

afforded Dr. Chalmers and Dr. Alison, the two rival authorities upon this question, an opportunity of bringing forward the facts upon which their opinions are founded.

A resolution was passed by the Committee of the Section, recommending that the Council of the Association should take steps to urge upon the Government the expediency of extending the system of registration of births, deaths, and marriages, now operating in England, to Scotland;* and the following grants of money were recommended by the committee, and sanctioned by the General Committee.

1. 100*l.* for continuing inquiries into the actual state of Schools in England Committed to Sir C. Lemon, Bart., M.P., Lieut.-Col. Sykes, H. Hallam, G. R. Porter, and J. Heywood, Esqrs.
2. 100*l.* for the purpose of inquiring into Vital Statistics. To Lieut.-Col. Sykes, Drs. W. P. Alison and R. Cowan, G. R. Porter, J. Heywood, E. Chadwick, and A. Watt, Esqrs.
3. 25*l.* for continuing inquiries into the Mining Statistics of the British Coal Fields. To Professor Johnston, H. T. De la Beche, W. L. Wharton, T. Wilson, J. Heywood, D. Milne, C. R. Baird, and T. Edington, jun., Esqrs.

The next meeting of the Association will be held at Devonport, but the day is not yet fixed.

Illustrations of the Practical Operation of the Scottish System of Management of the Poor. By W. P. ALISON, M.D., Professor of the Institutes of Medicine in the University of Edinburgh.

[Read before the Statistical Section of the British Association, on 18th September, 1840.]

IN laying some statements on this subject before this Section of the Association, I am perfectly aware that this is not the tribunal by which the question either of the religious obligation, of the humanity, or the policy, of a uniform and fixed provision for the poor is to be tried. I am well aware of the restrictions which have been wisely imposed on the discussion of any such questions here; and it is only in so far as I shall have it in my power to lay numerical statements before this meeting, illustrating the efficacy or inefficacy of the system now in force in Scotland regarding the management of the poor, that the subject can be properly brought under the view of the Section.

I may state it, however, as a matter of fact, that the Scotch Law on this subject differs from the English, and from the laws of the greater part of Europe, chiefly and most essentially in this, that it is a law continually and avowedly neglected or disobeyed; whereas in these other countries, the law on the subject is practically and uniformly enforced. The Statute Law of Scotland *requires* the heritors, ministers, and elders of parishes, and the magistrates of burghs, to make provision for the “needful sustentation of *all aged poor and impotent persons*, to enable them to live unbeggared,” and “to tax and stent the inhabitants” when necessary, for this purpose; but I need hardly say, that in practice this law is not strictly executed in any parish in Scotland; that in many hardly any attempt is made to execute it, and that the practice under it is exceedingly irregular, and bears no fixed relation either to the number or the degree of destitution of the poor; the sums applied in the

* A copy of this will be given in the next Number.

way of legal provision, for their relief, varying from $\frac{1}{2}d.$ to $3s. 6d.$ a head over the population of different parishes, and the smallest of these sums being awarded, not where the destitution is least, but on the contrary, according to the testimony of impartial observers, in districts where the condition of many of the poor is "as wretched as is compatible with human existence."*

I may also state it as a matter of fact, that the immediate cause of this extreme irregularity is that peculiarity of the Scotch practice, by which those persons, or the representatives of those, who are to pay the tax for this purpose, are vested with an uncontrolled power, both of levying the tax, and of apportioning the relief given by it, there being practically no appeal from the decisions on this last point, which are given by the heritors and kirk-sessions of parishes and the magistrates of burghs.

It is also matter of fact, and for the credit of the country it ought to be stated in connexion with what has now been said, that the reason why the practice of the country is so widely at variance with its statute law is, the prevalent belief, if not of the inexpediency of that law, at least of great and formidable evils being inseparably connected with its execution, and of the wisdom, therefore, of holding it in abeyance, and resorting to it only on extreme emergencies.

I believe it will not be denied that this opinion rests especially on two grounds—on the alleged effects of a uniform and efficient provision for the poor (such as was contemplated by the statute); *first*, on their *number*, and *secondly*, on their *character*. The practice under the law, and its remarkable deviation from the spirit of the law, have been regulated by the belief that any fixed and legal provision for the poor, on which they know that they can depend, necessarily tends to an increase of their number, and so aggravates the evils it is intended to relieve; and farther, that such provision necessarily destroys all independence of character in those who receive it, and thereby essentially injures the conduct and feelings of the lower orders and the morality of the country. It is plain that the *onus probandi* rests on those who counsel us to neglect a disobedience of the Statute Law of the Land; and that especially as the arguments used for the purpose appear obviously, and are explicitly stated by the most celebrated advocate of that opinion (Mr. Malthus), to apply equally against private charity (which, as he says, has always the same tendency as the legal provision), and therefore persuade us to give no direct obedience to the positive precepts of the Gospel.

I believe I have fairly stated the main grounds on which men of the most undoubted patriotism and benevolence not only approve of the present practice, but wish to see it carried much farther, and the voluntary system of relief to the poor everywhere substituted for the legal provision.

Now in regard to both these points, it is not only possible to have statistical information, but highly desirable that no other kind of information should be held to be satisfactory.

Many facts may be quoted which seem to me to prove, not only that the Scotch system of neglect or practical disobedience of the law has had

* Fullarton and Baird on the Highlands and Islands.

no beneficial effect in the way of repressing the numbers of the poor, but even that the pressure of population on subsistence has rapidly increased, and is peculiarly great, in Scotland; greater, I believe, more burdensome on many of the richer inhabitants, and more destructive of human life, of happiness, and of all reasonable prospect of religious and moral improvement in the sufferers themselves, than it is in any of those European countries where the relief of destitution is invested with the authority, and administered with the uniformity, of law. Even in the country districts of Scotland, I believe this will be found, on careful inquiry, to be the case to a greater extent than many suppose: and that it is not uniformly the case throughout the country, I take to be owing chiefly to two causes, *first*, to the residence of the families of many landed proprietors who are charitably disposed—a contingency for which the experience of other districts sufficiently indicates that there is no security; and, *secondly*, to the proximity, to most parts of the country, of pretty large towns, in which there is a more variable and often a more rapidly increasing demand for labour, and a greater variety of means of obtaining charitable assistance. It is, therefore, only by investigating the state of the population in the larger towns, that the degree of pressure of the population on the demand for labour, and on the means of subsistence throughout the country, can be duly estimated.

It has sometimes been stated, that poor families from country parishes resort in great numbers to the large towns merely in order to become paupers; but this is not a common case. They come to the great towns much more generally in search of work; but they come not only in greater number than the existing demand for labour permanently requires, but in many instances when partially disabled; and if they lose their employment or become disabled, wholly or partially, even within a short time after their arrival, they hardly ever return to their places of nativity, but remain at least the greater part of the year, to seek for irregular and precarious employment, and to swell the lists of suitors for public and private charities in the towns.

The existing law of settlement by three years' residence, as I am assured, has no foundation in statute, but only in the practice of certain parishes, which was first approved and sanctioned by the Court of Session as late as 1767. The Statute Law of 1579 expressly declares, that the parish which is bound to support every indigent person is the parish of his nativity, when known; and that it is only when the place of nativity cannot be ascertained, that he becomes chargeable on the place of his usual resort for the last seven years, which term was changed in 1663 to three years: and afterwards, in 1693, the term of seven years was restored; but since 1767 the place of usual resort for the last three years has been the only recognized ground of settlement.*

The following documents (some of which were laid before the public in my reply to Mr. Monypenny) prove to what an extent the charities, legal and voluntary, of Edinburgh and other large towns in Scotland, are burdened by persons from other parts of the country; they shew that a very large majority of the destitute poor, receiving charitable assistance in Edinburgh and other towns in Scotland, would be maintained by other

* See Dunlop on the Poor Laws of Scotland, and Report of a Speech by Mr. Drysdale, in the Edinburgh Town Council, in the *Scotsman* Newspaper, August 1840.

parts of the country if the Statute Law was restored, or the English practice as to settlement introduced; and even that a very considerable portion of them would be thrown back on other districts, if the law now in operation were so enforced throughout the country, as to offer the means of subsistence in every parish to all who are recognized as its legal poor.

Of 871 out-pensioners of the City Charity Workhouse, it has been found, on accurate scrutiny by Dr. Wallace, that only 259, or 1 in 3·36, are natives of Edinburgh; and of 432 inmates of that house, only 143 are natives. Now of the 901 paupers thus shewn to be deriving aid from the legal provision in Edinburgh, but who are not natives, a very small number only could, by the old Statute Law, have acquired a settlement there, and at least 800 would have been charged on the places of their birth or parentage, to which many of them would have been removed.

In like manner, of 999 paupers of Dundee, it appears that only 344 were natives of that town, and of the remaining 655—

570 were natives of other parts of Scotland.			
64	„	„	Ireland.
16	„	„	England.
3	„	„	British America.
2	„	„	Foreign Countries.*
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655			
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Of 1517 paupers at Aberdeen, only 420 are natives, and 616 are persons who have spent the best of their days before coming thither, many of whom became paupers immediately on the expiry of their three years' residence; hence, a recurrence to the Statute Law of Scotland would prove almost as great a relief to those towns as to Edinburgh.†

Of 272 paupers on the roll at Dumfries—

108 are natives of Dumfries.		
50	„	Ireland.
4	„	England.
110 are from different parts of Scotland.		
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272†		
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The same general observation applies to the medical charities, and to the different voluntary charities, of our great towns.

