

**The sanitary condition of the City of London: being a letter to the Lord Ashley from the City Remembrancer, on the statements of the Sub-Committee of the Health of Towns Association; with the Sub-Committee's reply and Lord Ashley's letter [T. Beggs, secretary].**

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HEALTH OF TOWNS ASSOCIATION.

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BEING  
A LETTER TO THE LORD ASHLEY  
FROM  
THE CITY REMEMBRANCER,  
ON THE STATEMENTS OF THE SUB-COMMITTEE OF THE  
HEALTH OF TOWNS ASSOCIATION;  
WITH THE  
SUB-COMMITTEE'S REPLY AND LORD ASHLEY'S LETTER.

LONDON:  
PRINTED FOR THE HEALTH OF TOWNS ASSOCIATION,  
BY W. CLOWES AND SONS, STAMFORD-STREET.

1848.

HEALTH OF TOWN ASSOCIATION

THE

SANITARY COMMISSION

THE CITY OF LONDON

A LETTER



THE CITY REMEMBRANCE

ON THE STATUTES OF THE SUB-COMMITTEE OF THE

HEALTH OF TOWN ASSOCIATION

SUB-COMMITTEE'S REPORT AND FINDINGS

LONDON

PRINTED FOR THE HEALTH OF TOWN ASSOCIATION

AT W. GIBBS, LONDON, PRINTERS



## HEALTH OF TOWNS ASSOCIATION.

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10, *Walbrook*, *May 4th*, 1848.

MY LORD,

I am directed by the Sub-committee of the Health of Towns Association to acknowledge the receipt of a letter addressed to your Lordship by the City Remembrancer, and to submit the following observations on that letter for your Lordship's consideration.

I have the honour to be,

With great respect,

Your Lordship's obedt. Servant,

T. BEGGS, *Secretary*.

*To the Lord Ashley.*

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*Copy of a Letter addressed by the City Remembrancer to the Lord Ashley, M.P.*

*Guildhall*, *April 7th*, 1848.

MY LORD,

The attention of the Commissioners of Sewers of the City of London has been called to a work recently circulated amongst the Members of the House of Commons, intituled 'Health of Towns Association—Report of the Sub-Committee on the Answers returned to Questions addressed to the Principal Towns of England and Wales, and on the Objections from Corporate Bodies to the Public Health Bill.'

This work has no name affixed to it as an authority for its publication, and upon application to Messrs. Clowes, the printers, for some copies of the work, for the use of the Commissioners of Sewers, I was informed that they could not be obtained.

Neither the Corporation of London nor the Commissioners of Sewers have been applied to to answer any questions addressed to them by the Health of Towns Association; and as the names of the parties who have given the information contained in the Report are suppressed, the Commissioners of Sewers have no means of ascertaining the character of the person who gave the information respecting the City of London contained in the Report, or of judging of the means he had of giving correct information.

Believing the object of the Health of Towns Association (of which your Lordship is a prominent member) is to improve the moral and sanitary condition of the people of England, and that any publication of misrepresentations, for the purpose of effecting those objects, would be without the assent of the great majority of the association,



and would affect most prejudicially the important objects which they in common with the Commissioners of Sewers for the City have in view, I am directed to call your Lordship's attention to some of the most glaring misstatements contained in such part of the Report as alludes to the City of London Commission, trusting that your Lordship's well-known character for justice and integrity will induce you to prevent the further circulation of the misrepresentations alluded to, and to cause them to be contradicted by the Health of Towns Association at the earliest possible opportunity.

The first question is, "What is the present sanitary state of the town of London?" The answer is, "London (City of) sewers when made are of very little use—doubtful whether they are not even mischievous—the stench arising from them is intolerable."

The whole of this answer is untrue; no place in the world has so complete a system of sewerage as the City of London. The whole City of London is well and effectually drained, and a complaint is scarcely ever made of any inconvenience from smell. It is remarkable that no questions appear to have been addressed to the districts round the City of London, where several open sewers still exist and are very offensive, and which districts have been and still are under the control of the Crown.

Question 2.—"Have the authorities of the town suggested spontaneously the adoption of complete sanitary arrangements of any one kind; for example, complete drainage; that is, complete house-drainage, with sewerage and suburban drainage?" The answer is "(London City), Certainly not."

This answer is in direct contradiction to the fact, the city of London being, as the Commissioners believe, the only place in which complete house-drainage, with sewerage and all necessary provision for suburban drainage, have ever been attempted to be carried into effect.

Question 7.—"Were any of the existing defects in the sewerage, drainage, and supply of water ever pointed out by the local authorities before attention was directed to them by some one not belonging to their body?" The answer is "(London City), The Corporation has of late made a great deal of noise about sanitary matters, but it is only since the vices of its government have been exposed by other bodies, and in a manner that inclines to the suspicion that it is only done to prevent the Government taking the administration of the funds out of their irresponsible hands."

For several years past the Commissioners of Sewers of the City of London have directed their most anxious attention to remedy any of the existing defects in the sewerage and drainage, and to secure a supply of water. The Commissioners of Sewers cannot have been actuated by any such motives, and can have no fear of the administration of their funds being taken out of their hands by the Crown, as they feel confident that it will eventually appear that they have exercised their powers much more beneficially for the public than any of the Boards which have been in the appointment and under the control of the Crown. The Commissioners of Sewers court inquiry upon this subject before any fairly constituted tribunal not subject to the influence of the Crown.

Question 8.—"Have any and what improvements been actually suggested and carried out by the authorities of the town?" The answer



to this question, as respects the City of London, is suppressed—the improvements of all sorts suggested and carried out by the Corporation of London being so obvious that a denial of them would be useless.

Question 10.—“Is there in the town any person who would be considered an authority with reference to sanitary works, and whom the townspeople would trust with the immediate expenditure of their own money upon such works?” The answer is “(London City), None.”

If the question had been “*person or board*,” this answer would have been in direct opposition to the fact. The citizens and inhabitants of London have, for a long series of years, and are still disposed to trust the Commissioners of Sewers, who are annually appointed, with the expenditure of their own money for sewerage and sanitary purposes.

Question 11.—“Is the town prepared to intrust the local authority to make at once the whole outlay required for its sanitary improvement, without any supervision or control?” The answer is “(London City), There is no authority but would convert its opportunity into a means of most corrupt jobbing.”

The terms of this answer would convince any reasonable person of the animus which dictated it—it is totally false. The returns of the Commissioners of Sewers, made annually to Parliament for the last twenty years, and lately printed by order of the House of Commons, will satisfy any person who will take the trouble to investigate them. With respect to jobbing, the Commissioners would be happy, as before stated, to court inquiry upon that head, and to compare their conduct with that of the Government Boards who do not lay their accounts annually before Parliament.

