good clothing, and, on many occasions, of food to supply his wants. But the want of food is not so much experienced by him as it is by his hungry and unsatisfied children, who actually suffer that actual amount of destitution of the means of subsistence which is generally thought to be incident to poverty alone.

Many of the heads of collier families, male and female, are most abandoned drunkards, suffering in themselves degradation and many forms of disease, and plunging their miserable offspring into abject and hopeless destitution. Many of them get drunk daily, and remain in that condition for days together. This continuous intoxication takes place at all times throughout the year, and stops only when the funds or credit are brought to a close. Saturday night usually begins the orgies, which continue uninterrupted throughout Sunday and Monday, and often for the two next days. But the ordinary drunkenness is greatly increased at the beginning of the year. Work is in general dropped for a fortnight, and the whole time is spent in riot and debauchery. Many people, who are not in the habit of getting often intoxicated, indulge in a constant practice of "tippling," or drinking



whiskey in quantities sufficient to excite, but not to intoxicate, which drains the pocket of the working man, and undermines his health.

The practice of drinking whiskey is begun at a very early age. Many mothers give their children toddy,—a compound of whiskey, warm water, and sugar,—as soon as they are born. Toddy is, with collier women, a specific for gripes, and, indeed, for the great majority of children's diseases and complaints. Nothing is done without whiskey. The infant's head, the moment it is born, is washed with whiskey;—as soon as it begins to cry, toddy is poured down its throat. At weddings, births, christenings, deaths, and funerals, whiskey is present and indispensable on all those occasions.

Boys and girls acquire a taste for this deleterious agent when very young, and I have known boys, about the age of ten or twelve years, in the habit of getting intoxicated occasionally. On extraordinary occasions, such as the "new year,"—"fair-day," it is common for boys still younger to get intoxicated. The practice begun early is not unobserved at old age. Old women, scarcely able to walk, drink whiskey till they cannot speak; and it is a melancholy fact that several old women have fallen into the fire in a state of intoxication, and have been very seriously injured, and have presented sights of the most appalling nature. I have seen old women, whom I have sent for whiskey to be used medicinally in their families, return in a state of intoxication, having themselves consumed the liquor. Young women also in a state of intoxication meet with such accidents: one young woman about twenty years old was burnt to death in Tranent.

I have seen an infant in convulsions from the exhibition of whiskey by its mother. I have seen a man so convulsed, after the excessive use of whiskey, that he could not be secured from injury by violence by several men besides myself. I have seen apoplexy so produced: I was lately called to a lodging-house in Tranent, to see a man who was dead. He had jumped into a cart when intoxicated, and when the cart reached Tranent it was found that he was dead. During the time I lived there, several children lost their lives by being overlaid by their parents when in a state of gross intoxication. A great deal of acute disease is produced by whiskey in Tranent. Inflammation of stomach and liver, spasms of stomach, and a variety of organic diseases are produced by this dreadful practice; life is shortened in many instances, and families are left without a protector. By this course of dissipation, all the evils of bad example are communicated to the young; that training of the offspring which is so essential to its welfare, and which it is the duty of parents to bestow, is, in a vast number of families, totally neglected, and the consequences, as might be expected, are, dirty irregular habits of the children, which no after treatment can ever obviate or remove. With age they become confirmed, and the same example is continued from generation to generation.

Many of the young men assemble together, become disorderly, get addicted to whiskey and cock-fighting, quarrel among themselves, violate every moral law, break the Sabbath, and generally become profane. The girls are little better; in many instances early lose their innocence, and become the mothers of natural children. I have known girls about sixteen years of age to be the mothers of natural children.

I have now shown that a great deal of febrile disease prevails in and around Tranent. I have pointed out many circumstances connected with the habitations, the structure of their houses, their internal economy, the occupations, condition, and habits, of the working population, which must be favourable to the invasion of disease. I have shown the presence of vitiated air or malaria, the range of destitution, provoked and unprovoked, and it now devolves upon me to say what are the forms of disease which are wont to be produced by these morbid agencies.

Forms of  
disease pro-  
duced by the  
foregoing  
causes.



I think these unwholesome circumstances for the most part act thus : They assist the rise and progress of continued fever ; they induce many acute diseases of the stomach, lungs, and liver ; but the chief mode in which they operate, is by inducing a general bad state of health. Perhaps for every one that suffers acute disease two have their general health impaired. The forms of impaired health, which more commonly arise in those who are exposed to the operation of these unwholesome agencies, are irritable habit of body, pulmonary consumption, fistula, indigestion, or dyspepsia, general debility, often connected with organic alterations of lungs, liver, spleen, and kidneys, and bad and strumous habit of body, leading to psoas and lumbar abscess and disease of mesenteric glands. I do not think that any or all of the unwholesome circumstances which have been pointed out, produce all, or nearly all, the febrile diseases mentioned in the beginning of this Report as being prevalent at Tranent.

Exanthemata independent of external circumstances.

The febrile diseases there mentioned are continued fever, small-pox, scarlet fever, and measles. I do not believe that the small-pox is commonly produced by these or any other known external agents, contagion by contact being always excepted. I never saw above one case of small-pox so connected in its origin with any external circumstance, as to induce the belief that any external circumstance had produced it. The only case connected in such a manner with an external agent, with which I am acquainted, came under my own care, and was published in my work, 'On the Propagation of Contagious Poisons through the Atmosphere.' A grave-digger broke open a coffin unexpectedly, effluvia of a very offensive character arose, he became ill immediately, went home, and, in due course of time, an eruption made its appearance, having the characters of the pustules of small-pox. The body emitting the effluvia had not died of small-pox. The constitution of the man seemed to have been poisoned, for the pustules never ripened, were flattish, and of a blackish tinge. This man died. There had been no small-pox case in the house before, and I never heard that any one of the family was seized with that disease after his death. I never knew of scarlet fever and measles being produced by external circumstances, except contagion by contact, although I am aware that they, and likewise small-pox, are frequently influenced in their course and in their termination by external and unwholesome agencies.

These three diseases belong to that class of diseases termed exanthemata, which is distinguished from all others by certain well-known features. They arise under circumstances indicating no constant or uniform connexion with external agencies ; they attack in general only once in a lifetime ; they are marked with eruptions of specific and uniform characters, and they have, but more particularly scarlet fever and measles, their favourite periods of life for attack, more than those diseases which depend entirely on external causes. These diseases arise when they are not expected, when no external circumstances can explain their occurrence, and no measures on our part, such as go to prevent other diseases, have the least effect in warding off or preventing the occurrence of these diseases. The only means by which immunity can be obtained is by inoculation or vaccination. These diseases are therefore very different in their origin and nature from most other diseases. They seem to arise from sources inherent in the system, apparently little influenced by external circumstances, perhaps for some wise purpose in obedience to laws as cogent as that which regulates our growth or decay. Fever makes an approach to these diseases in some of these respects : it seldom attacks the same person more than once, and few instances are known of persons suffering many attacks of this disease in its regular forms ; it produces on many occasions an eruption of a defined and uniform character, and its course is marked with greater uniformity as to periods and length of duration than exists in diseases dependent on external circum-

Fever makes an approach to the exanthemata.



stances. These facts induced Hildenbrand, of Vienna, some time ago, and Dr. Roupell, of this town, more recently, to maintain that continued fever is an exanthema, like small-pox, measles, and scarlet fever.