Thus, of 282 inmates of the Infirmary at Edinburgh, in April 1840, only 91 were natives of that town, and 124 had not even passed the prime of life in Edinburgh, having only come thither either very recently, or else at a time of life when their labour could no longer be useful to the city.

The number of stranger-poor in the hospitals of Glasgow appears to be still greater. Dr. Cowan found that, of 178 inmates of the Royal Infirmary, in April 1840, only 38 were natives of Glasgow, and 98 had not passed the prime of life there. Dr. Perry states, that not more than 15 per cent. of the patients admitted into the Albion-street Fever Hos-

* For this Table I am indebted to Dr. Davidson, of Dundee.

† This statement was published by Mr. Urquhart, one of the Magistrates of Aberdeen.

‡ This I have from Mr. Gemmell, Manager of the Poor at Dumfries.

pital were natives, and 25 per cent. had not been three years resident ; that 30 per cent. were from Ireland, and 40 per cent. from the Highlands and agricultural districts of Scotland.

Of every 100 individuals received into the House of Refuge in Edinburgh, on account of their destitution, not more than 35 are found to be natives of that town ; and of 230 inmates at one time, 93 were found to have been less than a year in Edinburgh.

Of 2,910 admissions into the Night Refuge connected with that Institution in Edinburgh, in July 1840—

1,185	were from	Edinburgh, St. Cuthbert's, and Canongate parishes.
86	„	Leith.
56	„	Dalkeith, Duddingston, Musselburgh, and Portobello parishes.
418	„	Lanark, and Renfrewshire.
601	„	all other parts of Scotland.
136	„	England.
423	„	Ireland.
25	were	Foreigners.

2,910 *

Of 346 persons applying for relief to the Benevolent and Strangers' Friend Society, in July 1840, which is by no means restricted in its operation to persons who are strangers in Edinburgh, 14 were natives of Edinburgh.

Of persons not natives, but who have spent the prime of life in Edinburgh, there were—

65	Scotch.
51	Irish.
21	English.

137

Of persons not natives, and who have not spent the prime of life in Edinburgh, there were—

89	Scotch.
77	Irish.
29	English.

195

The Treasurer of the House of Refuge states that “many of the most destitute poor, even the lame and blind, entitled to aid from country parishes, refuse to leave Edinburgh, because little or nothing is done for the poor in their parishes ;” and, in confirmation of this, nine of the clergymen, visitors of the Destitute Sick Society, and medical men, who have returned answers to the queries on these subjects lately circulated in Edinburgh, state, as consistent with their personal knowledge, that “many destitute persons living in Edinburgh are entitled to assistance in other towns, or country parishes, but do not claim it.” Of this many examples have fallen under my own observation.

I have a list of 48 poor families, with whom I have accidentally met, all living in a most destitute state in Edinburgh, who have, as yet, no parish claim in it, but state themselves to be parishioners of other parts of Scotland, to which, however, they will not return.

* These statements I have from Captain Thomson, Treasurer of the House of Refuge.

Again, another consequence of the inadequate provision in all parts of Scotland for those who cannot maintain themselves by labour, and of the total absence of provision for those who are unemployed, is the number of beggars and vagrants found, at least in certain seasons of the year, in all parts of the country. For example:—From a Table sent to me by Mr. Gray, of Peterhead, of the number of stranger-beggars and vagrants who have entered that town during eight years preceding 1840, it appears that the total number was 6,765, averaging 845 each year.

Mr. List, Superintendent of Police at Haddington, states, in an examination before a Committee of the House of Commons, that he considers all Scotland as very much infested with vagrants; and that there are many who domicile themselves in Edinburgh during the winter, and in summer make their circuit, content with lying in farm-offices and barns, and begging through the day. He states, further, that of those known to him as vagrants, he had not known any apprehended as criminals; from which I think it fair to infer that, with many of them at least, vagrancy is the consequence of destitution only.

To the same purpose, Dr. Somerville Alison, in a Report made to, and printed by direction of, the Poor Law Commissioners, states, as to the little town of Tranent, that “almost all who are comfortable, even working-people, afford some relief, *almost daily*, to some of the numerous beggars who crowd about their doors; and that there are there 15 or 20 lodging-houses, the head quarters of beggars, generally crowded with them and paupers, and in which men, women, and children, live and sleep promiscuously in the same rooms.” Mr. Gemmell, Manager of the Poor at Dumfries, gives, in a letter to myself, an instructive statement as to the vagrancy at that place, and as to the irregularity and inefficacy of the voluntary system in meeting it.

“About 60 of the permanent paupers had, for many years, been privileged to beg through the town every Saturday, with a large badge, or brass plate, with many others who joined in the ranks with no badge, but took their chance. They had also their set day in the country, and their set hour and call at every house and shop; some served them weekly, others every fortnight, and others monthly; houses and shops were besieged at the time. The town resolved to abandon this system, and to suppress all public begging; about 400*l.* was subscribed, annually, for four years, and each ‘badger,’ as he was called, was paid 1*s.* 6*d.* per week, and a lodging-house-keeper was engaged, to whom all beggars and vagrants were referred, by tickets, for supper and bed; this cost upwards of 100*l.* per annum. *Subscriptions began to fail from those who could well afford it*, and this system was of necessity abandoned. A voluntary assessment was next resorted to, for one year, but *it also failed*; hence our legal assessment since June 1834.” The expenditure, in cash, on the number of vagrants and beggars who visited Dumfries between January 1834 and February 1837, when the system was abandoned, was as follows:—

			£.	s.	d.
1834	No. of vagrants	640 (2½ months no funds)	19	0	0
1835	„	1,120	22	0	0
1836	„	1,610	37	0	0
1837	..	163 (for 1st month). . .	4	10	0

Average, about 3*d.* each.

“ Since February, 1837, they have been thrown upon the public, with the exception of about 5*l.* annually paid to them by the Session Treasurer. In 1836 the poor Irish passed through this town, in summer, to the south, in great bands; there were a great many mechanics, &c., connected with the Unions, Secret Societies, Strikes, and Chartists, who were passing and repassing. When these Societies were discovered and broken up, and the operatives again at work—a constabulary force established through the Stewartry of Kirkcudbright and Wigton, to suppress vagrancy and mendicity—the Poor Law introduced into Ireland—and the cheapness and facility of communication by steam-vessels, by which the poor Irish can reach Glasgow, Liverpool, &c., much increased—poor Irish families have been in much smaller numbers. Within the last six months, however, vagrants in general (not Irish families) *have very much increased*; but, not coming in contact with them now, having no provision for them, I can offer no opinion as to the cause.”

The number of such vagrants from towns spreading themselves over the country in summer is considered, by some of the inhabitants of country parishes, as compensating for the number of paupers coming from the country who establish themselves in towns. I believe it will be found, however, that but a small proportion of these vagrants are natives of the towns which they make their place of residence during the winter; but the evil thus pressing on the country parishes is only another indication of the redundancy of the population, and of the inefficacy of the present system of management of the poor.

It is hardly necessary to say that it is no answer to this and other statements, shewing a great redundancy of population in Scotland, to observe that many of these persons are of irregular and profligate character, and that their want of employment is to be ascribed to that cause. In many cases this is true, and in many others it is not true; but what concerns us at present is not the characters of the individuals, but the fact of their number being in excess. All lines of industry are well supplied, and there is generally no complaint of lack of hands; but, nevertheless, there is this large number of persons, partly able-bodied, but a greater number partially disabled, whose employment is scanty and precarious. If their characters were better, probably many of them would be more regularly employed; but then, the demand for labour being the same, others would fall out of work and take their places. Whenever the population is redundant, persons of irregular character will have most difficulty in finding employment, and the same is true of those who have any physical defect; but this does not affect the question of the existence of redundancy, and its attendant evils.

Of the actual redundancy of population, of the want of employment, and of the destitute condition of many of the poor in Edinburgh, I have it in my power to give further authentic information, confirming, as I think, all the statements which I formerly laid before the public. This has been obtained by answers to queries circulated by the association lately formed in Edinburgh for inquiry into pauperism, which were addressed to numerous clergymen of different persuasions, to missionaries employed under the direction of the clergy in the poorer parts of the town, to the lay visitors employed by different charitable societies, and

the medical officers of dispensaries. Answers were received only from a small number of these gentlemen, but in all there were 28 answers, and of these an analysis was drawn up by Mr. Forbes. I shall here quote, first, the queries successively; next, the general result of the answers; and lastly, a few individual answers to each query, returned by gentlemen who have had peculiar opportunities, and have taken pains on the subject, and almost all of whose answers apply to different portions of the town, and so illustrate the extent of the evil.

I beg it may be observed that these answers relate to a town in which there are hardly any manufactures, and in general little fluctuation of employment, and to a season, in which the resort of the higher ranks to it was greater than usual, and the winter not unusually severe. I think I need hardly say, that without going into such details, the mere statement of the number of *paupers*, and of the sums expended on them in different parts of Scotland, give no information whatever as to the existing amount of *destitution*, or the efficacy of existing means for its relief.