The Commissioners feel indignant at the manner in which the person selected to answer for the City of London has chosen to express himself with reference to their operations, and this feeling is tempered with so much contempt for the tone of the language, that they would not have condescended to notice it more than they have done other and similar attacks, if the names of your Lordship and of several other noblemen and gentlemen of the highest rank and character had not been attached as influential members to the Health of Towns Association, but who the Commissioners feel assured could not have been made acquainted with the subject, or such statements would never have been made.

The Commissioners do not feel it necessary to enter into any defence or justification of their past proceedings. They have adopted other means of doing so; and are now, as they always have been, ready to enter into any inquiry before a competent impartial tribunal; nor do the Commissioners feel it necessary to enter upon a defence of the Corporation of London, of whom they are a constituent part. The Corporation of London are able and willing to justify their conduct, if necessary. The Commissioners therefore will only add, that the statements affecting the Corporation are equally false and unfounded as those which apply to the Commissioners.

In conclusion, the Commissioners of Sewers for the City desire me to express their extreme regret that the Health of Towns Association, a society who propose to themselves objects so exceedingly desirable, and in the promotion of which the City Commissioners, in common with a great majority of the people, take a deep interest, should have



allowed those objects to be impeded, and their attainment rendered more distant and uncertain, by permitting themselves, as it is much feared is the case, to be made the tool of parties who have in view objects very foreign to the promotion of health, cleanliness, and morality, being nothing less than their own personal advancement and aggrandizement at the expense of the liberties and rights of others.

I have the honour to be,

My Lord,

Your Lordship's faithful and  
obedient Servant,

*The Right Honourable*  
*Lord Ashley, M.P., &c. &c.*

E. TYRRELL,  
*City Remembrancer.*

*Observations by the Sub-committee of the Health of Towns Association.*

No one knows better than your Lordship that it is no easy task to deal practically with the subject of Sanitary Improvement. That task has been attempted by two administrations in two parliaments, after the attention of the Legislature had been three times emphatically directed to the subject in so many successive speeches from the Throne. The Government has at length proposed a measure, which, however defective, appears to us to contain the essential provisions which must be embodied in any efficient Health Bill, and among these is the fundamental principle of the supervision of the local authorities intrusted with the execution of the Act. To this principle some of the corporate bodies are opposed, under the guise of respect for the ancient and Saxon institutions of the country; but really influenced, as it appears to us, by the most narrow and selfish biases. After having long laboured to awaken attention to this subject, and to diffuse information upon it, we have not shrunk from the task, odious though it has been to us, of endeavouring to expose the true nature of these biases, and the real share they have in corporate opposition to the Bill. The Corporation of the City of London, which takes the lead in this opposition, appears to us to be not exempt from such biases. In a letter addressed to your Lordship by their officer, the City Remembrancer, the City authorities call upon us either explicitly to retract this opinion or to prove it. We take the latter alternative; because, if these biases really exist, and if they are allowed to prevail over the essential principle of the Health Bill now before Parliament, we think Lord Morpeth has concisely and correctly expressed the result,—that legislation on this subject will be a mockery.

In the execution of the task now before us, we shall as much as possible avoid descending to anything approaching personal observation; but on account both of the subjects and the persons we have to notice, we cannot be exonerated entirely from this disagreeable duty.

1. The City Remembrancer complains that he has been unable to obtain, for the use of the City Commissioners of Sewers, copies of our Report. We beg leave to inform him, that the work is to be had at Renshaw's, in the Strand, at the price of one shilling. We have however directed twelve copies to be sent to him, for the use of those Commis-



sioners who take an interest in the subject, and it will be a satisfaction to us if every member of the commission will obtain a copy, and study it carefully.

2. The City Remembrancer complains that the names of the parties who gave the information contained in our Report are suppressed. We have stated the sources from which our information has been derived; namely, the testimony of medical men living and practising in the several districts, clergymen, the secretaries of our own branch associations, or the leading members of those bodies, and in some cases persons holding official situations in the town or district. We have given the information thus obtained not as official information pretending to minute accuracy, but as expressing the impressions and opinions of competent observers having the ordinary means of information of persons resident in a town or neighbourhood. Such impressions and opinions are as likely to err on the side advantageous as on that disadvantageous to a town; and minute errors of this kind are compatible with substantial correctness. After consideration, we determined on withholding the names of our informants, on the ground that we had no right to expose them to the personal annoyance to which every individual is subjected who reports anything to the disadvantage of the administration of the town or neighbourhood in which he resides. We made no selection of towns, but applied for information to every town in which there resided a townsman known to us capable of giving us trustworthy information. From some of the towns from which we sought information we have obtained no replies. We have given the answers as we received them. Had we thought it right to make alterations, we should, probably, have softened the language in which the information is given in several instances; but there is no instance in which we have any reason to doubt the substantial correctness of the information sent us. Neither have we made any suppressions. Several of the questions indeed are unanswered: this in our summaries we have indicated by the terms "Not answered." Comparatively few of our informants have answered the whole of our questions, apparently from their conceiving themselves not to be in possession of sufficient information to answer correctly the particular questions which they have left unanswered. With regard to the City of London, we do not find in the spirit in which the members of the Corporation have received our Report any reason to regret our decision not to make public the names of our informants. Yet no personal annoyance which they could inflict on the individual who has answered for the City of London could alter the facts of the case—facts so notorious, that we hesitated whether to insert any answers in relation to the City of London and the metropolis; and assuredly we should never have thought of pretending to rest questions affecting the health and lives of so large a portion of the country upon the unsupported testimony of any one individual. The City Remembrancer, the City Commissioners of Sewers, and the Corporation generally, are in a state of astonishment and indignation that any one could be found to declare that London is filthy, and that its sewers smell; and they are impatient to ascertain "the character of the person" who could state that the City is not healthy. "Its healthfulness," they said in 1847, after all the evidence given on the subject, "is not to be surpassed."



Yet the Registrar-General proclaims that nearly six thousand children are annually destroyed in the City over and above the number that die in a neighbouring district, and that by no means a healthy one as compared with many rural districts. "If we take children under five years of age," says the Registrar General, "where neither disturbing causes nor occupations interfere, the deleterious influence of London in its present state will appear undisguised in all its magnitude."

The excess for the City of London as compared with the district above referred to, taken on an average of seven years, is shown by the Registrar General as follows:—

The deaths registered in London (1838-44) under 5 years of age were . . . . .	139,593
The deaths, if the mortality had not been higher than in Lewisham, would have been . . . . .	80,632
	<hr/>
	58,961

It will be seen immediately that the state of the City, with respect to its sanitary arrangements, is amply sufficient to account for this slaughter.