I cannot at present go the length of stating my belief that fever, in all its forms, is an exanthema. I am inclined to think that the fever of this country, in some of its more common forms at least, is an exanthema, or something very near it; and my reasons for this opinion are founded on those characters above referred to, and so closely resembling the most prominent and remarkable features of the species of that class of disease. This opinion, founded on these facts, is further strengthened by a fact of which I have fully satisfied myself, viz. that the circumstances under which fever arises does not in general indicate such a uniform connexion between the origin and extension of the disease and unwholesome external agencies, as is almost invariably found, in relation to those which are positively known to arise from exposure to external circumstances. I know of cases of fever arising where there are no external circumstances to account for their occurrence, and I doubt not such cases are familiar to most medical practitioners. But while I maintain the accuracy of the above great general principle, I must confess, on the other hand, that there are occasions when there exists a manifest connexion between the prevalence of fever and unwholesome external agents, such as malaria or vitiated air and destitution,—a connexion not less certain and obvious than that which exists between attacks of inflammation and exposure to cold.

Those forms and cases of fever arising when there exist no appreciable unwholesome external agencies adequate to their production, I would consider as exanthematous, or partaking of the nature of an exanthema. Those forms and cases of fever occurring under exposure to unwholesome external circumstances, such as malaria and destitution, and seeming to depend upon these, may be regarded in two different points of view. They may be regarded in the same light as those diseases which depend absolutely or entirely on external circumstances, such as catarrhs, rheumatism, and the like, in short, as accidental diseases. Or if we can suppose that an exanthema may sometimes be affected in its development by external causes, we may regard these cases and forms of fever as still exanthematous likewise, and as being produced by these external unwholesome agencies, acting as exciting causes on bodies having a disposition to this exanthema. I am not at present prepared to say which of these views is the most just. I am satisfied at present to state my belief, that fever in some forms is really an exanthema, and regulated by laws, if not quite, nearly the same as govern the origin and course of small-pox, measles, and scarlet fever, and to state my decided opinion, that some cases and forms of fever occurring in this country are so intimately connected with unwholesome external agencies, such as vitiated air, destitution, and its attendants, that these cases and forms of fever would not have occurred at all, had these and like unwholesome agents not been in operation.

It has been remarked here that no efforts on our part, no precautions in respect to external unwholesome agencies, have hitherto been successful in extinguishing the exanthematous diseases, or even in protecting persons from their invasion (if inoculation be excepted), and it does not appear that any sanatory enactments will be more successful in time to come. Possibly in the course of time these diseases will decline; a period will doubtless arrive when they will have a termination, as certainly as there was a time when they had a beginning, but it appears to be beyond the reach of human penetration to fix upon that epoch, which may not, in all probability, arrive until a great internal revolution has been accomplished in our systems, or until an essential change has taken place in the nature of those things in whose sphere we exist—two possible contingencies over which human means cannot exercise the slightest control.



It has been shown above that fever, in some of its forms, partakes largely of some of the peculiarities and characteristics of the exanthematous diseases; and a question of great moment and immense practical relations now arises, viz., does fever in these forms resemble these diseases in another character, and depend upon some innate and hitherto unexplored disposition in the system, acting by some internal law or laws of the constitution, for whose operation it is not essentially necessary, as in respect to most other diseases, that there should be present external circumstances of an unwholesome character?

In respect to fever in those forms in which it most closely resembles the exanthemata, I think analogy and several facts connected with the history of fever warrant the supposition that this character is possessed by it also. The almost constant presence of fever among mankind, and its occasional violence and general extension in these respects so like the career of small-pox and measles for many ages past, would almost seem to indicate that it is inseparable from our present situation.

I fear that fever in some of its forms—its more exanthematous forms—depends upon sources within the system, and independent of external circumstances, even the presence of contagion. I fear further that no human means, no sanatory enactments, will extinguish fever in these forms, which I believe will continue to prevail, more or less, in time to come, even where a pure atmosphere and abundance of wholesome food are supplied.

But while I consider that human precautions, that sanatory enactments, will fail in extinguishing fever in these forms, I am aware of the great truth, that sanatory enactments and precautions in respect to wholesome air, to the supply of food and the necessities of life, to the better construction of the habitations of the poor, and the like, will, if fully carried into operation, effectually check the career of fever in all its other forms, and finally extinguish it. It is proved beyond doubt, that fever in these forms, numerous and frequent in occurrence as they are, depend upon certain unwholesome external circumstances; and our daily experience teaches, that with the removal of causes their effects cease.

I am not prepared at present to specify the proportions in which these different forms of fever arise. I will only state my belief that the fever which prevails in this country among the comfortable rural population, and among the better classes inhabiting comfortable houses and inhaling a wholesome atmosphere, is chiefly of the exanthematous form, while the fever which prevails in the densely-populated towns of this country, among the lower and destitute classes inhabiting tenements in alleys, closes, lanes, and the like, having little ventilation and surrounded by a vitiated atmosphere, is, on the other hand, chiefly of that form, of that accidental form which results from the operation of external causes, and which is capable of being prevented.

The distinction which I hope I have established is important, and will doubtless be useful in enabling us to form an opinion as to the amount of good which sanatory enactments may achieve. It will show that there certainly exists a large amount of fever which may be overtaken by sanatory measures; and by showing that there is an amount of fever, I hope small in proportion, which there is reason to fear will continue in spite of our best endeavours for its suppression, it will prevent a feeling of disappointment arising, if, after sanatory enactments have been in efficient operation, fever continues to prevail.

Disappointment will certainly arise if it is confidently expected that means for the abatement of vitiated air, for the relief of destitution, and the like, will be followed by the total disappearance of fever; for, doubtless, if fever in some of its forms is an exanthema, and arising exclusively through the operation of laws within the system, that disease will continue to appear from time to time possibly for ages, and certainly till a great change has taken place within the human system.

Such disappointment is hurtful, it shakes the opinion of many, and puts



a powerful weapon into the hands of those who are opposed to the establishment of measures for the promotion of public health, and should certainly be avoided in future, by expecting not the entire extinction, but only the diminution and abatement, of fever, which of itself is a sufficient inducement for exertions, and a very great and a very desirable result of sanitary precautions.

I think that the febrile diseases are produced by contagion much more seldom than is generally believed. I think it is possible for measles, scarlet fever, and the exanthematous forms of continued fever to be produced by contactual contagion, *i. e.*, by contact with a body or bodies labouring under these diseases. It is known that small-pox is communicable in this way. But I do not think that very many of the ordinary cases of these diseases are so produced. I am likewise convinced, notwithstanding the almost universal belief to the contrary, and the mass of evidence on the other side, that these diseases never arise, under ordinary circumstances, from atmospheric contagion understood as an atmosphere holding in solution the specific contagious poisons of these diseases, and distinct from mere vitiated air, or air tainted with mere impurities, which I am aware not only exists, but favours the rise and progress of fever and many other diseases. I have shown in my work on the propagation of contagious poisons that the virus of these diseases are not diffused in the atmosphere, at least under ordinary circumstances.