Q. 1.—Have you seen, during the last or recent winters, many persons and families in a very destitute state?

General Answer.—26 out of 28 answer—“Yes.”

The Rev. Dr. Brinton, and *Rev. Mr. Hunter*, of the Tron Church, answer—“Certainly; but much of the population in the most destitute districts is so fluctuating, that no correct numbers can be quoted.” *The Rev. Mr. Fraser* states—“Having been in the habit of daily visiting poor families in every part of the city for nearly 15 years, I think I may say that there are many hundreds of families, and many thousands of individuals, in extreme want.” *The Rev. Mr. Guthrie*, of the Grey Friars’ Church, answers—“Very many, but for the soup kitchen and private charity two winters ago, must have been starved to death. Every day of my visitation of the greater part of my parish, I am distressed by scenes of extreme destitution.” *Mr. Dalziel*, Missionary of the High Church, says—“The population of the High Church parish is about 2,500, and of these there are 103 families permanently or occasionally in destitute circumstances.” *Mr. M’Donald*, being a visitor of the Destitute Sick Society, answers—“I distributed tickets for food to the destitute in February and March, on the north side of the High Street, from Chalmers-close to Anchor-close, and relieved from 80 to 90 families—about 250 persons; of these 32 were widows with children, 29 single women, 15 labourers, and 8 tradesmen, all out of employment.” *Mr. Orrack*, a very experienced visitor in another district, (chiefly the Old Church parish) says—“That out of 500 families, he found 80 in a very destitute state.” *Mr. F. Wilson*, another lay visitor, answers—“I assisted in distributing the temporary fund raised by subscription for the destitute poor, and relieved 58 families in very destitute circumstances, in Richmond-street, Simon-square, and Cross-causeway” (a district at some distance from any of the others above noticed); “I have no doubt that many in the district were equally destitute, who did not apply, not being aware of the fund.”

Q. 2.—Have you seen many whose furniture, bedding, and clothing, had been pawned or sold for subsistence?

General Answer.—22 out of 25 answer—“Yes.”

Mr. Dalziel answers—"Almost all the working classes, when destitute, resort to one or other of these expedients, but the greater part of those whom I stated as in destitute circumstances, have little or nothing, either of furniture or clothing, to pawn or sell." This is the condition of 103 families out of 2,500 people. *Mr. M'Donald* answers—"I have seen a miserable destitution of the furniture and clothing, and was frequently told they had been disposed of for subsistence, and in many cases have no doubt it was true." *Mr. Wilson* answers—"In 14 of the above cases, the houses were *entirely without either furniture or bedding*, most of them said to be sold for subsistence, and many more I ascertained to have sold part of their furniture to procure the means of subsistence." The following striking answer is given by the *Rev. Mr. Guthrie*—"I know of many such cases; the miserable pittance which they receive from the public funds leaves them no choice; they must pawn their furniture in many cases, and beg or starve. The result is deplorable. Their Sunday clothes are pawned, the house of God is neglected, character is lost, low habits are contracted, and step by step those who were once decent, sober, church-going people, sink down into the lowest stage of sin and suffering." *Dr. Wood*, nine years a medical officer of the New Town Dispensary, says—"I have visited rooms destitute of every article of furniture, where there was only a little straw for bedding, and hardly sufficient bed-clothes for decency. Very often, during sickness or temporary want of employment, body-clothes are pawned, the want of which when they recover, or when employment offers, prevents them from accepting it. I often meet with persons who for want of proper clothing are ashamed to go to the infirmary." *Dr. Paterson*, being in the same institution, but employed in another part of the town, says—"I visit many who have no furniture and no bed, but some straw laid on the floor, and whose clothing is most scanty." *Mr. M'Intosh*, of the Destitute Sick Society, says—"I have visited families, who, before they applied to any charitable institution, had disposed of almost all their clothing and furniture."

Q. 3.—Have you seen many whose food was scanty and precarious?

General Answer.—27 out of 28 answer—"Yes."

Drs. Brunton and Hunter answer—"Very many." *Mr. Dalziel* answers—"The single women and widows in general have a scanty and precarious supply of food, and so have the labourers and artisans when out of work; occasionally, however, the two latter, when industrious and well-doing, get credit to a certain amount, which lessens their difficulties, and carries them through." *Mr. M'Donald* answers—"All the cases referred to above, in answer to Query 2 (250 persons), were of that description." *Mr. Wilson* answers—"During the winter months I found all of the above cases very much so; the food of such aged or infirm persons as are dependent on parochial relief, is permanently scanty in the extreme; indeed, those who do not receive additional aid from private benevolence are scarcely one remove from absolute starvation—and there are many such." *The Rev. Mr. Guthrie* answers—"Scores; there are many very decent old men and women, and widows with families, whose food for the greater part of the year is scanty. I know of cases where persons have attended both forenoon and afternoon services on a Sabbath day, without having broken their fast."

Mr. Lorimer, twenty years an Elder and Visitor of the Destitute Sick Society in the West Port District (West Church parish), says—"I have seen a *very great number* of individuals and families nearly starving, and who, but for the Destitute Sick Society and other charities, must certainly have done so." *Mr. Lindsay* states—"That he had seen a number of individuals and families nearly starving, many of them very decent people." *Dr. Paterson* and *Dr. Wood* both state—"That they had visited many whose diseases might strictly be termed 'want of proper support.'"

Q. 4.—It being commonly believed that most of these destitute families are intemperate, have you seen a considerable number whom you had no reason to consider peculiarly so?

General Answer.—20 out of 26 answer—"Yes."

Mr. Dalziel answers—"The number of destitute families reported by me who are intemperate in their habits is 49, and of those who are not, 53. *Mr. M'Donald* answers—"From long experience as a visitor of the Destitute Sick Society, I would say, that although it is not the immediate cause, intemperance brings about much of the existing misery, but not the greater part, for the most numerous cases are widows with young children, in very many instances having only the parish allowance, which seldom exceeds 5*d.* or 6*d.* a-week for each individual. In many recent visits, I did not meet with any case of intemperance among those relieved, although there were several of whose habits I was suspicious." *Mr. Wilson* answers—"With very few exceptions, these cases of destitution arose from circumstances over which they had no control, and not from intemperance, such as want of employment, old age, infirmity, widows with young children, and wives deserted by their husbands." *Rev. Mr. Guthrie* says—"By far the larger number of the destitute families known to me are intemperate, still there are many cases of extreme suffering in those not chargeable with intemperance." The *Rev. Mr. Fraser* says—"I believe that intemperance prevails to a very high degree among those destitute families, but I have reason to know that there are many exceptions. There are thousands, I believe, of aged persons, some decrepid, some blind, others tortured with disease, who are perfectly sober." *Mr. Orrack* says—"I believe, in the majority of cases in my district, the destitution arises from other causes than intemperance." *Mr. Miller* (Missionary) says—"Of 17 very destitute families, 5 only were found to be intemperate." *Mr. M'Intosh* says—"The intemperate are generally the most numerous, but I meet with cases suffering much from pressing want, who were very sober people." *Mr. Lindsay* says—"I have seen a considerable number whose destitution I have reason to believe did not arise from their being peculiarly intemperate." *Dr. Wood* reports—"I have seen a considerable number whose destitution was altogether independent of intemperance, arising from want of employment, inability to work from sickness, or suspension of work from severe weather."

Q. 5.—Are there many labourers with families out of work during some months of the year?

General Answer.—23 out of 24 answer—"Yes."

Mr. Dalziel answers—"There are 16 labourers (in the 103 families) who are occasionally out of work. Their destitution, however, does

not generally arise so much from being out of work for months together, as from getting but partial employment." *Rev. Mr. Fraser*—"I have met with many at all seasons of the year." *Mr. M'Donald* answers—"The numbers given in Answer to Query 1, above 89 families, may be taken as a specimen only of the unemployed in the district; many new applications were made from persons out of work, after the fund was exhausted; those cases were therefore not taken down." *Mr. Wilson* answers—"Nearly a fourth of the cases of destitution I saw were of persons or families generally out of employment for three or four of the winter months; those are the most utterly destitute class of poor, having no source or fund to apply to for relief." *Mr. Lindsay* says—"A very great number are willing to work, but unable to procure it."

Q. 6.—Is this the case also with many artisans?

General Answer.—18 out of 19 answer—"Yes."

Mr. Dalziel answers—"There are 37 (of 103 families) occasionally out of employment; painters are generally so several months of winter, and of tailors the greater part have only half employment." *Mr. M'Intosh*—"I met with cases of every trade in this condition." *Mr. Wilson* answers—"Among the cases I saw were 2 shawl-weavers, a book-binder, and a slater, all of decent, steady character; one of these families, consisting of man, wife, and 6 children, to my knowledge received no other aid for many weeks than from this fund, and it was given in meal, potatoes, and coals, at the rate of 3s. per week."

Q. 7.—Also, with many single women, or widows with families?

General Answer.—23 out of 25 answer—"Yes."