3. In contradiction to the correctness of the answer returned to our first question, which, with reference to the City of London, is to the effect that the sewers are of very little use, that it is doubtful whether they are not even mischievous, and that the stench arising from them is intolerable, the City Remembrancer says, "The whole of this answer is untrue. No place in the world has so complete a system of sewerage as the City of London. The whole City of London is well and effectually drained, and a complaint is scarcely ever made of any inconvenience from smell."

How is it possible that the Corporation of the City of London can venture to put forth such a statement as this in the face of the official information which has been constantly communicated to them and urged upon their attention during the last five years? Thus, in the Supplement to the Sanitary Report, published in 1843, at page 224, it is stated in evidence, by Thomas Abraham, Esq., Registrar of Deaths in the City of London Union, "that the drains in the City of London smell very strongly, which scarcely any one can fail to notice; that he has heard country people complain of them at times when they had not attracted any particular notice from himself; that there is a gully-hole near his own house, from which there was constantly an offensive smell; that a neighbour living two doors from him, being more annoyed by it than himself, after great efforts, succeeded in getting it trapped; since which he has not perceived any smell from it, though he still observes it in other places; that the gully-holes are trapped now in most of the respectable streets, but in the by and poor streets they are not trapped; that he has not the least doubt in the world that the existing state of the sewers in the City is the latent cause of much disease and death; that a great deal of active disease, which creeps on gradually and insidiously, may be traced to that cause; that with respect to the surface cleansing in the City, even the best streets are very badly cleansed, but in the poorer streets it is bad indeed—horribly bad! and that, in his opinion, if there were a perfect system of drainage and



cleansing in the City, there would be a considerable extension in the duration of the life of the inhabitants."

Mr. Thomas Porter, Surgeon to the St. Botolph's, Bishopsgate, district (p. 229), gives similar evidence: namely, "that the emanations from the sewers are most offensive and noxious; that you may tell the condition of the weather from the smells from the public sewers; that every person passing near the gratings must perceive a peculiarly offensive effluvium; that this effluvium is so great in the City, that no particular place is distinguished by being free from it." On being asked—Suppose a tradesman or a merchant returning from Change in a state of depression from anxiety passing through a street, exposed to a succession of smells and breathing the effluvium from such sewers; what is likely to be the effect upon him?—This witness answers, A low nervous fever, with considerable gastric derangement. The greater part of fever cases which I have to treat are of this description.

Is that with every class of persons?—Yes, with every rank of life.

At page 226, Henry Blenkarne, esq., South-west district Surgeon of the City of London Union, states:—"Where there have been deposits accumulating in the sewers, and the drains have been choked up, the effect has been just the same as if there had been cesspools; that the illness produced by such accumulations is just the same as that produced by cesspools, namely, a low depressing nervous fever, most like that which is described to be the form of jungle fever; that if any person in a state of mental or bodily depression should happen to be exposed to such an influence it would produce low fever; that in passing through the City he is often assailed with smells from gully-holes; that only yesterday, in passing through the City, the smells from many of the gully-holes were very offensive; and several medical friends agree with him in attributing extremely prejudicial consequences as arising from this cause."

Dr. Wray, a medical officer of the West London Union, states, that "even in the large public streets the effluvia from the sewers are often most offensive; that he himself was standing the other day at a snuff-shop in Fleet Street, when the effluvium from the gully-hole in the street was so bad that it was scarcely endurable, and that the people in the shop could not remain without shutting the door."

It is remarkable that Mr. Richard Kelsey, late Surveyor to the Commissioners of Sewers for the City of London, when under examination by the Health of Towns Commissioners in 1843, had his attention expressly drawn to these statements, and that he was unable in any instance to impugn their general correctness. He admits, indeed, that his own personal authority is not to be implicitly relied on in this matter. "I am a very incompetent witness upon this subject," he says, "for I cannot smell."\* We much fear that the City Remembrancer and the whole body of the City Commissioners of Sewers must be afflicted with the infirmity of their late surveyor.

But however this may be, a late Lord Mayor himself bears express testimony to the *constant* noxious influence of the sewers. In a letter written by direction of the Lord Mayor, and dated, Mansion House,

\* First Report of Health of Towns Commissioners, vol. i., p. 213.



July 30, 1846, application is made on the part of the Lord Mayor to the directors of the New River Company "to let out water during the night, so as thoroughly to flush and clear the several gullies and drains within their districts, and thereby prevent in a great measure THOSE NOXIOUS EXHALATIONS IN THE ATMOSPHERE WHICH ARE CONSTANTLY EMITTED FROM THE DECAYED ANIMAL AND VEGETABLE MATTER IN THE SEWERS."

But still more recently the state of certain parts of the City of London has been frequently and earnestly brought under the notice of the Corporation by a member of their own body, the late Dr. Lynch, in his place in the Common Council; who has left a brief, formal, and authentic embodiment of facts which he himself observed, and the record of which he has given in the shape of a presentment made by the ward inquest of St. Sepulchre's, containing the following among other averments:—

"The inquest of St. Sepulchre's parish, in the City of London, beg to state,—

"That in the performance of their official duties they made a personal inspection of the parish, and regret to find that the nuisances which had been from time to time presented to the Court of Aldermen continue not only uncorrected, but from time and circumstances much aggravated.

"They desire particularly to direct attention to the close, ill-ventilated, and undrained courts and alleys to be found in the Old Bailey, such as Elliot's Court, St. Dunstan's Court, Bear Alley, Green Arbour Court, Little Green Arbour Court, Dean's Court, New Court, Prujean Square, Horse-shoe Court, Ship Court, several courts in King Street, and Bull's Head Court, Queen's Head Court, Red Lion Place, and various courts and alleys in the parish of St. Sepulchre and around Smithfield.

"In such places they found that there is often only one privy, which numbers of both sexes, old and young, frequent, very much to the detriment of common decency and morality; and that the privies are exposed, and the stench arising therefrom is most revolting.

"That in such courts, where there are sewers, the stench is almost intolerable, the foul air escapes into the courts, and into the dwellings of the poor, and becomes a source of injury and annoyance to the poor, and the cause of disease and much suffering.

"That such sewers, without traps to prevent the escape of gas, and without an abundant supply of water, are a curse to the place rather than a benefit, and have always the inconvenience and effect of a prolonged cesspool; and the inquest have been informed by the medical officer of the district and the dispensary, that they are the perpetual cause of disease and death amongst the poor.

"That such courts and alleys are nuisances, that they are unfit for the healthy habitation of human beings, and are a disgrace to the sanitary supervision of the City of London.

"They regret that all the remonstrances of previous inquests have been neglected, that the frightful evils from which the poor suffer are unheeded, and that there is no proper Board or authority in the City of London to watch over the health of the inhabitants; the present neglected state of the localities in which the poor are compelled by their



necessities to live are revolting to the senses, and most disgraceful to a Christian community.

“ That the presentments have ceased to have any effect.