Contagion.

In the production of these exanthematous diseases, there is, as I have already said, some peculiar or specific force in operation, in addition to mere external unwholesome agencies. In a few cases the specific force is contactual contagion, but in the great proportion of cases there is no sufficient evidence of the operation of that agent in its contactual or any other external form. I am so convinced that the virus of these diseases do not act externally except in comparatively few cases, that I will continue to maintain this opinion, although I am here opposed by very eminent members of the profession. Perhaps, as I have already suggested, this force is some law of the system by which these morbid processes are set up; or perhaps it is possible that the virus may be present in our systems even in the foetal state, and that they act, develop themselves, produce their respective diseases, and propagate themselves, only when circumstances concur to favour their activity. Worms it is known swarm in the bodies of some people when their health is out of order—when, in short, the condition of the body favours the development and growth of these animals. These worms are peculiar to the animal machine: they are not earth-worms, neither do they live in vegetable structure: it would appear that neither these animals nor their ova are introduced into the system from without, but that they belong to it; and it is pretty clear that if they belong to it, the ova of these animals must be present in our systems anterior to the period of our birth; and if the ova of worms may be so present, it will appear perhaps possible that the virus or the minute germs of the virus of the exanthematous diseases may be present there likewise. Scrofula, gout, consumption, mental derangement, peculiar dispositions of mind and body, have descended from parent to offspring, and the seeds of these diseases and dispositions could only have been received anterior to its birth. Without some such explanation as this, it is utterly impossible to account for the primary cases of the exanthematous diseases.

Source of the exanthematous diseases.

The most eminent physicians think that the ordinary range of contagion is very limited, not exceeding a few feet. How then can we explain the occurrence of these exanthemata at sea, thousands of miles from land, or in remote districts having little or no intercourse with other parts of the world? As evidence of the possibility of contagious virus remaining long dormant in the system, I shall here mention a very extraordinary case. A child, when about six months old, was



Case in which the virus of cow-pox remained dormant several years.

repeatedly vaccinated, but in vain. When this person was about the age of five years, vaccine vesicles formed on the spot where he had been vaccinated. This case excited great interest in the part of the country where it happened; and many well-informed people were satisfied of the vesicles being those of cow-pox. I have examined the arm of this person, and the cicatrices are very complete. Small-pox prevailed in the family lately, and he was almost the only member who escaped.

I could adduce much evidence in support of this opinion, but perhaps it would be out of place in a report of this nature.

Means at present used for the suppression of drunkenness.

It has been shown above, that the excessive drunkenness which exists in Tranent and neighbourhood among the labouring population, is the fruitful source of much immediate disease and of destitution, with its usual attendants. The abatement of this vice is therefore most desirable, and indeed so much is it connected with the origin of destitution, that there is great reason to fear, unless it is materially checked, every means which wisdom and philanthropy may suggest for the relief of destitution will prove almost useless, in a great many instances at least.

The abatement and suppression of this vice has, I regret to say, met with much less attention than its importance demands. Comparatively little is done in and around Tranent for the abatement of the evil. It can scarcely be said to be generally discouraged, for many of the most abandoned of the population never come in contact with those who are qualified to reprove. They do not go to church, and they are not visited by respectable people. Even where there is an infraction of the peace, it frequently happens that no interference is made, and I have known tumults and assaults to take place among drunken people, both in and out of doors, and no cognisance of them has been made by the authorities. Scenes of the most open and disgraceful drunkenness among persons of both sexes are of constant occurrence in Tranent, and I have frequently seen men and women fighting in the public streets, and desisting only after they had been completely worn out or had been severely wounded; and on these occasions no interference was made by persons in authority. Such scenes as these are common, even on the sabbath.

State of police.

There is a regular constable in Tranent, but he is quite inadequate for the maintenance of the peace. The present person is superior to those who preceded him. I believe they were frightened to be seen on those occasions, and avoided them. The colliers and others stand in no awe of the law. They engage with the utmost fury, totally regardless of the consequences, light as they know them in general to be, in as far at least as punishment is concerned. I have seen most extensive and dangerous wounds produced by striking with the fist, by kicking, and by various instruments, even by knives, and many have not even been noticed by the constable. Wounds and blows are so common and general that the constable on many occasions is not informed of their occurrence. Husbands beat and kick their wives in the most brutal manner, to the great danger of their lives, and no information is conveyed to the constable. On some occasions, however, the constable is informed, and if the case seems to him sufficiently important, he reports it to the sheriff, who may or may not cause an investigation to be made. In many cases where serious wounds have been perpetrated, and where punishment would be both well-merited and likewise useful, no trial takes place, and no punishment is awarded. In proof of this I will add the following case, which I believe I myself reported to the authorities at Haddington. A very dissipated young man, a butcher, in a state of intoxication or excitement, pursued his brother, with a butcher's knife in his hand, intending to kill him. The result was a wound of the arm of the person pursued. The wound involved all the soft parts of the arm, integuments, muscles, arteries; in short, everything down to the very bones. The person lost a great deal of blood, life was endangered, and it became a question whether or not amputation would be necessary. No inves-



tigation took place in this case further than that made by the constable.

Women in a state of intoxication, which will scarcely permit of their standing, rail and scold for hours in the public streets, and no interference is made.

For many years it was the almost daily practice of a man in Tranent, in a state of gross intoxication, standing about his door or sitting on the outside of the window-sill, to curse and blaspheme for hours together. He used to vociferate to his wife and daughters the most indecent and obscene language, such as might well shock even the most profligate. I never heard of any attempt being made to put down this nuisance.

It would be difficult to describe the scenes of drunkenness and violence which prevail in Tranent; but I will here mention that were a person to walk round the town on Saturday night, or any time on Sunday, the probability is that he would hear the sounds of discord, and the vociferations of persons struggling, proceeding from ten or twenty houses. In a table prepared by Mr. List, Superintendent of Police, and published in the Statistical Account of Scotland, there appear only three cases of conviction for drunkenness and riot, for the borough and county of Haddington, for one entire year, I believe 1836.

I think it is very desirable that the law should interfere and punish the more gross cases of drunkenness, perhaps by solitary confinement. It should, perhaps, be made punishable for persons to be seen drunk in the streets, so as to be a nuisance to the public, and severe chastisement should be devised for those savages who maltreat their wives and families. Until some steps of this kind are adopted, I fear drunkenness will continue to run riot in Tranent, more particularly among the older and more hardened offenders; destitution in its most squalid forms will meet the eye, and multiply disease around, even though more ample legal provision were made for the poor, though soup kitchens were erected in every house, and fever hospitals in every corner.

Many persons in and around Tranent think that the Temperance Societies are calculated to abate this evil, and many individuals have taken the pledge. I am, however, not sanguine in expectations of very great good from this source, for I have observed that those who stand in most need of this check are the last to avail themselves of it, and because many who do take it disjoin themselves from the society, being unable to resist temptation any longer. I think it is right, however, to mention that several most abandoned characters have been reclaimed by the abstinence scheme, and are now respectable members of society; and I will here express my disapprobation of the discouragements which the laudable endeavours of the humbler classes, in furtherance of sobriety, have met with, from those placed above them, and my sense of the injustice of persons in authority watching the movements of honest people, engaged in most laudable pursuits, as they would the manoeuvres of designing and wicked characters bent on the violation of the law. The secession clergyman has taken a great interest in the Temperance Society of Tranent.