Drs. Brunton and Hunter answer, "With many of both these classes, even when willing to work." *Mr. Dalziel* answers—"There are 49 single women and widows, with or without families, in destitute circumstances, some of whom have only a day's work in the week, some none for weeks together, and some none at all." *The Rev. Mr. Marshall* says—"It is very difficult to get employment for females in Edinburgh, and such means of occupation as exist are greatly overstocked; I have often found single women and widows with families, of good character, in circumstances of great destitution." *The Rev. Mr. Guthrie* says—"There is at all times during winter a great deficiency of work for single women and women who had been in service." *The Rev. Mr. Fraser* says—"The misery experienced by widows with families is truly heart-rending, particularly when they are, as is frequently the case, of decent moral character." *Mr. Orrack* says—"Many females are employed at out-door work, which totally ceases in winter; and the small wages they receive prevent their saving anything. This is the cause of much destitution." *Mr. Lorimer, Mr. Lindsay, Mr. M'Intosh, Dr. Wood and Dr. Paterson*, give similar evidence. *Captain Thomson*, of the House of Refuge, says—"Women who work in gardens and fields are a most pitiable class; their wages, when employed, never exceed 9d. a-day; for months, in winter, they have no means of earning subsistence but as beggars." *Mr. Wilson* answers—"Many cases of single women working in the fields when they can get labour, who during the winter months are in entire destitution; there are also several widows with families, but they receive small parochial aid for their children; this pittance, however, is scarcely sufficient to keep them in subsistence even when employed."

Q. 8.—Are there many instances of several women or families associated together in single small rooms to lessen rents?

General Answer.—13 out of 15 answer—“Yes.”

Drs. Brunton and Hunter answer—“Very many.” *Mr. M'Donald* answers—“Three, frequently.” On this point *Mr. Taylor*, Surgeon in the Grass Market, gives more specific information: he says—“I have seen this to a very considerable extent; in some of the lodging-houses not less than 30 people in one room—men, women, and children.” *Dr. Wood* has seen “Very many such instances—men, women, and children huddled together in a small room; and, in some cases, asses, swine, and poultry associated with human beings in the same small rooms.” *The Rev. Mr. Guthrie* has known a “very considerable number of such cases;” and *Mr. Simpson* understands “that, in some houses in the parish, the wretched inmates are huddled together to an incredible extent.”

Q. 9.—What are the ordinary profits for women of the lowest rank when employed?

General Answer.—Seven answer—3s., or less, per week.

Drs. Brunton and Hunter answer—“Very various, probably not exceeding, on an average, 6d. per day, and extremely precarious in duration.” *Mr. Dalziel* answers—“4d. or 5d. a-day by knitting, 8d. or 1s. by sewing, and 1s. with victuals by washing.” *Mr. M'Donald* answers—“For common needlework, or out-door employment, the average profits are from 6d. to 8d., but these employments are very precarious; these women have seldom employment more than three or four days in the week, and are often for many weeks without any.”

Q. 10.—Are these employments generally overstocked in Edinburgh?

General Answer.—18 out of 19 answer—“Yes.”

Drs. Brunton and Hunter answer—“Very greatly.” *Mr. M'Donald* answers—“Quite overstocked.”

Q. 11.—Do many of these destitute persons or families receive assistance from their parishes?

Drs. Brunton and Hunter answer—“Yes; but the allowances are utterly inadequate to their maintenance.” *Mr. Guthrie* says—“The allowances are in most cases miserably deficient.” *Mr. Lindsay* and *Mr. Lorimer*—“Widows with families have in general a pittance, barely sufficient to support life, without consideration of rent or clothing.” *Mr. Orrack*—“A number receive this; but the sum is so small that it barely pays their rent.” *Mr. Dalziel* answers—“29 families (out of 103 destitute) receive such assistance.” *Mr. Miller*—“Only one out of 17 destitute families.”

On this point more specific information will be given afterwards.

Q. 12.—Are many living in Edinburgh entitled to assistance from other towns or country parishes, but not obtaining or claiming it?

General Answer.—Nine answer—“Yes.”

Drs. Brunton and Hunter answer—“There is no doubt there are.” *Mr. M'Intosh* says—“In country parishes very little is done for the poor; consequently, a great number resort to Edinburgh, and get upon the charitable institutions till they obtain a parish right.”

I have already stated the result of my own experience on this point.

Q. 13.—Are there many families or individuals now chargeable in Edinburgh who are only recently from other parts?

General Answer.—Seven answer—“ Yes.”

Q. 14.—Do you consider the increased number of applications to public charities of late years to be owing to a real increase of destitution, or to the benefits of the societies being extended to many not so destitute as those formerly relieved ?

General Answer.—Seven answer—“ Increase of destitution.”

Mr. M. Donald answers—“ My decided impression is, that poverty and destitution have considerably increased in that quarter since my former acquaintance with it five or six years ago.”

The most important fact in reference to this query is that furnished by the Reports of the Managers of the Infirmary, particularly for 1838, by which it appears that, while the number of admissions have more than doubled within 25 years, the mortality has gradually increased from 1 in 21 to 1 in 8 ; which implies that the numbers of sick and destitute persons had increased in a much greater proportion than the number of admissions to the Infirmary, and that, either by means of the dispensaries and other institutions out of doors, or by the scrutiny of the medical men in the Infirmary, a *selection* of the most urgent cases only for admission to the Infirmary had been going on. Another equally conclusive fact is drawn from the recent resolution of the Destitute Sick Society to exclude, as a general rule, from their charity, all who inhabit lodging-houses, because the increase of applications made to them (increasing from 3,200 to above 10,500 annually, within 22 years) made it necessary to draw the line somewhere, and they thought that in this way they would exclude the least deserving. By this rule, however, many sick persons in extreme misery, unable to procure clothing to enable them to go to the Infirmary, are absolutely excluded from all but casual and precarious voluntary charity.

Q. 15.—Do you know of many poor persons, who have been resident three years or more in Edinburgh, but are yet unable to claim parochial relief, from want of landlords' receipts, or other causes ?

General Answer.—Five answer—“ Yes.”

Drs. Brunton and *Hunter* answer—“ From the way in which many of the most destitute are huddled together in one house, nay, in one apartment, such cases must be very numerous.” *Mr. Lorimer* answers—“ I meet with many such cases, as it is a most difficult thing to get on the poor's roll without these receipts.” *Mr. Lindsay*—“ I have known some, and heard of many more. It is quite notorious that it is very difficult to get on the poor's roll.”

This question I can answer more decidedly, from my own experience, having drawn up a list of above 40 very destitute families, who, as I am assured, have been refused, and certainly have not obtained, parochial relief in Edinburgh, although certainly resident in it more than three years. The legality of such refusal may be questioned ; but, as long as there is practically no appeal from the decisions of the kirk-sessions, or other managers of the legal relief in Scotland, I must say, with all deference to those authorities, that I believe such cases will be very frequent.

I can add here a few documents, giving a nearer insight into the condition of the poorest class of the inhabitants of Edinburgh, and some other Scottish towns, and which every one, who has attended to the

condition of the poor in Ireland, will, I think, acknowledge to be a near approximation to the lamentable state of destitution there seen. I quoted elsewhere the instructive analysis made by Mr. Chambers of the poverty of a single small town in Scotland, where it appeared that, in a population of about 2,000 persons, there are only 38 admitted as out-door paupers, with allowances, in general, of about half what is necessary to support a bare existence; but that the number of persons in a state, some of almost constant, others of occasional, necessity, is fully 200, or 10 per cent. of the population; that all the female field-labourers, who are just supported by their wages during the summer and autumn, are dependent on charity of one kind or another during the rest of the year, although they are allowed nothing from the parish; and, lastly, that nearly a fourth of the population are reduced to such straits during a severe winter as to ask and receive assistance from a public subscription.

Availing myself of the kind assistance of Mr. Westwater, Teacher in the Grey Friars' parish, and of Mr. Dalziel, Missionary in the High Church parish, I have had two small districts in Edinburgh investigated, nearly on the same plan as that adopted by Mr. Chambers. The first of these consists of two small closes in the Cowgate (Cowan's and West Campbell's), well known to the Rev. Mr. Guthrie, of the Grey Friars' parish, as well as to myself, and which we agreed on as a fair specimen of the poverty of Edinburgh; in which the people are all of the lowest class, but, in general, of tolerably regular habits, and less migratory than in many of the poorest districts. The number of families in these closes whose cases were carefully inquired into by Mr. Westwater is 48, comprising 158 persons; and I am certain that I do not exaggerate in stating that, in the Ancient Royalty of Edinburgh (comprising 55,000 inhabitants), more than 50 districts may be found, of equal extent, containing a population equally destitute, of which this may be taken as a specimen, as well as many other districts, one of which will be noticed in the sequel, of which a part of the inhabitants are in a similar state of destitution. Of the whole 48 families there are only 10, of whom the working members have regular employment, and, of these 10, there are 2 whose profits are stated at only 2s. 6d. and 3s. a-week. The remaining 38 are stated as being out of employment from two to ten months in the year, 12 of them six months, or more. Of the 38 there are only 12 whose earnings, *when employed*, are stated at 6s. a-week, or from that to 12s.; and, of the remaining 26, there are 16 whose earnings, when employed, are stated at 3s. a-week, or less. When it is considered that hardly any of the families, whose earnings are thus scanty and precarious, can have their rooms at less than 6d. a-week, and that they are prevented by a strict police from public begging, and even from carrying baskets of goods so small as to appear to be pretexts for begging, some idea may be formed of the privations as to food, clothing, furniture, and fuel, which they have habitually to endure; and it is not surprising that the clothing and furniture of most of them should be marked as "bad," "very bad," or "very scanty," and that 16 of them should be noted as having either no bed, or no bed-clothes. Nor is it surprising, when we remember their scanty earnings, that very few of these families, not more than 4 or 5, should be noted as of intemperate habits.