“ That the labours of the inquest are, consequently, useless, except in disclosing to the more respectable inhabitants the horrible state of those places, which was unknown to its full extent, except on an official visit, such as is made by the inquest.

“ The inquest found that the poor people are sensible of the sickness and misery occasioned by the frightful nuisances to which we refer, and they on our rounds directed our attention to open privies, and to gully-holes, from which they said, ‘ The stink was enough to suffocate you.’

“ In St. Dunstan’s Court, for example, a woman pointed to the whole basement floor, overflowing with the contents of the privy and cess-pool ; MANY OF THE JURY COULD NOT GO DOWN TO VIEW IT, FROM THE FOUL SMELL.”

The correctness of these statements, and the truth of Dr. Lynch’s representations and descriptions, have received the following melancholy confirmation by an eye-witness, also a member of the Corporation.

In a speech delivered by Mr. Anderton, a member of the Common Council, at the London Coffee House, on the 17th of August, 1847, on the occasion of a public meeting held to promote a subscription in behalf of the widow and children of Dr. Lynch, Mr. Anderton made the following observations :—

“ He had frequently heard Dr. Lynch expatiate largely upon the sanitary condition of the lower orders resident within the locality in which he was then speaking ; he had heard him describe the wretchedness of their dwellings for the want of a better sewerage, for the want of a better circulation of air, and a larger supply of that necessary of life—pure water, and the crowded state in which the poor were compelled to live ; but, like many others, he (Mr. A.) was incredulous to the statements, and could not believe that such things could exist in this the metropolis of England and the seat of Government, until at last he told Dr. Lynch that he would accompany him in his rounds, and examine into the condition of the poor himself ; and accordingly he devoted the best part of three days to that purpose. He visited, with the Doctor, some of those wretched localities he had so often spoken of ; and although within the immediate vicinity of Farringdon-street and Holborn-hill, he not only found the Doctor’s statements fully borne out, but such was the stench and unwholesome smells, that he is convinced that, if on the third day he had remained a few minutes longer in the place he was then visiting, he would not have been present at that meeting to tell the tale. Upon leaving the spot, which was in Field-lane, he was obliged to have recourse to a glass of brandy to relieve him from the nausea which affected him, and which he did not overcome for several days. He believed there were other parts of the City and the vicinity equally as bad, and no part of the kingdom worse. (Mr. Deputy Obbard, ‘ No, no.’) The Deputy said ‘ No, no ;’ it was because he had not visited them ; had he done so, he would have found that neither Dr. Lynch or himself (Mr. A.) had made any exaggeration in their statements ; and for the sake of the Deputy and his family, he



would recommend him to continue his ignorance ; or, like the Doctor, he too might fall a sacrifice in a public duty."

Mr. Anderton does not appear to have raised himself in the estimation of his fellow-corporators by the testimony which he thus bore to the real condition of the City ; for shortly afterwards we find him reproached for "promoting the sanitary humbug." Mr. Lawrence, also, the Builder-Commissioner, one of the superseded architects and builders of the Tower Hamlets Sewers Commission, now elevated to the dignity of Alderman, who in the Court of Common Council is so jocular on the sickness and mortality of the residents in courts and alleys, is accustomed to reply to any report or measure tending to remove their grievances or better their condition—"Humbug!"—"A piece of most extravagant humbug!" (laughter)—"Sanitary doctors solemnly called in to purify the atmosphere and to banish disgusting smells : it would turn out to be nothing but mere humbug!" (loud laughter)—"The comparison of any other city in the world in these (sanitary) respects with the City of London was ridiculous in the extreme, and calculated to fix upon the gentlemen whom he had been describing indelibly the character of humbug." (Laughter.) There is, indeed, bitter sarcasm here, but it is where neither this gentleman nor these laughers perceive.

Very recently, instances of a state of things similar to that described by Dr. Lynch in other parts of the City have been brought officially under the notice of the Corporation. Thus, it appears that, in consequence of complaints from residents, an Inquest Jury of Portsoken Ward was held on November 25, 1847, when the Court proceeded in two divisions to inspect the state of the ward as regarded the cleanliness and drainage of the several courts and alleys ; that, on reassembling, the Court reported that several of the courts, yards, and alleys, particularised by name, were in a filthy state, dangerous to the public health ; that some of them were undrained ; that the privies in general were in a disgusting state ; that in one house, two or three yards from one of the said privies, a man named Allen had been ill of fever and died at the Fever Hospital ; that the corpse was brought back to the said house and waked according to the Irish custom, and kept eight days uninterred ; that within a short time the man's mother, wife, and child died in the same house ; that on the opposite side of the court two poor women were severely ill, and that the medical gentleman who attended this district (Mr. Baller) had also died of fever caught by his attendance on these poor people ; and that the general appearance of the inhabitants was squalid and unhealthy.

It is further stated that on the reassembling of the Court on November 30, 1847, the foreman reported that he had, accompanied by several members of the Court, made the presentment to the Court of Aldermen ; that he felt it to be his duty to represent to the Court that two more deaths had occurred in the locality referred to within three days after the examination by the ward inquest, and he urged upon the Court the necessity for immediate abatement of the nuisances. Thereupon, the presentment having been received by the Court of Aldermen, it was referred to Mr. Alderman Moon to investigate and report again to the Court ; who did report to the Court to the following effect : namely,



that "it having been referred to him, as Alderman of Portsoken Ward, to make inquiry into the statements in a paper presented by the inquest of the ward, complaining of the existence of horrible nuisances in several of the lanes and alleys in that crowded and indigent neighbourhood, he had paid immediate attention to the subject; that he had certainly had to encounter not a little in the revolting adventure upon which he considered it his duty to go; and that all he could add upon the subject was, that HE WAS ASTONISHED HOW ANY HUMAN BEINGS COULD CONTINUE TO EXIST IN THE MIDST OF SUCH ABOMINATIONS AS HE WITNESSED IN THE PERFORMANCE OF THE MELANCHOLY DUTY."

On the same occasion it was stated by Mr. Nell that he had brought all these facts under the notice of the proper officer two years ago, but that all his representations were totally unheeded.

Notwithstanding such accounts of the state of numerous places within their jurisdiction, brought under their notice officially and most earnestly by members of their own body, the City Remembrancer declares that "the whole City of London is well and effectually drained, and a complaint is scarcely ever made of any inconvenience from smell;" and the City Commission of Sewers has persisted in affirming its deliberate conviction that "the City of London, for effective drainage, cannot be surpassed." What confidence can be placed in an authority which requires or allows its chief officers deliberately and repeatedly to make such unwarranted assertions?