The relief of destitution in and around Tranent, derived from several different sources, is very incomplete and inadequate. The chief source of relief is the parish, which supplies pecuniary aid to the most destitute of the poor. The funds made available are derived chiefly from two sources; viz., the assessment on the land and houses, and the voluntary contributions collected at the church doors on Sundays. The annual amount of relief given to the poor in the parish of Tranent is about 450*l.*, and of this 15*l.* are collected at the church doors; but the amount given to each person is generally only 1*s.* per week, sometimes as high as 1*s.* 6*d.*; and I rather think on some occasions the allowance is still greater, amounting to 2*s.*, or even a little more. I observe in the Report of the General Assembly

Drunkenness, punishment of.

Temperance societies.

Means at present in use for the relief of destitution.



on the Poor, that the lowest rate at Tranent is 1*l.* 6*s.* per annum. The number of poor to whom relief is given in Tranent amounts to between 100 and 110. These are chiefly old men and women, who are unable to provide for themselves, and helpless children, who have been deprived of their parents. There is, I believe, some difficulty for poor and deserving people to get their names upon the poor roll of Tranent. Applications for relief are considered only twice in the year, at Whitsunday and Martinmas. Great privation is sometimes experienced by deserving people before their applications can be attended to. Larger collections would be made at the church doors for the poor, did there not exist a general feeling that these go merely to diminish the expenses of the heritors.

The funds expended on the relief of the poor of Tranent and other parishes are not derived from the assessment of the heritors, and from the plates of the parish church only. They are likewise derived from the sale of the goods and furniture of the paupers, at their death. It sometimes happens that the sale brings more money to the parish than has been given by it to the deceased pauper. I understand an attempt is now making, or has been lately made, in the parish of Tranent, as well as elsewhere, to appropriate for parish purposes the collections at the extension church, given for the purpose of defraying the minister's stipend, &c.

Destitute children, who have lost their parents, or have been deserted, are placed by the parish with private persons. The allowance is very trifling; not more than will afford the child the scantiest sustenance. I have seen several so placed. They were in general sickly, and looked withered as it were. I have good reason to believe that the children were in general ill attended to. The women usually intrusted with their care did not bear the best character for such a trust.

I do not think it is usual to provide education for all the children who are in destitute circumstances, or even for the orphans who are upon the parish list. I rather think that for the majority of such children no education whatever is provided. I perceive by the Report of the General Assembly that only three children are educated at the expense of the parish of Tranent. I have known many destitute children spend their days in begging from house to house, who might have been saved from ruin, and might have become respectable members of society, by means of proper and efficient education. I could give many instances in illustration of the above positions, but the following case will give some idea of the training and care bestowed upon orphans chargeable upon the parish:—

Some years ago, perhaps five or six, a collier of the name of Banks or Boulks was poisoned by his wife: the wife was tried at Edinburgh, found guilty, and hanged. Three children were thus orphanized—two girls and a boy. I do not remember their exact ages at the time, but I presume they ranged from eight to twelve or fourteen years. They were chargeable on the parish of Tranent, and were placed with their uncle who kept a common lodging-house in that village, frequented by the very lowest of society. The two oldest children got employment in a colliery, and the youngest, a girl, spent her time as a common vagrant about Tranent and the neighbouring parts. In that lodging-house, scenes the most destructive to innocence were constantly to be witnessed; and I have constantly had occasion to see humanity in that house in its lowest and most horrid phases.

A pious lady tried to educate the youngest child, but it was in vain, as she preferred a roving life, and not a little on account of her good success in begging; for it was common for her to return home, in the after part of the day, literally loaded with victuals, so much so, that she proved, no doubt, very useful to the household generally. If children so situated do not become vicious and abandoned, it will not be from the want of an atmosphere fitted for the growth of depravity.



Vice in children so situated must be a sickly plant, indeed, that will not flourish in such a hotbed—a feeble root, indeed, that will not strike in such a soil. When children so placed become vicious and commit crime, it occurs to me that they themselves are less to blame than those who, possessing the power to amend their condition, neglect to exercise it.

At Martinmas, 1835, there were on the poor roll of Tranent 110 names. If we divide the sum of 450*l.* paid to the poor, we will discover that the average amount which falls to each name is 1*s.* 6 $\frac{3}{4}$ *d.* per week. But the names do not represent single individuals only, but single individuals and families. It is to be presumed from the fact of there being 57 of these persons widows, that there were also children. In one case the name represents four orphans. When this is taken into consideration, it will appear that the 450*l.* are not divided among 110 only, but among many more. I am unable, from want of data, to ascertain the exact average amount of relief given to each; but I dare say, including lunatics, &c., it does not exceed 9*d.* per week. It is probably much less.

In addition to the parochial aid which is afforded by the parish of Tranent, a great deal of private charity is dispensed. Almost all who are in comfortable circumstances, even the working people, afford some relief daily to some of the numerous beggars who crowd the doors. Assistance is given to those who are thought to be deserving rather than to others; but I have no doubt the assistance given daily to improper and worthless characters is very considerable. Money or clothes are the only forms of assistance the worthless desire. Bread and the like, are often cast away or refused. Money is soon exchanged for whisky. This assistance by money and clothes in general does harm; intoxication and quarrelling are the common results.

There are very few families of wealth around Tranent. One wealthy family is very charitable to the poor. Numbers of poor people go to the house daily, and I believe few return without aid in one manner or another. Almost all people in Tranent who are in more than ordinary want seek assistance from that family. The head of this family is not the chief heritor in the parish, and I am pretty sure the amount of charity dispensed by him is greater than that of the aggregate charities for the parish of all the other heritors. Several of the heritors are non-resident. The consequence is that a great deal more than his own proportion of the necessary aid falls to be disbursed by one heritor, who, in short, dispenses aid which should be afforded by others. That family proves a great blessing to Tranent, and many of my patients have received wine, linen, butchers' meat, and money, which could not have been easily obtained elsewhere. I have recommended many to that family for assistance, and in no instance was aid withheld.

There are also several benevolent individuals, not heritors, in and around Tranent. These assist with money, food, and clothes where there is an assurance of the worthiness of the object.

For some winters past a soup kitchen has been established in Tranent for the relief of the poor, and has proved most beneficial, more especially when, in consequence of snow being upon the ground, many families were thrown out of employment.

It is generally got up by active and benevolent people in the village, and the expenses have been defrayed by contributions voluntarily made by the heritors, and in general by the better classes. On all occasions the door of the kitchen has been crowded with persons desiring to be supplied, and the allowance of soup has been uniformly received with great thankfulness.

A collection is made once a year at the church, for the purpose of purchasing a supply of coals for distribution among the poor. Almost all the members of the congregation assist, and I believe the heritors in general contribute for this purpose. The farmers in the neighbourhood



Steill's hos-  
pital.

drive the coals to the houses of the poor free of expense. The allowance to each family is about a ton.