Now among these 48 families the whole regular parochial allowance

is 6s. a-week, divided among 6 of the families, and the only other assistance from the parochial funds, of which I find a record, is, that one widow had 3s. during the last illness of her husband, and that another had a child buried at the expense of the parish. I believe that, in this district, the parochial relief given is accidentally less than in many others; but it will be remembered that, among 120 families in a very destitute state, known to Mr. Dalziel and Mr. Miller, City Missionaries, only 30 had any parish assistance, and that the assistance when given is, as stated by Drs. Brunton and Hunter, "altogether inadequate to their support." The expressions used by Dr. Wood on this subject, in his Answers to the Queries above quoted, are hardly too strong:—"In the great mass of cases of destitution *there is no parish assistance*. In fact, very many of the most destitute are assisted, sometimes altogether supported, by the charity of those who are mostly as destitute as themselves. *This I see constantly*, and, while it has led me to admire the kindly Christian feeling which has dictated such conduct, it has struck me that the means of support for the very destitute ought not to be subtracted from the very scanty means of subsistence possessed by others nearly as poor." Nor is this deficiency of legal relief compensated by assistance from their own relations. Such assistance, among these very destitute persons, is, in fact, so far as I can learn from pretty frequent inquiries, less frequently given, or expected, than among almost any other class of people. In only three of these cases did Mr. Westwater find that any regular assistance from relatives, not living in the family, was obtained.

Again, Mr. Dalziel carefully examined the condition of the people in Carrubber's-close, a part of the Old Town, which I should say is unusually free from the indications of destitution, being generally inhabited by respectable and well-employed artisans. Here he found, however, out of 76 families, 19, comprising 46 persons, in a destitute state. None of these had regular employment; 5 only, when employed, had from 10s. to 16s. a-week; these were out of work from four to six months in the year; of the remaining 14, only 5, when employed, have more than 3s. a-week, and all these are fully one-third of the year unemployed; 9 families, when employed, have 3s. a-week, or less; 3 of them have, absolutely, no employment. Of the 19 families, 11 are noted as of good character, and only 6 as bad, or dissipated. The clothing, furniture, and bedding, are described as most generally "poor, or very poor." The parochial aid distributed among these 19 families is less than 4s. a-week; 3 of them have 1s. a-week each from the Societies for Indigent Old Men and Women; several more have a little assistance from the clergyman of the parish; and *only one is noted as having any assistance from relations*.

Now when to these details, shewing the great *excess of the destitution in Edinburgh over the existing legal provision for its relief*, I add the fact, that the number receiving the legal relief is nevertheless so great as to make the assessment for the poor in the Ancient Royalty (to which all these facts apply), after deduction of the privileged class, who pay nothing, not less than 3s. 3d. a head on the population, *i. e.*, nearly as great as in some parts of London, and considerably greater than at Birmingham, I think I need say no more in order to shew that the redundancy of the population, and all the miseries and moral evils thence resulting, must be peculiarly great in Edinburgh.

Aberdeen.—The following documents from Aberdeen shew as to that town (which has suffered, I believe, of late years as much from fever as Edinburgh, Glasgow, or Dundee,) how far destitution exists, and how far it is adequately met, or even its extent ascertained, by the existing provisions:—

1. Extract from a letter from Mr. Watson, Sheriff Substitute:—“An inquiry into the state of the poor was lately attempted, but has *completely failed*; the few returns that have been given in are worthless, and I can give no correct estimate of the number of poor *not* receiving parochial aid. I have no doubt that the number is very considerable; and, from a report by one of the City clergy, it appears that the destitution is frightful.”

2. The Rev. Mr. M'Lean, Missionary in the North parish, states (in answer to queries)—“This parish contains nearly 5,000 people, and should a survey be taken, the proportion of destitute during the winter season will be found *almost incredible*. I have seen not a few, whose furniture, bedding, and clothing, had been pawned or sold, and many to whom the supply of the necessaries of life was so scanty and precarious, that to those in different circumstances it would scarcely seem credible that their existence could be supported. Intemperance is the general bane, but I have seen many whose destitute circumstances could be traced to afflictions and other causes beyond their control; many labourers, and some classes of artisans, are out of work during some months of the year; this is the case also as to many single women, and not unfrequently tempts them to a deplorable course of life. The lowest end of the scale of wages for women is only 10*d.* or 1*s.* a-week. There are a *great many instances* of associations of several women, or families, in the same rooms, to lessen rents.”

Tranent.—The following statement, by Dr. Somerville Alison, laid before the Poor Law Commissioners, shews, that in the little town of Tranent, as compared with Edinburgh, there is probably an equal amount of destitution from unavoidable causes, and a greater amount from intemperance and misconduct.—“A great amount of destitution of the proper means of subsistence exists here among the collier and day-labouring population, as aggravated as I have ever witnessed in the metropolis; and the proportion of the poor to the rich I believe to be much greater than in Edinburgh. Some are reduced to destitution by dissipation, some by laziness, some by old age, some by accidents or diseases incident to their employment, some by the loss of husbands or fathers, and others by their desertion. There are many old men and women, especially the latter, whose only regular means of subsistence are derived from the parish; the relief is usually 1*s.* a-week, very seldom 2*s.*; such persons would inevitably die of starvation, or perish through exposure, did not benevolent persons and neighbours, *generally working people*, assist them with money and food. By such casual aid, the struggle against premature death is maintained. The old men so situated are generally decayed labourers and journeymen tradesmen, and *I am not aware that any frugal habits could enable them to avoid comparative want in their old age*. The women are widows and unmarried women, who have been unable to save any part of their earnings, and by reason of old age are unable to provide for their subsistence. Many colliers are

reduced by disease or accident incidental to their occupation ; but so urgent is their distress that many of them, even in this frail state, go out to the colliery and do a little work. *I have known men so situated work occasionally to within a day or two of their death*; and have little doubt the lives of many are thus shortened. A collier so reduced, unless he is very ill indeed, gets no relief from the parish. These poor men generally die at an early age, and leave families totally unprovided for, and the privations consequent on this event may be easily conceived from what has been stated. The men belonging to Pencaithland colliery are superior to most others in sobriety and cleanliness, but they die in general at a very early age. The average age of the heads of 35 such families is only 34 years. Many of the male heads of these families are in bad health, suffering from cough, difficult breathing, and emaciation. In these 35 families of colliers there are 10 widows; and where it is usual for one-third of the young families to be deprived of their fathers, there must be great suffering, and much occasion for some liberal and permanent relief. But so importunate are the destitute in other quarters that these people 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 5s. a-week of parish money is spent on all these 35 families.*"

Dumfries.—In the town of Dumfries, the proportion of the inhabitants admitted either as permanent or casual paupers is stated as higher than in any other part of Scotland. At present more than 10 per cent. of the population are in that condition; the permanent paupers and their families are 544, who receive 1,150*l.*; and the casual paupers of a year, 700, who receive 126*l.*: total 1,244 persons in a population of 11,600. But the following extract from a letter from Mr. Gemmell, Manager of the Poor, will shew that even here the number of destitute and dependent poor greatly exceeds the number of paupers.—“ From my partial inquiry made last week I find that there are not less than 250 poor tradesmen, labourers, and women, heads of families, who are only partly employed during the year, but receive no assistance from the public in any shape. For example, tailors have not more than eight months’ work in the year, average wages, when employed, 12*s.* to 14*s.* a-week; labourers not more than eight months, average wages, when employed, 9*s.*; stocking-weavers, average wages 6*s.* to 7*s.* per week, clear of all deduction. These are now more fully employed than formerly, many having left this for other places. Hand-loom cotton-weavers are better employed now than they were, but may be reckoned to be one month idle during the year, and their average wages are not more than 3*s.* to 3*s.* 6*d.* per week, after deducting loom rent, fitting, &c. There are about 250 such weavers in Dumfries at present, few of whom are in the receipt even of casual relief; and how they fare, with families, on that very small earning God only knows; masons have employment only eight months in the year, but at good wages.” “ I consider the 350 families, or 700 individuals, returned by the session treasurer as casual paupers, as destitute poor, dependent on charitable assistance of some kind or other during the year, although not regular paupers, and to these I would be inclined to add at least 250 more families who must suffer great privation during winter from want of employment. Thus the regular paupers being 544, or 4·7 (nearly) of the population of 1831, the whole destitute poor, dependent during

part of the year on some kind of charitable assistance, are 1,200 more, *i. e.*, 1,744, or rather more than 15 per cent." He adds—"I have intentionally kept rather within the numbers, that I may not appear to exaggerate in answer to this question."