But, supposing the belief of these official persons to be well founded, that the construction of the City sewers and drains is absolutely perfect, what is to be thought of the state of mind of Commissioners of Sewers who represent such works as practically perfect when nothing is done beyond the mere *construction* of the sewers and drains? Yet, such is the avowed belief of the City Remembrancer, and such was the opinion of the City Commissioners of Sewers, deliberately and officially expressed in April, 1847. Accordingly, there stand their sewers and drains at the present moment, isolated works, without any provision for supplying them with water. Nevertheless, it has been demonstrated—and during the last eight years at least the demonstration has been authoritatively promulgated—that sewers and drains unconnected with duly regulated supplies of water positively and most grievously aggravate the very evils they are intended to remove, and that under such circumstances they become in fact and effect extended cesspools; with this difference, indeed, that these elongated cesspools are placed under conditions far more favourable to the decomposition of their contents than the common cesspool, and far more favourable to the rapid and general diffusion of the poison they generate. Yet, when they had no means of supplying, and had made no attempt to supply, their sewers and drains with regulated supplies of water, they believed them to be perfect; they were not even conscious that, having made their sewer, but not having made provision for duly supplying it with water, they had accomplished only one-half of their work, and had left the most essential and difficult half of it undone. Surely, were any person intrusted with the execution of an ordinary matter of business, to display such deplorable incompetence and ignorance, and moreover to call on his employers for congratulation on the perfection with which he had accomplished his work, he would not be retained in office a single day. Nor would con-



fidence be restored if, some months after the publication of a Report expressly pointing out the essential imperfection in his work, this officer were to state that he was now "actively engaged in completing a system" for remedying the defect.

The City Remembrancer concludes his comment on the answers returned to our first question by the following observation:—"It is remarkable that no questions appear to have been addressed to the districts round the City of London, where several open sewers still exist and are very offensive, and which districts have been and still are under the control of the Crown."

No questions were addressed to these districts because their condition was notorious. They had been already and very recently officially examined and reported on. The City Remembrancer correctly states that these districts were and still are under the control of the Crown. The Crown made inquiry into the manner in which the several Commissions including these districts exercised their trust. On the Report of the Sanitary Commissioners the Crown was satisfied that these Commissioners had neglected and abused their trust, and it at once superseded these Commissions. It remains to be seen whether the Consolidated Commission which has taken their place will long allow these districts to continue in their present state.

4. The second query we proposed is—"Have the authorities of the town suggested spontaneously the adoption of complete sanitary arrangements of any one kind; for example, complete drainage, that is, complete house-drainage, with sewerage and suburban drainage?" The answer is "(London City), Certainly not."

"This answer," says the City Remembrancer, "is in direct contradiction to the fact, the City of London being, as the Commissioners believe, the only place in which complete house-drainage, with sewerage and all necessary provision for suburban drainage, have ever been attempted to be carried into effect."

Here it is again repeated inferentially that the City house-drainage with its sewerage is complete, whereas it has been shown that the City sewers and drains, accumulating deposit and without duly regulated supplies of water, are, in fact and effect, nothing but elongated cess-pools, and, instead of accomplishing their object, positively increase the evils they were intended to remove. But if the sewerage and the house-drainage in the City be indeed complete, as the Commissioners are here stated to believe, why do they go to Parliament for a new Bill, asking for new powers, especially when Mr. J. Daw, their principal clerk, tells them that, from his experience, he is of opinion that "there is no deficiency in the powers" they already possess; that "he considers that they have in every respect in the City of London all needful powers, with the single exception of that of compelling parties to drain, the expediency of which he doubts."\*

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\* In your experience is there found any deficiency in the powers of the Commissioners under your local acts?—I think not: I consider that we have in every respect in the City of London all needful powers, with the single exception of that of compelling parties to drain, the expediency of which, as I have already said, I doubt.

You think you have sufficient power to carry out the objects of the Commissioners bearing upon the health of the inhabitants?—Yes.—*First Report of Health of Towns Commission*, vol. i., pp. 196, 197. J. Daw, Principal Clerk. See questions 3183 and 3168.



Then as to the suburban drainage, with all the "necessary" provision to render that also perfect, where is it? who before has ever heard of it? who devised the plan of it? who executed the works? out of what fund has the expense been paid, and what portions of the community are reaping the advantages of it?

The second Report of the Sanitary Commissioners, published scarcely a month ago, contains the following statement:—"The marked prevalence of the epidemic typhus in the suburban districts, which we have already had occasion to notice, as well as of influenza, and the applications that we had received from the inhabitants of several of them, called our attention to the circumstances immediately affecting the condition of these districts. We find, upon such investigations as we have been enabled to make, that not only their condition, but the condition of the interior of the metropolis itself, is powerfully acted on and depressed by the state of the extensive marshes and ill-drained land in their immediate vicinity. These influences have long been observed by medical practitioners in the suburban districts; where, after a rainy period and during the drying up of the stagnant moisture of the marshes, marsh fever, scarlet fever, and other analogous diseases prevail.

"Throughout the urban districts there is a large amount of decomposition constantly going on from the action of the air on the filth and impure remains that are allowed to accumulate; and the presence of warmth and moisture promotes the decomposition. An accession of moisture to aid the process visibly arises both from the defective drainage of the town itself, and from the suburban marshes." How does it happen that "all the necessary provision" to render the drainage of these suburban marshes perfect has escaped the notice of these inquirers? and how does the City Remembrancer explain the equally remarkable fact that these "provisions" have not been observed by the inhabitants residing in the districts, who apply to the Sanitary Commissioners to relieve them from "epidemic typhus, influenza, marsh fever, scarlet fever, and other analogous diseases"?

5. To our tenth question, "Is there in the town any person who would be considered an authority with reference to sanitary works, and whom the townspeople would trust with the immediate expenditure of their own money upon such works?" the answer, with reference to the City of London, is "None." "If," says the City Remembrancer, "the question had been 'person or board,' this answer would have been in direct opposition to the fact. The citizens and inhabitants of London have been for a long series of years, and are still, disposed to trust the Commissioners of Sewers, who are annually appointed, with the expenditure of their own money for sewerage and sanitary purposes." In this statement the City Remembrancer confounds the distinction between the minority, composing the Corporation, and the majority, comprising the inhabitants of the City of London; between the members of the Corporation, themselves the representatives of a minority, and the majority, not represented in this civic council, consisting of capitalists, merchants, householders, and all who have not paid the tax for taking up their freedom—a tax indispensable to admission to the privilege of becoming retail dealers. That the Corporation have the confidence and sanction of this immense majority of the inhabitants



is an assumption without the shadow of evidence to authorize it. They have indeed an indisputable claim to the distinction—peculiar, it is believed, to the City of London among all the cities of civilised Europe—of having successfully contended for retaining the barbarism of preventing people from settling as retail dealers within their jurisdiction without taking up their freedom; that is to say, without paying to the Corporation a certain amount of money in the shape of fees. This minority of a minority, which, as compared with the whole of the metropolis, is in the proportion of about 129,000 to 2,000,000, has hitherto successfully contended against the interests of the majority within the City itself, and the far larger majority of the whole metropolis, in having improved markets; and is now contending against the great metropolitan interest in securing efficient sanitary arrangements.