There is in Tranent an hospital called Steill's Hospital. It was endowed by a person of the name of Steill. He left property for this purpose amounting to 900*l.* per annum. The objects of the institution, I believe, were the maintaining and educating poor children belonging to the parish of Tranent. The number of inmates, I think, does not exceed ten; viz., eight boys and two girls. Connected with this institution is a day school, attended by about 140 children. Some of the inmates are the children of people in pretty good circumstances, and many of the day scholars are the children of respectable labourers and hinds: I believe few collier children attend.

The account which I have just given of the means at present in use for the relief of destitution in Tranent parish includes everything of importance that occurs to me. In many parishes in East Lothian there is no assessment for the relief of the poor, and in some the allowance made to the poor is extremely small, so low as a few shillings in the quarter. In those parishes where there are few resident gentry and farmers the privations of the poor are extreme. It generally happens that the clergyman endeavours to procure relief from the parish, but he seldom ventures to propose more than a shilling per week. The heritors would not listen, in general, to propositions for more.

By the account which I have given of the destitution among the labouring population, and more especially of that great portion of it produced by contingencies incident to society at large, by casualties attendant upon their pursuits, and to diseases provoked by the unwholesome nature of their occupation, an opinion may be formed as to the amount of relief required. The amount of relief required may now be compared with the amount of relief given. The amount of relief given in the parish of Tranent is very great, and perhaps equals, on the whole, the amount which is required. But notwithstanding this, I maintain that the relief is neither so uniform nor so appropriated as to overtake all, or anything near, that destitution for which it is the duty of Christians to provide.

The relief is spread over an immense multitude, given to persons totally undeserving, and altogether distributed in such a casual and desultory manner as to prove a sufficient and uniform subsistence to none, while it affords to many just sufficient to make them less dependent on their own steady and persevering industry, and gives an opportunity of indulging in occasional fits of dissipation. The same amount of charity which is at present administered, which fails to supply anything like that comfortable subsistence to which the old, the helpless, the diseased, and maimed are surely entitled, and much of which is lavished upon importunate, abandoned, and able-bodied vagrants, would, if collected and distributed upon proper principles, provide a comfortable home for the really deserving poor, and afford security against starvation at all times and at all seasons, such as should exist in a great and Christian land like Scotland. But it would be necessary to prevent the infamous from rioting, as they do at present, on the funds which should be appropriated for the hallowed purpose of relieving the truly destitute and deserving.

In order to make the relief, which is at present afforded, partly by assessment and partly by voluntary aid, overtake the whole exigencies of the parish, it would be necessary in the first place to make the burden uniform and regular, and this could be best done, I presume, by an assessment. I cannot believe that the great body of the parishioners would be opposed to a plan which would provide comfortably for the poor at no more expense than they are subject to at present. I am aware that any assessment for any purpose whatever, however excellent, will be most unpalatable to some people; to such people for instance (and undoubt-



edly there are some) who afford no private relief, at present, under any circumstances. An assessment would prove to them not a substitution of one tax for another, as it would be to the more charitable, it would be an imposition of a tax where there was no tax before. Such people would, doubtless, oppose themselves to any imposition of burdens; but in a case like the present the urgent claims of many destitute and helpless beings should be listened to, rather than the interested opposition of avarice and illiberality.

In those parishes where no assessment is made at present, it becomes a question whether any such provision should be made. It is the opinion of the heritors of these parishes that no such assessment should be made, and I am aware that in this opinion they are joined by some of the clergymen of the parishes. But I do not think that the opinion of the heritors in this case is entitled to exclusive consideration; they are interested parties, and I do not perceive why in this case persons should be the sole judges, or the judges at all, where their own interest and funds are involved, and why the principle which provides against this contingency should be departed from on this occasion. People at large are not permitted to fix the amount and number of the taxes they shall pay. These taxes are imposed for state purposes, whose performance it would never answer to leave dependent on the impartiality and liberality of the community. The provision for the poor is, or assuredly ought to be, a state object, and as such ought to be provided for by the state, which, of course, is not subject to the same petty influences and motives which may actuate heritors upon whom the burden directly falls. As British subjects the poor have had duties to perform to the state—they have paid directly and indirectly towards the maintenance of the state—they are liable to be called upon by the state to defend the country from invasion by foreign foes, to protect against internal aggression, to fill her armies, and to man her navies. He who refuses to serve his country when the call is made by the state, he who deserts her standard, is liable to punishment, and surely it is only right and proper that the state in return should see to his provision should destitution overtake him, and not leave that vital measure to the consideration of partial judges, and make his subsistence—his very life bread, dependent upon the uncertain liberality of those from whose pockets that provision is to be made.

The assessing of parishes hitherto free of assessment.

I will here give two cases which will well illustrate the evil operation of the present system in these parishes, prove at once the solicitude which some landlords entertain for the well-being of the labourers on their estates, and show how highly desirable it is that relief for a destitution which never ceases, should be made to rest upon something more uniform and constant than the good-will and liberality of landed proprietors.

In a parish in the east of Scotland where no assessment is levied for the relief of the poor, the exigencies became greater than the collections at the church could meet. The parish clerk, at the request of the clergyman, wrote to one of the heritors, requesting the contribution of 1*l.* sterling towards meeting the surplus destitution, mentioning that if this were acceded to, the clergyman would go on without requesting an assessment. The heritor in question wrote in answer that he was highly pleased to understand the clergyman proposed avoiding an assessment, and promised the contribution of 1*l.*, specifying, however, that it was not to be considered an annual donation. This was about two years ago, and although applied to again for this pittance, the 1*l.* had not been received by the parish authorities three weeks ago. This heritor draws large sums annually from the parish in question, and is non-resident.

In another parish in the east of Scotland, likewise, the same circumstances occurred. The clergyman himself wrote to the heritors requesting a contribution, and among others to a very wealthy individual. This



person made no reply. Another letter was despatched requesting a contribution: no answer was granted. The other heritors who approved of the minister's request, and were willing to grant the desired contribution, were displeased with this inattention. A meeting of the heritors was summoned for the purpose of assessing, but the heritor who had not found it convenient to answer the letters respecting the contribution, made it convenient to attend the meeting in order to oppose an assessment. He offered the contribution which had been solicited, but the other heritors were so offended with his conduct, that they opposed his wishes, and actually levied an assessment. But it is only just to say, that the heritors of Scotland, as a body, are much interested in the poor.

Besides the open destitution which readily meets the eye, there is another form of privation which is less obtrusive, and that is borne in silence by a most deserving and respectable class of individuals. These people have in general been well doing and industrious farm servants. They have sufficient pride left to make them reluctant to seek, perhaps in vain, the miserable pittance allowed by the parish, to make them unwilling to undergo the scrutiny of the parish clerk, perchance to be thought and treated as impostors, and all for the chance of getting 1s. per week.

I would regard it as one of the greatest blessings which could be experienced by Scotland, could a system of better regulated, more uniform, and more liberal parochial relief be adopted. Could some such system as exists in England be adopted, I am sure a world of destitution would be relieved, many respectable old people, at present in the depth of privation, would pass the remainder of their days in comparative comfort, and children, instead of becoming vicious, and totally abandoned as at present, would be likely to turn out well, and to become respectable and useful members of society. Such a system would put down vagrancy and public begging, by which thousands of infamous and profligate characters riot in dissipation and actually in extravagance, upon the means which would go a great way to bless the country with the happy results of a sufficient and well-regulated legal provision for the poor.