To the same purpose Dr. M'Lellan, of Dumfries, states—"During the last three winters, I have seen many individuals and families in a destitute state, or enduring different degrees of privation. Very few of these were on the poor's roll, though some of them received occasionally 1s. or 2s. from the collections at the church doors, which, being of a small amount, proved quite inadequate to meet the cases requiring relief. I have not seen many whose destitution could be ascribed to intemperance, but many, particularly Irish labourers, who in winter have little or no employment. The food of many is scanty and precarious, and many diseases, particularly of children, are induced, as I have reason to believe, in a great measure by scanty and improper food. In 1838 there was a severe visitation of fever, chiefly confined to the poor, and their privations in regard to food were doubtless an influential cause of its extension and long continuance."

St. Andrew's.—The following extracts from a report from St. Andrew's, containing the result of an inquiry into the condition of the poor there, made by a Committee consisting of the provost and three members of council, Sir David Brewster, the episcopal and two dissenting ministers, and several other gentlemen, and *unanimously approved by the town council*, shews a state of matters there very similar to what I have represented as existing in other towns in Scotland, and this is the more important, as Mr. Monypenny (late Lord Pitmilley) is a heritor of the parish of St. Andrew's, and the system there established may be presumed to be that which meets his approbation.—"There is no assessment levied for the poor, they are entirely supported by the church-door collections, the contribution of the Ladies' Society, &c. &c., and occasionally the voluntary contribution of the inhabitants. The total amount of funds distributed in the two parishes is 414*l.* (being 1s. 3*d.* a head on the population). In St. Andrew's, as in most other parishes of Scotland, the parochial guardians of the poor seem to have regarded pauperism as a disease which they were bound to keep down by every means in their power, and with this view they have reduced both the number of paupers admitted on the roll, and the amount of allowance, to the smallest possible limits. The average number of paupers on the permanent roll, in the parish of St. Andrew's, is 87; in the parish of St. Leonard's, 14; and the average number in the former, receiving occasional relief, is 34." The regular paupers therefore are 1.6 per cent. of the population, and the whole number receiving parish assistance are 2.1 per cent. "The amount of relief given to those on the permanent roll (exclusive of lunatics,) varies from 2*s.* 6*d.* to 6*d.* a-week. Four persons receive 9*d.*, four 6*d.* a-week, and 49, or more than one-half of the whole number, 1*s.* per week. *From this sum they require to provide themselves with food, clothing, fuel, and lodging.* A certain portion of them receive a quartern loaf from the Ladies' Society in winter, and a half-quartern loaf in summer. A few coals also are occasionally distributed among them. Even with this assistance it must be evident that the sum allowed them is not one-half of what is needed to support a bare existence, and the

allowance they receive can be regarded as nothing else than *a system of protracted starvation*. A considerable portion of those on the pauper roll are aged single women, whose gains, when they were able to work, amounted to only 8d. a-day, and were therefore barely sufficient to support and clothe them. They have rarely any relations who can give them any assistance, and are consequently left destitute in their old age. The allowance granted to paupers of this class rarely exceeds 1s. per week, and is sometimes only half of that sum. *One or two scanty meals of porridge or potatoes, with now and then a little tea or thin broth, form the diet of a day with most of these people; and their feeble attenuated appearance bears sufficient testimony to the inadequate manner in which they are supplied with the necessaries of life.*

“The rents paid by these poor persons are exorbitant, and press very heavily upon them; they average about 34s. for one small room. The average rent of those on the permanent pauper roll is 26s. As might be expected, the rents are not well paid, and many are in arrears for three or four years. In a very few instances the rent is paid by some benevolent individuals.

“In only a few cases, *less than one-fifth of the whole, do these persons receive the slightest assistance from their relatives*. With respect to the 34 individuals who are represented as receiving occasional relief, their circumstances are so necessitous as to render them fit objects for *permanent* assistance. And, besides those to whom this pittance is doled out, there are a considerable number of needy persons in this parish who receive no public allowance, and are therefore dependent for support entirely on voluntary charity (a list of 50 of these persons is subjoined). There are *numbers* also who are occasionally employed, but at a rate of wages so low as barely to support and clothe them. Whenever they are thrown out of employment, which not unfrequently happens, they are *entirely destitute*. The parish does little or nothing for them, and, but for the assistance of their neighbours who are a little better off than themselves, *they would starve outright*.

“There is no dispensary in this parish, and no public provision made for supplying the poor with medicines or medical assistance. With the exception of 10s. or 15s. annually disbursed by the session, they are dependent for the supply of medicines on the benevolence of the medical gentlemen of the town. There are six lunatics in the parish of St. Andrew's, for whom no proper provision is made. *Four of these are dangerous, but are, notwithstanding, permitted to go at large*.

“The facts elicited during this inquiry into the state of the poor in St. Andrew's, abundantly prove the *insufficiency and inequality of the system by which the Scottish poor are supported*. The allowance granted them falls miserably short of the sum necessary to support even a bare existence, and *the burden of maintaining them lies to a great extent on the middle classes of society*. If society is bound to support its poor and infirm, and sick members, the burden ought undoubtedly to be borne by all, according to their several abilities; but it is a well-known fact, that in general the most able and wealthy are by no means the most charitable members of society; that, in fact, those by whom the poor are for the most part supported, are, comparatively speaking, a small minority, principally composed of the middling classes, and that not a

little assistance is given them by those who are only a little better off than themselves. But since all classes reap the benefits, they are all bound to bear the burdens of society, according to their several abilities, and the only method by which the wealthy can be made to contribute, as a body, to the support of the indigent and the infirm, is by a **COMPULSORY ASSESSMENT.**"

Perthshire.—In further confirmation of what I have stated as to the extent of poverty, vagrancy, and mendicity, in Scotland, its pernicious effects, and its dependence in many instances on the inefficacy of the existing provisions against destitution, I beg to subjoin an extract from "Some Observations on Vagrancy," drawn up last year by Mr. Barclay, Sheriff Substitute of Perthshire, with which I have been favoured by Mr. Anderson, Sheriff Depute of that county.

"It is assumed that the gentlemen of the county of ———, like those of other counties around, are now fully aware of the great increase of the evil of vagrancy, with its attendant train of crime—an evil which has so steadily progressed as now to excite alarm—*rendering it difficult to reside in the country districts with peace and safety*, not to speak of enjoyment. It is not enough to say, as is often said, that begging, promoted by indiscriminate charity, is the occasion of the evil. This is rather an effect than a cause. The inquirer must go a step beyond and examine the occasion of begging.

"Its remote causes lie deep in the very nature of society, especially of society in its advanced but highly-artificial condition. To suppose that any measure or congeries of measures will ever totally obliterate pauperism (or rather, destitution and dependence on charity,) from the face of society, is to suppose a state of existence not the lot of humanity, and opposed to the Divine word that saith, 'The poor ye shall have always.' To mitigate the evil is all that can be expected, and assuredly the very regularity of its increase where no means have been used to restrain it, and its decrease wherever opposed even by small resistance, shew how much can be done to repress its growth.

"There need be no amazement that the offspring of beggars and vagrants, whose life and manners have been moulded from youth according to the impress of their parents, should belong to the same class, and surpass in crime their instructors. But even the children of parents industrious and moral, may, from neglect and misconduct, sink into the classes which are counted the pests of society. To test this, let inquiry be made, and the result will be found that *by far the great mass of vagrants, at present overrunning the land, were either themselves at one time in far other circumstances, from which their own misconduct or misfortune has driven them, or at least that they are the immediate children of decent and industrious parents*, who, in their day, filled the station of humble, though useful, members of society.

"The *very stinted parochial relief given to those on the Scotch poor's list is an obvious encouragement to beggary*. There is just sufficient aid given to stamp the person as a pauper, and so to destroy his independence. By giving something, however little, the claimant, it is vainly thought, will be appeased; whereas, he is merely added to a class whose clamour is just the louder that their claim to relief is admitted, but their satisfaction is only a mockery. It is avowed, that the pittance is not

meant to give the pauper complete support. He is to supplement it by labour, but then he may not have physical power; or he is to receive the aid of relations, but relations he may have none, or if perchance he has, they need more to receive than to give aid. *Nothing remains but to beg.* The romance of a wandering life gains the mastery over existing local affections; he goes through the neighbouring parishes, he meets with the outcasts of other places, he forms friendships, and often alliances, not meet for the strictest scrutiny. He only comes to his parish on the pay day, to get his pittance, or he indignantly throws it up, and taking the world as his parish, pursues the far more lucrative profession of vagrant. Thus the labourer becomes the parish pauper, and passing through this chrysalis state, comes out the full-formed vagrant.

“Much has been said in praise of the Scotch, and much in dispraise of the English, system of poor laws. It is almost treason against a nation’s pride, to whisper that the Scotch system is not perfect. There may be a balance of evils, and assuredly wisdom leads to a selection of the least. In England it may be that the pauper is (or at least *was*) in a situation more enviable than the labourer, and so industry was fast merging into pauperism. In Scotland it may be, that the pauper has only a starving allowance, and therefore, that there pauperism is a synonyme for vagrancy. Perhaps there may be excellencies to be found in both systems, and evils to be avoided. There does appear to be *a fitness and an economy in a workhouse*, to which the able-bodied, but indolent vagrant could be sent.