But it is not true that the Corporation in general, or the Commissioners of Sewers in particular, have the confidence of the whole even of their own body. They are represented by some of their members to do their work so badly as to have lost their confidence, and these persons desire that the care of their interests should be placed in other hands. For proof of this we may cite the resolutions passed by the Ward Inquest of Farringdon Within, on December 16, 1847. It appears that, in consequence of a presentment made by the Inquest respecting an intolerable nuisance, “prejudicial to the health and comfort of the neighbourhood,” arising from the slaughter of animals in Warwick Lane, and the retention of the dung and filth, in the particular instance complained of, for three months without any removal, and sometimes even for three years, the City authorities prosecuted William Waight, of No. 11, Warwick Lane, who pleaded guilty to the indictment. The counsel for the prosecution then stated that they did not intend to proceed at present further in the matter, as the nuisance had in a great measure been abated, and Mr. Waight had promised to do all he could to get rid of it entirely. The Recorder said the City authorities would do all they could for the protection and comfort of the citizens, and thereupon called upon Mr. Waight to enter into his own recognizances of 40*l.* to appear at the next session if so called upon to do. He was however never called upon to appear; he continues to slaughter as heretofore; and no steps against him are likely to originate with the civic authorities until the inhabitants, sufficiently alarmed for their health, get up another petition, and cause another presentment to be made, and then the same delusive process of a prosecution will be gone through as before.

In consequence of the above abortive effort to suppress the nuisance, the Inquest passed the following Resolutions on December 16, 1847:—

Mr. C. L. Collard moved, and Mr. Harding seconded, the following Resolutions:—

“That this Inquest are of opinion that the slaughtering of calves and sheep in the cellars and private houses in Warwick Lane and in the environs of Newgate Market, together with the accumulation of filth and the stench arising therefrom, is prejudicial to the public health.

“That the ward of Farringdon Within, in common with the localities adjacent, are not sufficiently drained.

“That they think a comprehensive system of drainage will tend to improve the health of this crowded part of the City.



“That this Inquest pray the Government to extend to the City of London the advantages of the Commission now appointed on Sanitary Reform.

“That they are of opinion that one system of drainage under the control of a Central Board will be the most economical and at the same time the most effectual.”

It was then moved by Mr. Collard, and seconded by Mr. Willis, that copies of the foregoing Resolutions should be sent to Lord Morpeth, Lord John Russell, the Lord Mayor, and the Editor of the ‘Times’ newspaper. Lords Morpeth and Russell replied to the communication, but the Lord Mayor took no notice of it.

6. The City Remembrancer says that the Commissioners feel indignant at the manner in which the person selected to answer for the City of London has chosen to express himself with reference to their operations in his reply to the 11th question, namely, “Is the town prepared to intrust the local authority to make at once the whole outlay required for its sanitary improvement without any supervision or control?”—The answer is, “(London City)—There is no authority but would convert its opportunity into a means of most corrupt jobbing.” We are bound to say that we think this answer would have lost nothing in truth or force if it had been couched in more moderate and guarded terms; at the same time, from what we know of the character and position of our informant, we are satisfied that he could have been induced to use this language from no other consideration than that of his own strong conviction. Nor is any individual charged—nor, as we understand the answer, intended to be charged—with corruption; it is the system that is complained of—a system which, while it cannot but operate powerfully and very unfavourably on the mind, renders the mind itself apparently unconscious of its influence. An individual accustomed to this system, of respectable position and character, apparently without the slightest conception that his integrity can be impeached or even endangered, allows himself to be placed in circumstances in which the temptation to spend the public money to his own advantage and to the public disadvantage cannot but be deemed strong, if it be not irresistible. For example, an ex-Lord Mayor, one of the City Sewer Commissioners, who are a Board for paving as well as sewerage, was partner in a house whose business lies in providing granite for paving-boards. A clerk or foreman of this paving firm, having succeeded to the business from which this City Sewer and Paving Commissioner has retired, continues at the present time to pave the whole of the City under the jurisdiction of the Corporation. The Paving Commissioner himself is, or was at the end of last year, chairman of the Heyter Granite Company. Further, this same City Sewer and Paving Commissioner was a leading member of the lately superseded Westminster Sewers Commission; and we find him, along with three architects in practice, on a select committee of that Commission, which reported against Lord Morpeth’s Public Health Bill of last year. Another City Sewers Commissioner is in business as a leading builder, and this same builder was a member of the lately superseded Tower Hamlets and Holborn and Finsbury Sewers Commissions; an active member of all those commissions requiring the service of builders. Paviers are connected with builders, builders with paviers;



both classes of persons are active members of commissions that direct large and expensive works in brick, stone, and mortar. All these combinations of trading with official positions may be innocent and justifiable, and possibly even praiseworthy; but the parties can have no right to complain if reflections are made as to the passions and interests that may be called forth in such circumstances. Ought they not, out of delicacy, to avow the bias that they are under, and leave the opposition to new measures to be made by others? Other persons at present members of the City Commission of Sewers are builders.

Provided he possess the requisite knowledge and science for the office, we do not object to a baker being the chairman of the City Commission of Sewers because he is a baker, any more than we object to a tailor being a member of the recently consolidated Metropolitan Commission of Sewers; for we believe that integrity and ability are restricted to no calling or profession: but what we should object to would be, that a baker should be a member of a commission for supplying the commissariat department, or that a tailor should be an active member of a commission for supplying the clothing of the army and navy. Without doubt these Commissioners may be tradesmen of unimpeachable integrity; they may be impelled to give their time and energy to the several Commissions on which they have acted from the impulse of the purest patriotism: it is questionable, however, whether, when placed in such a position, their bias can always remain steadily on the side of the public interest; and it is certain that the public ought not to accept of services which, while they expose its disinterested servants to so much danger, offer no peculiar guarantee for the security of its own interests. Such unquestionably is the view taken of this matter by the Sanitary Commissioners. They found on the Commissions under the jurisdiction of the Crown architects and builders acting as prominent and influential members; they objected to this as an abuse directly contravening the interests of the public. Of a professional witness under examination the Sanitary Commissioners ask,—

“Do you consider architects, builders, agents, or persons in trade, or attorneys and conveyancers in practice, to be persons who can be considered qualified to act as ‘indifferent’ (that is, impartial) Commissioners within the meaning of the Act?—Certainly not. A person having a delicate sense of public duty would scarcely like, if he had a previous knowledge of the fact, to accept an office in which he could not act in an unbiassed manner without frequently offending his employers and customers, and in which, if he could not be tempted unduly to make friends, he would be sure to make bitter enemies.