I am not prepared to say precisely on what principle this legal provision should be made, but I shall here state, if the same amount of comfort and comparative plenty among the labouring population of England could be afforded—if that greater freedom from open wretchedness in the public streets of the great towns of England could be secured—if asylums could be formed for the aged, the sick, the destitute, the insane, as throughout England—if a check could be put, as in England, to public begging, that evil which multiplies with exertions for its relief—if all or most of these great ends could be obtained in Scotland by the introduction of a system of poor-laws, such as exists in England,—may some such system soon be introduced into Scotland, and may it soon be added to the number of those noble institutions of that land whose boast and glory it is that it possesses a legal provision for the education and religious instruction of her children—of that land which does not leave to voluntary exertions the education of her children, and the maintenance of her church. Let it soon be her boast, likewise, to have a legal provision for her poor, and let it no longer trust to voluntary exertions the subsistence of the destitute portion of her population.

Means which should perhaps be used for the relief of destitution, &c.

There are six classes of persons for whom it is desirable to provide legal assistance, and for whose comfortable maintenance and well-being the present means in use are totally inadequate. These classes are:—

1st. Children at tender years, who by reason of the gross and abandoned drunkenness of their parents, are almost totally neglected and denied the proper and regular means of subsistence.

2nd. Children who have lost their fathers, and for whose subsistence



the mothers are compelled to work out of doors, and to neglect their families.

3rd. Children who have lost both father and mother, and who are yet unable to earn a subsistence.

4th. Those comparatively young men and women, who by reason of disease and accidents incident to their occupation, &c., are unable to follow their usual employment.

5th. Those old persons, who by reason of old age and its attendant infirmities, are likewise unable to earn a subsistence.

6th. Maniacs, and those idiots for whose provision relatives are unable to provide.

With respect to the treatment of persons comprised in the 1st class, I shall make a few remarks. These unfortunate persons under the present system are not regarded as objects of destitution. But this is a great mistake; for these poor creatures, although living with their parents, suffer the most complete destitution that can possibly exist. They suffer destitution, not merely of the comforts of home, not merely destitution of the proper means of subsistence, but what is worse, they suffer destitution of all moral and religious instruction, and are placed in an atmosphere which poisons every good principle which nature in her unassisted efforts may put forth. Their unfortunate position calls loudly for some interference, in order to remove them beyond the range of influences of the most noxious character. It is impossible to expect that children, inured to the want of comforts readily granted to the horses and dogs of the better classes, can grow up with a taste for cleanliness and order; it is unreasonable to expect children who see their parents oftener drunk than sober, to cherish a taste for sobriety. Or is it to be expected that children, seeing their parents pilfer, will respect the property of others? that they, hearing their parents curse and blaspheme, will not become profane? that children seeing their parents pursuing their wicked courses, altogether regardless of consequences to health and future comfort, will cherish wholesome and provident habits? that children, in short, seeing their parents openly violating the laws of God and man, can possibly become good members of society, good husbands, good wives, and good parents? To expect such results in such situations, would be vain. It would be to disregard the experience of all times and all nations. Degradation, vice, and crime are as surely the results of exposure to such influences, as the melting of gold and silver is the result of placing these metals in the furnace.

Some of these children never get any literary education. Three children are educated at the expense of the parish of Tranent. Some are sent to school, but the system of education which is pursued is altogether inadequate to secure the growth of good principles. They acquire at school a knowledge of the alphabet, and perhaps learn to read; but they return home in the after part of the day, and have set before them lessons of immorality, drunkenness, and brutality—lessons well calculated to make an impression on the mind, coming before their eyes, as they do, in a practical form, and almost inculcated by those whose example they are wont on all occasions to follow. There is little encouragement to expect that the sands of the shore, which have become dry by the receding of the tide, will remain dry when the sea shall have again washed over them; and there is as little encouragement to expect the few and faint wholesome impressions made upon the minds of children every day at school will be continued, and influence their minds and conduct, when they, like the sands of the shore, shall have become again immersed in the tide, not indeed of water, but of that profligacy at home which is sure to engulf them.

I would earnestly recommend the consideration of a scheme by which these children should be taken from the unnatural parents, and removed



to a situation where their education might be conducted, so as to become a permanent blessing, rather than an useless mockery, as it is in many cases at present. Some such scheme would, doubtless, save from perdition thousands of human beings, would greatly diminish crime, poverty, destitution, disease, and even death itself.

With respect to individuals of the second class, I would recommend, where the mother is a respectable and sober person, that the child should be left in her charge; that a sufficient allowance should be made to support the child, and that the mother should be provided with some employment at home, by which she shall be enabled to provide, either in whole or in part, for her maintenance. But where the mother is drunken, children so situated should be put under other management, perhaps in a workhouse.

Children belonging to the third class, including those already mentioned as being ill attended to, should be put under judicious management, either in private houses or in workhouses.

Persons, who by reason of old age are in destitute circumstances, might be treated in two different ways. They might be allowed a proper and reasonable sum for their maintenance in their own houses; but this sum would require to be very considerably greater than is given at present. This plan would suit respectable people, who would not disabuse their liberty or their means, and it would be more agreeable to them in general. But for the dissipated and worthless a workhouse should be provided, and likewise for those who have no friends to take care of them.

For persons belonging to the fifth class, some provision is certainly due: they have claims for relief sanctioned by the Bible. They have become disabled in employments essential to the existence and comfort of their countrymen; and surely those persons who suffer bodily injury in providing essential comforts for their countrymen, are not less deserving of assistance than the soldier who gets wounded in fighting the enemies of his country. A great number of people in and around Tranent are unfit to follow their usual occupation on account of bodily injuries by accidents, and of disease caused by their occupation.

These persons might be put into a workhouse, and made to work at some light and easy occupation. Although unable to follow their usual occupation, many are able for some more gentle and easy employment; and in this way they might defray all, or nearly all, the expense of their maintenance. Where workhouses cannot be established, and where there is a great reluctance to enter them, perhaps a moderate allowance of money might be made, in order to assist the pauper's efforts for subsistence.

In and around Tranent there are many insane persons. There are about twenty idiots in the parish of Tranent. The relatives of many of these persons are very unable to provide for their subsistence. I do not think that any assistance is given by the parish towards their maintenance.

Mad persons, who are dangerous to themselves and others, should be provided for, and put under restraint. Two persons are thus provided for by the parish of Tranent. But I know of one person who is not thus provided for: she is a young woman; she lives with her mother, an old widow. She is very furious; is confined in a dark closet; I believe she is completely naked; has no bed, save a little straw, and has no bed-clothes. She roars like a wild beast; I have heard her; she tears everything that comes in her way. She tore with her teeth a strait-waistcoat in which she was once restrained. She lives like a hog; and her dark closet is cleaned out during the night that the neighbours may not be horrified by the sight. The parish authorities have failed to send this person to an asylum, although solicited by the mother, a poor



but most respectable person. The heritors, I believe, allow 3s. 6d. per week for the maintenance of this person.