“It is no argument against the right *use* of a system, that it has been subject to great *abuse*. The parochial authorities of Scotland might usefully inquire whether even a more judicious scrutiny may not be applied to their roll; whether work may not be obtained, in some way or other, for all who can work, and that those who cannot, should be either boarded, or otherwise *fully supported*, with the stern and strictly-enforced (because then and only then the just) penalty of forfeiture of alimnt (or rather, forfeiture of liberty,) on detection of an act of mendicancy.

“There is no doubt that indiscriminate charity is the hot-bed wherein pauperism and vagrancy luxuriate. But it is equally vain to attempt to coerce benevolence where it exists, or to make it flow where it has no spring in the heart. Neither penal law, nor moral exhortation, will open the hand of the niggard, or shut up that of the benevolent. It is impossible to forbid charity, and if it were possible, it would be inexpedient. True wisdom will deal with the receivers, and not the givers; and labour to withdraw the unworthy objects of charity, and present only those on whom may fall what doubly blesses.”

It is of the utmost importance, in all discussions regarding the management of the poor in Scotland, to keep in view the great *excess*, thus shewn to exist, of *poverty, destitution, suffering, and dependence*, of large bodies of the people, *over the pauperism that appears on the rolls of the parishes.*

One consequence of that miserable destitution in so many inhabitants of our towns is very important, because it shews the natural tendency of this neglected, or imperfectly relieved, misery to perpetuate itself. I mean the necessary *neglect of education, and of religious, or moral, training, among many of the children.* The following is the account

given of this matter by Mr. Gemmell, Superintendent of the poor in Dumfries. There may, very probably, have been some peculiar neglect in this case, but more or less of such neglect I believe to be inseparable from a system, under which disabled parents and widows are not only continually prevented from bestowing attention on their children, but are very often, and to a great extent, dependent on their labour, or on their gains as vendors of little wares, or, more generally, as beggars: "The orphan and pauper children have been left to live without the fear of God ever being set before their eyes, or even being taught to reverence his holy name, without any system of regular moral training; they might attend school, or not, as they pleased; no inquiry was ever made whether they were doing so, or not; and as to the state of their education, no one ever took the slightest interest, and as little inquiry was made whether they went to church, or had suitable clothing for it. In fact, the only anxiety ever shewn was to get them off the roll, to lessen the expenditure. Thus have the pauper children been reared to become the very pests of society, the nursery of crime, and a perfect hot-bed for breeding more paupers; and, while such a system is persevered in, pauperism, I fear, will never decrease. I found upwards of 300 children, at present, attending no school, and the one-half had never been at school. Many of them, who therefore of course could not read, were 9, 10, and 12, years of age. If, on a slight inquiry, so many were found in this way, we might reasonably expect that a closer examination would shew us many more."

Another consequence of this state of destitution, to which no legal provision is applied, is, likewise, in a practical view, of great importance, because tending to a perpetuation of the evil, viz.,—*the great deficiency of precise, or definite, information as to the extent, or precise nature, of the evil itself.* There has been some boasting of the number of agents employed, under the voluntary system, in distributing relief to the poor; but, in a practical view, the number of agents employed is not the important point. The grand desideratum is a regular and rigid surveillance of that part of the population which is necessarily dependent on the assistance of the rest, in order that their real wants may be known, and their character and conduct be watched; and, if we inquire how far this object is accomplished in any of the large towns, which appear, from what has been stated, to be the great receptacles of the destitution of Scotland, we shall find that, while many agents are employed, each of whom does a little, there are few of the poor whose history, character, or wants, are accurately known to anybody.

Of that great mass of destitution which is not admitted to the legal provision, and which is continually shifting its place, there is no regular, or official, inspection, and no record. The deficiency of information, of any precise character, as to most of the Queries circulated in Edinburgh, was very obvious in the Replies of even the most experienced gentlemen to whom application was made. Mr. Watson's statement on this head, from Aberdeen, has been already quoted. An inquiry was attempted also at Dundee, but proved equally abortive. Mr. Gemmell writes from Dumfries:—"I proposed to a committee, lately, to have an accurate and complete inquiry into the external and internal state of the dwellings of the poor, their employment, earnings, characters, education, &c., to be

assisted by some respectable inhabitants in every district. The only reply I received was, that they doubted if I would get respectable individuals to give their time."

Of the miseries of a redundant population, it is well known that the frequency and fatality of diseases, and especially of epidemic diseases, are among the most distressing. The observation of Malthus I believe to be perfectly just, at least in relation to continued fever, that it is always to be apprehended in an epidemic form when the population considerably exceeds the demand for labour, and the means of comfortable subsistence derived from labour; and I have formerly quoted facts to prove that, in this respect, Edinburgh and Glasgow, as well as other towns in Scotland, have furnished no exception to the general rule. Dr. Cowan has shewn that *the number of cases of fever in Glasgow, in five years ending December 1839, must have been not less than 55,000, in a population under 300,000, that is, more than one-sixth; and, judging from the number admitted into the hospitals in Edinburgh during the same time (6,875), the number of fever cases in Edinburgh and Leith must have been nearly 15,000, in a population certainly under 180,000, i. e., not less than one-twelfth of the whole.*

There has been some difference of opinion, and, as I conceive, misapprehension, on this part of the subject, in consequence of the opinion having been espoused—never, I think, by any considerable number of practitioners in Scotland, but by several physicians of high character in London—that the continued fever of this country proceeds from a malaria, chiefly originating in putrescent animal and vegetable substances, and in excretions from the human body, and that it may be extirpated, therefore, by draining, and by careful and constant removal of all such offensive matters. If this opinion were held to be established, it must be admitted that the frequent prevalence, and occasional rapid extension, of continued fever in any town would not be any such indication and test of previous destitution and suffering, as I have elsewhere represented it. In confirmation of this opinion, I see it stated by Dr. Southwood Smith, that all those districts in London which are well furnished with sewers are nearly exempt from fever, and that those where there are no sewers are peculiarly liable to it. This observation does not seem to be without exception, even in London, or other English towns; for it is stated by Mr. Evans, in the Borough, in 1837, that fever was prevalent in the district which he superintended, although the drainage was very good, except in one small portion of it, where fever did not prevail more than in others; and a similar observation is made by Dr. Jenks, in an excellent Report on the Sanatory State of Brighton. But, admitting Dr. Smith's observation to be, in general, just and important, I cannot but think the inference hasty and unfounded, that the matters which ought to be carried off by sewers are the immediate source of the contagious fever. The districts without sewers will, naturally, be not only the dirtiest, but the *cheapest*; they will be inhabited by the poorest and most destitute people, who will be huddled together in the greatest numbers in proportion to the space they occupy; and, especially, they will be the resort of the poor Irish, among whom, wherever they may abide, fever has, for many years past, been at least as firmly rooted as it was in the jails in the time of Howard, and who, practically, derive little

or no benefit from the provision against destitution which exists in England. Of the effect of all these circumstances on the extension of epidemic fever, I apprehend there can be no doubt; and, in connexion with these, I think that the want of sewers ought to be stated as an additional and accessory cause of the extension, but by no means as an ascertained cause, certainly not as the main cause, of the production, or generation, of fever.

It is easy to give quotations from various authors, particularly from Bancroft (on Yellow Fever), Chisholm (in *Edinburgh Medical Journal*, vol. vi.), and Parent Duchatelet (in *Annales d'Hygiène*), to shew on how large a scale, and for what length of time, the effluvia from putrescent animal and vegetable matters and excretions from the human body may be applied to great numbers of people in all climates and seasons, without any such result following as the generation of continued or typhoid fever. The exhumations at the church-yard of St. Innocent's, at Paris, in 1786-7, carried on for two years in all weather, in which an enormous mass of corrupting human bodies were fully exposed to the air, producing a most nauseous smell, and even causing fainting fits in many of the workmen employed, but which, after the fullest inquiry, do not appear to have been attended by any febrile disorders; the very offensive state of the burial-grounds at Seville, in which 20,000 persons had been interred after the yellow fever of 1800, and which was described by M. Berthé, professor at Montpellier, but was not followed by any febrile disease; the habitual combination of filth, foul air, and putrid effluvia, found in the habitations of many nations and in all climates—in the yousts of the Greenlanders and Kamschatkans, and in the slave-ships of the torrid zone, but unattended by any febrile epidemics; the numerous examples of prisons on the Continent of Europe, reported on by Mr. Howard, in which he found on different occasions of visiting them “cells and dungeons as crowded, offensive, and dirty, as any he had observed in this country,” but without finding fever in any of them; the various manufactures or preparations of ammonia, of adipocere, of refined sugar, and dressed leather, described by Dr. Chisholm, in which great numbers of persons are continually exposed to the most offensive effluvia from putrescent animal matter, without ever being affected with fever; the complete immunity from fever enjoyed by the numerous persons employed at Montfaucon near Paris, where many thousand animals are annually slaughtered, and part of their bodies allowed to putrify, where likewise almost the whole filth of Paris is collected and prepared for sale as a manure—are so many proofs, that neither any effluvia from dead animal or vegetable matter, nor excretions from the human body itself, if unaffected by fever, have any power to generate this poison.