“Is there not a clause in your recent Act prohibiting Commissioners from acting, when interested, under a heavy penalty?—There is a clause, but no penalty is attached to it.

“How is it that the clause was so loosely worded? who drew the clause?—The clause, as originally drawn, contained the penalty, but the Court of Sewers struck it out before it went to Parliament.

“Is the effect of the clause apparent? Is it serviceable to protect the public?—I fear not. In a recent instance, when the chairman rebuked a Commissioner interested for voting, he said he should do as he pleased, there was no penalty.”

The Crown Commissions, which afforded such facilities for abuse,



have been superseded by the Crown, and have been replaced by a consolidated Commission, the members of which have no ostensible trading or professional connexions or interests to serve. What already has been the result? According to the statement of Lord Morpeth in his charge to the jury delivered on the 6th of April, 1848, the Westminster district has already gained by the consolidation carried out by the Government—

1. A large increase of valuable service with a diminution of expense: namely, an additional staff of officers, consisting of a chief clerk, a consulting engineer, a chief surveyor, and two assistant surveyors; with a diminution of expense from 6000*l.* per annum for fragmentary and imperfect service to 4700*l.* for a consolidated and improved establishment, available, moreover, for all the other districts.

2. The greater efficiency of works which is dependent on systematic operations on a wide basis; in other words, the prevention of the worse than waste incurred by operations on a narrow basis—by feeble establishments acting on limited information.

3. A diminution of expense, which in some instances has already amounted to one-half, and in others to two-thirds, of the expense formerly incurred for much less efficient works.

The gains from consolidation then in this first instance in which it has been tried are—the increase of the force of the establishment, the increase of the efficiency of the works, and a reduction of the expense.

Thus far experience has afforded satisfactory proof that the act of firmness by which the Crown superseded and consolidated all the Commissions under its jurisdiction has conferred a signal benefit on the public. Of the importance of this benefit the public is beginning to have a just appreciation, but its full extent and manifold relations can be perceived only as time and service go on.

Should Parliament exercise a similar act of firmness and justice in respect to the City Commission, the like benefits will result to the public; the like “increase of the force of the establishment;” the like “increase of the efficiency of the works;” the like “reduction of expense.”

On looking closely into the matter, it is found that these local bodies, composed for the most part of a small number of individuals belonging to certain classes, and to which the City Corporators appeal for aid and sympathy in opposition to the Public Health Bill (aid and sympathy which they will doubtless receive), are pervaded by such interests as above described, and utterly destitute of any alliance or community of interest with the lower classes, whose wellbeing is the most affected by their proceedings. The earnest opposition to improvement, the determined resistance to the diminution of expense, are invariably found to come from some person who has, either directly or remotely, an interest in the maintenance of local office and patronage, or in the continuation of abuse and waste. Often, on inquiry, it is found that the individual who takes the lead in opposition to the particular improvement advocated has been either directly or indirectly connected with the description of work or with the expenditure which the improvement would affect. Thus the name of the City Sewer and Paving Commissioner to whom we have already alluded, and who was also a



member of the Westminster Commission of Sewers, is found in the Committee of Sewers Commissioners appointed to remonstrate against and oppose the consolidation of the business of sewerage, draining, and paving, proposed by Lord Morpeth's first Bill. This Commissioner was opposed to this measure of sanitary improvement. The City Sewers Commissioner, the superseded member also of the Tower Hamlets and of the Holborn and Finsbury Sewers Commissions, the builder, was reported to have made so furious a speech in the Court of Common Council against sanitary reform as to have led to the inquiry as to who and what he was, which inquiry speedily solved the question why this Commissioner was opposed to sanitary improvement. Very recently a person in the employment of the paving firm in which the City Sewers Commissioner, and late Lord Mayor, was formerly the chief partner, was observed delivering circulars, with the City arms upon them, to parochial vestries and paving boards, urging resistance to sanitary improvement. It was observed by the late Dr. Lynch, who, towards the close of his career, was placed in a position in which some of these mysteries were necessarily revealed to him, as one of the shocking things of the day, the audacity with which men steeped in private interest, either their own direct personal interest or that of their immediate connexions, came forward, alleging purely public grounds, as opponents of measures of improvement. You see a man with an angry air, in the pride of disinterested, offended patriotism, coming forward as the advocate of a grievous abuse or the opponent of an economical and beneficial improvement. Who is that member of the Common Council who declaims with such fervour in favour of corporate rights? He is the father of one of the City printers! Who is that fluent defender of the beauty and perfection of civic institutions? That is the City Solicitor! Who is that other member, not only of the Common Council but of the City Commission of Sewers, who steadily votes against interference with this Board; *i. e.* against proceedings for the creation of a disinterested authority charged with the office of compelling the owners of ill-conditioned tenements to do their duty and obey the laws set up for the protection of the public against nuisances? That is the owner of tenant-property occupied by the poorer classes, of which an inspector reports—"IT SURPASSES ANY PLACE I HAVE EVER SEEN IN HORRORS: it was streaming with blood, with the thin excrementitious fluids of newly-slaughtered animals, and water. The gully-hole into which these impurities were discharged had a rotten, sickening smell of the most horrible nature, well calculated for venting or spreading pestilential disease." Whence proceeds this outcry against interference with local self-government and Saxon institutions (created, it may be remarked, by recent local acts, and in the case of the City by the 11th of Geo. III. c. 21)? Is it from the labouring classes, the largest portion of the community, inhabiting the courts and alleys? Is it from the majority of rate-paying householders, who, in the Corporation district, have voice in the local elections? Or is it not rather from Paving Boards, and from local officers, whose works, apart from the question of economical administration, are proved to be the most inefficient and the most wasteful in the country?

We have had in England political agitation about forms of government, how far monarchy, aristocracy, or democracy will best promote



the public weal; but the question which at present more immediately concerns the people of England is, whether they shall be, in the most essential of all matters, ruled by a Jobocracy; whether all the arrangements that concern their health shall continue to depend on the views and interests of tradesmen and the officers of local Boards; whether they shall be obliged for ever to live in confined and filthy dwellings to keep up the exorbitant rents of a number of sub-letters, lessees, and small owners; whether they shall be for ever subject to filth in their persons and in their streets to sustain separate and expensive office-bearers under separate boards of management which would disappear on consolidation; whether they must for ever rest satisfied with scanty supplies of bad water, charged to them at a most expensive rate, to pay the dividends of a trading company whose two hundred-pound shares are worth some two thousand pounds; and whether the majority of the inhabitants of London must for ever submit to the small minority of persons exercising an uncontrolled patronage of upwards of one hundred thousand pounds for office-bearers. Is not the time come when the people of England should insist on having intelligent, scientific, and responsible supervision over public works, paid by public rates, executed by local bodies—that is, on making local executive bodies really responsible, and not allowing them to remain, as they now are, independent sovereignties, levying the most oppressive taxes for the most inefficient works? It is this supervision, this practical responsibility, which all past experience shows to be essential to secure the public interests, on the one hand against wasteful parsimony, and on the other hand against wasteful and inefficient expenditure,—it is this supervision of local bodies which we advocate, and not their abolition; we regard these bodies as useful and constitutional servants of the public, but only constitutional and useful when under the direction and control of a competent authority, itself accountable to Parliament.