The result of the education in the parish of Tranent proves that the present system is very inadequate for the purposes of education, viz., the enabling man the better to discharge those duties which are the chief end of his creation, and while in his mortal situation, to discharge his duties to his neighbour and himself.

Means which would be useful for the instruction of children.

An attentive consideration of the situation of the population of Tranent and many other places similarly situated, has led to the conviction on my part that the improvement of the intellect and the acquisition of worldly knowledge are of themselves inadequate to achieve the ends of education, and that for these objects to be useful to any very considerable extent, there must be conjoined some tuition of the heart, some impressing on the juvenile mind a deep and ever actuating obligation to serve God. Examples of the failure of mere literary education, such as is given in the schools of Tranent, are not wanting. The experience of one of the principal institutions in Edinburgh, attests this statement. The best education of the kind was given in that institution, but it nevertheless appeared that many, nay a large proportion, of the young men who left did not do well. On the contrary, I have heard it said by persons qualified to judge on the question, that the lads would have made better members of society had they been brought up under the superintendence of their honest though poor parents. In this school exclusive attention was directed to the cultivation of the intellect, and the consequence was, that the boys from a want of general training and cultivation of the heart, were remarkable for rudeness, insolence, want of respect, and of that forbearance which is so essential to our happy intercourse with the world.

A reformation has taken place in this school. More attention has been paid to training, &c., and the lads now become better apprentices, and more respectable and more flourishing members of the community.

I have examined some of the schools around London for the education and training of pauper children, and I confess it to be my opinion that the system pursued in these schools must give to a child advantages of the last importance, which are not at all obtained in the schools of Tranent, and that they are much more likely to form good habits than the latter. I have examined the School of Industry at Norwood for pauper children, and likewise the school at Little Chelsea in connexion with the workhouse of St. George's, Hanover Square, and I consider them to be most admirable institutions. The children at these schools were on the whole much cleaner than the children in the parish-school of Tranent. The girls particularly struck my attention. Their clothes were clean, in good repair, their heads in good order, no vermin, and no skin diseases so common in Scotland. They are taught to be industrious and useful. I saw them reading aloud religious books, washing, ironing, and engaged in many different useful pursuits. At Little Chelsea, the boys were under very correct but not oppressive discipline; they were acquainted with their Bibles to a remarkable degree; they knew the catechism most correctly. I heard them sing in good time several sacred tunes in which their hearts appeared to sympathise. They were respectful and attentive to a degree I never saw approached in any of the schools in or around Tranent.

Such schools as these would prove decided blessings to a population such as that of Tranent. Were they in operation there, I feel assured there would be less drunkenness, wretchedness, and suffering. I think they would entirely change the face of society.

If such schools could not be got up in such situations as Tranent, it would perhaps be advisable to graft upon the present establishments,



the general training and other features of the schools I have examined here.

Establishment of hospitals for the reception of fever and small-pox cases.

On account of the closeness, filth, and many other obvious circumstances connected with the habitations of the poor, and on account of the want of proper attendance and many necessities, it would be very desirable to establish hospitals in East Lothian for fever and small-pox cases, &c. The extension of these diseases seems, on many occasions, to be much favoured by the healthy living and sleeping with those ill of these complaints, and on this account likewise such hospitals would be very useful. There might be separate wards for the two different diseases. I have seen the greatest inconvenience arise from the want of an hospital for the reception of such cases. Persons so afflicted have been deserted by their relatives, and left to struggle with diseases and with wants unsatisfied; and notwithstanding great exertions on my part to procure attendance, none has been obtained.

I think a small hospital might be provided in Tranent at very little expense, and if properly conducted, I have no doubt persons afflicted with fevers and small-pox, would readily avail themselves of it.

There existed great objections to entering the hospital at Tranent, which was established for the reception of cholera patients; but I have heard enough of the management of that institution, both by the nurses and others, to account for that; and I have no doubt whatever, if incompetent medical men and unqualified nurses are placed in charge of any fever hospital which may be established, that like objections will again arise, and interfere with its beneficial operation. If such an hospital is established, and most sincerely do I hope, that may be the case, I would respectfully submit that Dr. Young, my successor, is well qualified for its medical charge.

I think it would likewise be well to establish a fever hospital in Haddington and Dunbar.

Whitewashing of the habitations of the poor.

It would be very desirable to establish a system of thorough cleansing and whitewashing the habitations of the poor. These processes should be performed at least once in the half-year; and as the poor themselves are in general too indifferent to attend to this matter, the cleansing and whitewashing should be done by persons authorised for the purpose, or to the satisfaction of competent judges.

Supply of water in villages.

A great step towards improving the physical condition of the working classes, towards improving their habits and health, would be attained by a sufficient supply of pure water being secured in the different villages around Tranent. Water should be supplied in the villages for the use of the inhabitants wherever that is practicable.

Efficient body of scavengers.

The health of Tranent and the neighbouring villages would be much promoted by the establishment of an efficient body of scavengers. Their services would be much prized by all the better classes.

Lodging-houses.

Lodging-houses for vagrants and trampers should be placed under some regulations, in order to prevent the undue crowding of many persons together, and to secure cleanliness as far as that is practicable.

Drains.

Drains should be made in all the villages of East Lothian, and covered in such a manner as to confine effluvia. Water-courses, where they exist, should be improved; and where none exist, should be formed.

In addition to such regulations as those to which I have above alluded, I am of opinion that there exist many circumstances and practices in connexion with the labouring population of Tranent and the neighbouring country, which, though they cannot be said to be productive of febrile disease, yet as leading to vice and destitution—as leading to bodily sufferings, to disease, and the loss of life, are fitting subjects for remark in a report of this nature.

There exist in Tranent parish many public-houses, forty in num-



ber, to which great numbers of the dissipated of both sexes resort, at almost all hours. Some of these houses are very disorderly, and admit boys of comparatively tender years. There are twenty-six public-houses in the village of Tranent, and I do not think there are more than six bakers' shops. People are encouraged to frequent these houses; and it was not unusual, when no money could be obtained by the keepers of these public-houses from their customers, for them to receive clothes and furniture in payment. For practices of this nature it appears desirable that some remedy should be devised. I have heard that the value of the whiskey supplied every week to the parish of Tranent by one distillery in the neighbourhood, is about 100*l.* sterling.

Public-houses.

There exists in many collieries foul air, in greater or lesser quantity, which proves the source of considerable danger to life, and of disease among the colliers. This is chiefly carbonic acid gas, which will not support respiration. On one occasion, about four years ago, several men were nearly suffocated in Penston colliery; and during the past spring, so great was the amount of noxious gas in another colliery, that a considerable proportion of the men applied to me for the relief of disease produced by that agent. They complained of pain of chest, difficulty of breathing and cough, and in some instances partial inflammation supervened. I think these ailments on the whole are very much calculated to shorten life. The colliers informed me at the time that a candle would sometimes not burn where and when they were working; and they thought it possible that some means might be devised in the way of more thorough ventilation for the abatement of the evil. The employer of these people is a most kind and liberal gentleman, and is most desirous of promoting the welfare of his workmen.

Foul air in collieries.

Perhaps it would be possible to devise some measures for the abatement of this evil.

It would be very desirable that some provision were made for excluding stone and coal dust from the lungs of miners. I think such a provision might be obtained. Were that object effected much health and many lives would be preserved.