The City Remembrancer concludes his letter by stating his apprehension, and that of the City Commissioners of Sewers, that the Health of Towns Association “allows itself to be made the tool of parties who have in view objects very foreign to the promotion of health, cleanliness, and morality, being nothing less than their own personal advancement and aggrandisement, at the expense of the liberties and rights of others.” This virtuous alarm seems to have taken possession of the Corporation, for another high officer, the City Solicitor, is reported to have declared his belief that the whole object of sanitary agitation is to procure small places for small people. The atmosphere of a Corporation seems to be favourable to the suggestion of such trains of thought. The Lord Mayor, whose state for the service of the City costs annually as much as the nation pays to four of its cabinet ministers for performing the business of the whole country; the City Chamberlain, the City Solicitor, the City Comptroller, and the City Remembrancer himself, whose individual emoluments for the legal and administrative service of the City equal, if they do not exceed, those of the Under Secretaries of State for conducting the business of the nation, may indeed look down with contempt on such small people as the advocates of sanitary improvement. The money loss from the avoidable sickness, premature mortality, and the excess of funerals in



the City of London, was estimated in the tables of the Association for 1842 at two hundred thousand pounds per annum; and this loss must be continued because, according to the civic economists, a per-centage may not be paid to officers of health or men of science for their labours in preventing it. But we may be permitted to doubt whether the people of England will take precisely the same view of this matter as the corporators of the City. While such enormous sums are spent in nuisances which depress the population, the people of England may be of opinion that it would not be a waste of the public money to give some small remuneration to men of science for removing the causes of sickness and stopping the physical—and thereby in part checking the moral—degradation of the population. The Corporation of the City of London indeed scoff at such objects and aims, as they did at the views and labours of the late Dr. Lynch, whose widow and children they suffered to be dependant on a charitable subscription, when he fell a sacrifice to his exertions for the poor in those noisome and poisoned dens in which they allow vast masses of the people to reside. But those who have long devoted their time and energy to awaken the public to a sense of the physical and moral suffering and degradation which are at present permitted to go on, but which might be prevented by means which they have clearly and practically indicated, indulge the hope that that public will in general take no part in the attempt thus made to pour contumely upon them.

But after all, my Lord, the great issue which should be placed before you, on which this Corporation should be tried, is their deliberate and constantly repeated and recent statement that **THE CITY OF LONDON, FOR HEALTH, CLEANLINESS, EFFECTIVE DRAINAGE, LIGHTING, AND THE SUPPLY OF WATER TO THE INHABITANTS, CANNOT BE SURPASSED.** Are these allegations true, or are they false? You yourself have visited the courts and alleys of the City of London, in which the poorer classes reside, and which are included in these unqualified assertions. Are these places provided with sewers and drains which do not emit offensive odours? Are they provided with an ample supply of water fit for the use of human beings? Are the lanes and alleys which you visited cleanly, or is cleanliness possible with the arrangements which you witnessed? Did the people whom you saw, the children and the adults, appear to you to be healthy, and did they express to you their satisfaction with the comforts afforded them by the City authorities? We beg leave to call upon your Lordship as a witness to state the facts as you found them; and to take respecting them the course which, as a member of the Legislature, and with your sense of the duties belonging to that high office, you think the truth and the public interests, and especially the interests of our poorer brethren, require.

We regard the letter addressed to your Lordship by the City Remembrancer as so important a declaration on the part of the Corporation of the City of London, that we think it ought to be referred to the Sanitary Commissioners, to whom we have accordingly transmitted it.

(Signed on behalf of the Sub-Committee)

T. BEGGS, *Secretary.*



May 2, 1848.

SIR,

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your letter in reply to a communication made to me by the City Remembrancer.

You appeal to me for any opinion that I can give in respect of the health, cleanliness, effective drainage, and supply of water, in certain parts of the City of London.

My answer to this appeal need not be long. I entirely concur in the sentiments expressed by Mr. Anderton at a public meeting held in behalf of the widow and children of Dr. Lynch; and am fully convinced that no one of those who gainsay the statements of the advocates of sanitary reform has ever himself inspected those filthy and unwholesome localities.

I have perambulated not a few of them in company with a medical gentleman, and I must unhesitatingly offer my emphatic and deliberate testimony that the language and description of the letter you have just addressed to me fall short of the real abominations which are hourly endured by the wretched inhabitants of those courts and alleys.

It is affirmed, you say, by some of your opponents, that "the City of London, for health, cleanliness, effective drainage, and the supply of water, cannot be surpassed." It may be so: science may, possibly, have done its best in the metropolis of the British empire. Unlearned as I am in these matters, I do not presume to give an opinion on that head. But, if such be the case—if knowledge and zeal can do no more for the physical benefit of these masses of living beings, why, then it is evident that thousands upon thousands are inevitably doomed to a disgusting and hopeless degradation.

I am, Sir,

Your very obedient, humble Servant,

(Signed)

ASHLEY.

*Mr. Thomas Beggs.*



I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter in  
reply to a communication made to me by the City Health Officer.

Your appeal to my for my opinion that I can give in respect of the  
health, cleanliness, efficient drainage, and supply of water, in certain

parts of the City of London.

I have answered this appeal and will be long, I entirely concur in the  
statements expressed by Mr. Anderson at a public meeting held in  
behalf of the widow and children of Dr. J. J. J. and an fully con-  
vinced that none of those who gave the statements of the above-  
mentioned cases of sanitary reform has ever himself inspected these filthy and  
unwholesome premises.

I have perambulated not a few of them in company with a medical  
gentleman, and must unhesitatingly offer my emphatic and deliberate  
testimony that the language and description of the letter you have  
just addressed to me fall short of the real conditions which are  
hourly endured by the wretched inhabitants of those courts and alleys.

It is affirmed, in an way, by some of your opponents, that "the City  
of London, for health, cleanliness, efficient drainage, and the supply of  
water cannot be surpassed." It may be so; but unless many, possibly

have done its best in the metropolis of the British empire. I pointed  
out to you in this matter. I do not presume to give an opinion on that  
head. But it would be the case of knowledge and skill can do no  
more for the physical health of these masses of living beings, why,  
then it is evident that thousands upon thousands are inevitably doomed  
to a disgusting and hopeless degradation.

Yours very truly,  
(Signed)  
Mr. Thomas Bage