Provision for excluding stone-dust, &c., from the lungs.

Accidents happening among the workpeople in collieries around Tranent are a fruitful source of distress and privation in that neighbourhood. A week seldom passes without some serious accident occurring in one or other of the collieries, and several persons are killed or die in consequence of accidents every year. These accidents arise from the falling in of the roof, the sudden and unexpected fall of coal before the collier has time to draw back, and the rending of ropes. I feel this to be an important subject, but one on which I will not at present say much.

Accidents in collieries.

I think all serious accidents occurring in collieries and other great works should be inquired into. Where life is lost a thorough investigation should take place, and when parties are in fault they should be exposed and punished according to the magnitude of the offence, or carelessness, or inefficiency of apparatus.

There are no coroners in Scotland, but there ought to be, as in England and Ireland, to inquire into all cases of violent deaths.

Besides this, I think it would be well, and only what is due to the protection of the people engaged in such works, that all collieries should be inspected occasionally by persons appointed by Government, and their condition as to efficiency and other respects duly reported. I am pretty sure about fifty people under my care, and connected with collieries, have lost their lives in consequence of accidents occurring in these works around Tranent, and I do not remember of an investigation having been made by the sheriff in more than one instance.

There exists a common practice of employing children at tender years in the collieries around Tranent. They are sent down the pit as soon as they are able for any considerable exertion. Many are employed at

Practice of employing children in collieries.



the age of seven and eight, and I dare say there are some younger. They, for the most part, assist the parents: sometimes they are let to strangers, who, of course, will make the most of them. They are employed for carrying the coals which the adult hews out. In that instance, I believe, they are called "bearers." They likewise shove the waggon loaded with coal from the place where the adult is working to the bottom of the shaft, and return it when emptied; and I believe they are then called "putters." These children work, I believe, for ten and twelve hours at a time. Some work during day, some at night, according as they belong to the day or the night "shift."

The education of these children is sadly neglected. Their growth and health are much injured, and many die in consequence before arriving at manhood.

Children to a collier, when above the years of infancy, prove no burden: they are, on the contrary, the source of profit. It often happens that a few young children support their parents, who are too dissipated and lazy to work; and it is quite common for these children, by their exertions, to prove the sole support of parents who are unable to work, in consequence of disease and bodily injuries; and thus it appears that these poor and unfortunate children, by dint of exertions beyond their strength, and which send them to an early grave, afford that relief which should be granted by the powerful and affluent of the land—administer that succour which the rich withhold.

These poor children present little of the buoyancy of youth, seem even comparatively care-worn, and are often so little and so stunted as to appear younger than they are.

This system should be put down. It fosters a race of beings who, by reason of their almost total want of education, early familiarity with vice, and precocious adoption of the habits of men, are little gifted with the better qualities of the species. Vice, destitution, insensibility to comfort, and almost a savage state, are the results of this pernicious system. When arrived at manhood many of these persons are most abandoned.

Practice of mothers of families also working in collieries.

Mothers work in the collieries and neglect their offspring. Even infants are left at home in charge of girls, perhaps only five or six years old, hired for the purpose. This practice should be discouraged for obvious reasons.

Medical relief for the poor.

There are very few parishes in Scotland where a fixed sum is given for medical attendance for the poor. The poor in general seek assistance where they can get it, and on many occasions go without it altogether. When a case of urgent distress occurs the minister of the parish sometimes requests a medical gentleman to see it, and in this instance payment is made from the parish funds. This is a very inefficient way of providing medical assistance. People who are very ill sometimes die without assistance, perhaps because the minister did not know of it, or did not think it necessary to request assistance. Some clergymen treat cases themselves, and the consequences may be readily conceived. Moreover, when assistance is got, it frequently happens that it comes too late to be of any use. The minister may be from home, or engaged, and may not at the time consider the matter of such importance as to require immediate attention. Some clergymen are very attentive to the poor. A great deal of this evil would be prevented were parish surgeons appointed throughout Scotland. I would strongly recommend the immediate adoption of this step; it would save the lives of many persons, and relieve the sufferings of thousands.

During the time I lived at Tranent, I received a small annual salary for attendance on the poor of the parish. But I am not aware that there are many parishes so liberal as to afford the poor the right of medical advice.



It is highly desirable that some enactments should be made, in order to permit persons in authority, such as sheriffs or surveyors of roads, to take cognizance of the accommodations of the working classes. Houses which are at present unfit for the habitation of human beings should be altered, or put into proper repair. Houses which may be built in future should be so constructed as not to injure the health of those who may inhabit them, and should not be so crowded together so as to prevent due ventilation. It may, perhaps, be difficult to compel people to inhabit good houses, but it is quite possible to prevent coalmasters putting their work-people into apartments unfit for human habitations. It is the practice for persons who rent collieries to supply houses for their workpeople. In general these houses are very bad indeed; some are most wretched and uncomfortable. In some collieries they are worse than in others. The worst houses of the kind, I think, are at Westpans—a village in the parish of Inveresk. The houses are inhabited by the colliers of Preston-grange colliery. Some of them are pretty fair, but some are most miserable, and, as a medical man, I say unfit for human habitations. Some of the apartments inhabited by collier families are almost altogether below the level of the ground outside. I am sure the roof of some of these apartments is not much above the level of the ground outside. I rather think these apartments were originally cellars, or some such offices. A few steps lead down to one of these apartments, and of course the rain finds its way down also. There is one nearer the sea, the entrance to which has been made by removing the earth, and forms an inclined plain. These apartments are, of course, ill adapted for light and ventilation. The houses of Penston colliery have lately undergone considerable improvements. The houses belonging to Tranent colliery are in general superior. The manager of this work is a liberal-minded man, and has done a great deal to improve the condition of his working people. But it would be well to investigate the accommodation made for the working people, and to make some provision for securing their comfort.

Regulations  
for the con-  
struction of  
houses and  
streets.

There are several tenements in Tranent which are in ruins; partial falls of the roofs and walls take place occasionally, greatly to the danger of the inhabitants who may be passing. Near one of the main streets in Tranent there stands a gable end of a house; it is called the "pudding tower." It threatens to fall, which it will certainly do some day when time has worked a little longer. These tenements belong to persons who, by reason of indifference, poverty, or otherwise, will neither repair them nor pull them down. Round and about the "pudding tower" is about an acre of ground lying waste, which might by cultivation produce many bolls of potatoes for the poor of the parish. People in Tranent, for the most part, do with their houses as they please, totally regardless of public weal or the comfort of their neighbours. Houses are built in the most irregular manner; some seem as if dropped in the middle of the street, or left there by chance or accident. It is highly desirable, for the health and comfort of the inhabitants, that such grievances should be prevented for the future.

Houses in  
ruins.

The system of paying wages admits, I believe, of great improvement. In extensive works much good would accrue from paying work-people singly, and not in numbers, as is generally practised, and likewise, where practicable, at a distance from public houses.

I have the honor to be, Gentlemen,

Your most obedient servant,

*To the Poor Law Commissioners.*

S. SCOTT ALISON, M.D.

*Note.*—Since some copies of this Report were circulated, several clergymen and others have expressed in writing the great satisfaction