I can state, as the result of twenty-five years' observation in all parts of Edinburgh, that, although I have seen fever prevailing some hundreds of times in places where putrid effluvia abound, yet there is *not a single such district*, in which I have ever seen it, which I have not known to be at other times, for several years together, *perfectly free from it, notwithstanding the continued existence of the putrid effluvia*, and even although the disease very frequently was prevailing in the neighbouring streets or closes.

The doctrine, regarding the external causes of continued fever (distinguished of course from the intermittent or remittent fever), which has been adopted almost universally by the Irish physicians, is perfectly in accordance with all that I have ever seen of it, or heard of it, in Edinburgh, or other parts of Scotland, viz, that it may probably sometimes originate spontaneously in the human body itself (particularly under the influence of long-continued mental anxiety and depression) but that its chief, and, in a practical view, its only certain, source is *a specific contagion* arising from the living human body *already affected by it*, which putrid effluvia can no more generate than they can generate small-pox or measles, which is liable to variation in intensity and even in kind, in different seasons, and which is favoured in its effect on healthy persons, by various conditions, properly termed auxiliary or predisponent causes, but which, of themselves, are inadequate to produce the disease.

Now among these auxiliary or predisponent causes, I willingly admit that foul or vitiated air, gradually enfeebling the human constitution, is one of the most powerful; but, in attempting directly to remove this, we not only do not touch the source of the disease, but in the present state of the city of Edinburgh, as I think it easy to shew, we neither attack the most important, nor the most remediable, of its auxiliary causes.

Much has been said of the irrigated meadows in the neighbourhood of the town, but anxious as I am, for the credit, and even for the health in other respects of the inhabitants, to see such a nuisance removed, I must nevertheless express my conviction, that any money expended for that object will be found wholly ineffectual in diminishing the liability of the inhabitants to contagious fever. This opinion is rested on the following grounds:—

1. Any one who has observed the vitiated state of the air of the closes, of the passages and stairs, and more especially of the *rooms* in those parts of the Old Town, in which the poorest of the inhabitants dwell, however strongly impressed he may be with the efficacy of foul air as a cause of the extension of fever, can hardly by possibility think of resorting to the foul air of the marshes, *more than a mile off*, for an explanation of the extension of the disease by this means; or suppose that the draining of these marshes can make any perceptible difference on the atmosphere of the rooms in question.

2. The *parts of the town* in which I have seen the disease extend most rapidly, are by no means those which are nearest to the marshes. The central and most thickly-peopled parts of the town, and the Grass-market and West Port, are those in which it is usually most prevalent; but the principal marshes lie to the eastward of the town, a mile distant from the former district, and at least a mile and a half from the latter; and many intervening districts, and in some instances villages, close upon the marshes, are almost uniformly comparatively exempt from fever.

3. The *season of the year*, in which fever always prevails most extensively in Edinburgh, is the winter and early part of the spring, when the exhalations from the marshes are *less* than in the summer and autumn, and when the wind is very generally from the west (and often very high); when, therefore, the principal marshes are completely *to leeward of the town*, and no exhalations from them can possibly reach it. This observation is indeed a strong argument against any kind of effluvia from dead matter being a main agent in the diffusion of fever.

These two statements are elucidated by the following Tables:—

No. 1.—*Table shewing the Number of Fever Patients furnished by different Districts of the City of Edinburgh.*

Total number of patients affected with fever, admitted into the Edinburgh Royal Infirmary, from 1st July 1839, to 1st July 1840 . . .	} 684; viz.
From <i>First District</i> .—Cross-causeway, Cawseyside, and Southern District (Distant from the chief marshes) . . .	} 54
<i>Second</i> .—Pleasance, Arthur, Salisbury, Brecon, and Carnegie streets (Intervening between No. 1, and the chief marshes) . . .	} 18
<i>Third</i> .—Bristo-street, Potter-row and Lothian-street . . .	} 17
<i>Fourth</i> .—Candlemaker-row, and south side of Cowgate-down to Pleasance . . .	} 16
<i>Fifth</i> .—Cowgate, north side from Grass-market to St. Mary's-wynd (Nos. 4 and 5 equi-distant from the marshes) . . .	} 104
<i>Sixth</i> .—Lawn-market, with closes, and Castle-hill . . .	} 26
<i>Seventh</i> .—High-street, from High Church to Netherbow (Central part of the town) . . .	} 71
<i>Eighth</i> .—Canongate, with closes, and backs of Canongate (District nearest the chief marshes) . . .	} 125
<i>Ninth</i> .—Grass-market, with closes (Distant from the chief marshes) . . .	} 25
<i>Tenth</i> .—West Port, with closes, and Western district . . .	} 31
<i>Eleventh</i> .—New Town, including Stockbridge, Greenside, Rere-street, Jamaica-street, &c. &c. (For the most part distant from the chief marshes) . . .	} 61
<i>Twelfth</i> .—Leith . . .	} 27
<i>Thirteenth</i> .—No fixed residence in any particular part of Edinburgh . . .	} 20
<i>Fourteenth</i> .—Sent from various parts in the neighbourhood of Edinburgh, principally consisting of labourers engaged in the harvest, and on railways . . .	} 89

N. B.—This Table gives only general results; the population of the different districts not having been ascertained. It may be observed that the Grass-market and West Port furnished fewer cases than usual during this period, and the Canongate more. The Canongate district was affected, however, only partially; and at two places in this district, from which many cases have been sent, viz., Douglas-court, Leith-wynd, and Riddle's-court, New-street, I have ascertained that the disease had been imported; the first case in one of these having been affected in another part of the town, and in another having been affected in Aberdeen. I consider the unusual number of cases in the Canongate, therefore, as accidental.

No. 2.—*A Tabular View of the Monthly Admissions of Fever Cases into the Edinburgh Infirmary.*

February (9 years to March 1839)	810	averaging	90·0	each year.
March	845	,,	93·8	
April	701	,,	77·8	
May	749	,,	87·2	
June	712	,,	79·2	
July	631	,,	70·1	
August	678	,,	75·3	
September	783	,,	87·0	
October	888	,,	98·6	
November	1090	,,	121·1	
December	1176	,,	130·6	
January	1166	,,	129·5	

I may add, that twenty years ago, when fever prevailed much in Edinburgh, many of the inhabitants accused a number of dunghills, situated in the immediate vicinity of several of the great roads leading out of the town, in like manner as many of them now accuse the marshes. Several of the medical men then consulted gave a decided opinion, on similar grounds to those which I am now stating as to the marshes, to the effect that although the removal of the dunghills, as a nuisance, was proper, yet no perceptible effect, as to the liability of the inhabitants to fever, was to be expected from that measure. The dunghills were removed, but twice since that time, viz., between 1826 and 1828, and between 1837 and 1839, epidemic fever has spread in Edinburgh even more extensively than it had ever done before.

It is certain, however, that in the interior of the city, there is a great deal of filth external to the houses, depending partly on the imperfect state of the sewers, and the want of proper receptacles in the narrow closes where the houses are piled above one another in lofty *lands*, and partly on the great collections of manure which the proprietors of stables and cow-houses are allowed to make for their own convenience, in closes which are inhabited by numerous poor families. I have stated to the Poor Law Commissioners that it would be very desirable for the health of the city, if legislative measures could be employed to redress these grievances, which would require the prohibition in future, of houses being erected of more than a certain height, in proportion to the intervening alleys or closes between them, and would require also the prohibition of such depôts of manure, although private property, being made in the immediate neighbourhood of inhabited houses. I am happy to see that these or similar measures are recommended by the Committee of the House of Commons who have reported on the health of great towns. But I apprehend that both these measures would be expensive, and the former could not be really effectual for a considerable length of time.

But even if these measures were adopted, I think we cannot anticipate that by any such means, without a *permanent improvement of the condition of the poorest inhabitants of the city*, the liability to continued fever can be materially diminished. And for this opinion I beg to state the following reasons:—

1. The city has undergone, within my recollection, a very considerable improvement in point of cleanliness and ventilation, so far as the streets and everything exterior to the houses are concerned. The service of the scavengers is much better performed than formerly; the dunghills formerly mentioned on the outskirts of the town have been removed; a deep and spacious covered drain has been made along the Cowgate, and many of the crowded and ill-ventilated buildings, in which I have known fever to spread epidemically, have been removed, and either better houses substituted or wide openings left. Thus the greater part of the south side of the Castle-hill and West-bow, the whole of Libberton's-wynd, the greater part of Forster's-wynd and Ball's-wynd, and of several closes in the Cowgate, have been pulled down; and several of the oldest and most filthy large tenements in the High-street, in Blackfriars'-wynd, in High School-close, Canongate, &c., have been nearly deserted. But there has been no corresponding improvement in the health of the city; the inhabitants of such places have merely crowded into other parts of

the town, where their habits and mode of life continue as before, and their numbers are, I believe, increased; and within the last three years (previous to which time most of these improvements had been effected) epidemic fever has been both more extensive and more fatal than at any former time.

2. I have had many opportunities of observing that, among the most destitute of the people in Edinburgh, fever often spreads rapidly in situations as well ventilated and as far removed from any filth, *external to the inhabited rooms*, as can be desired. For example, in the *highest* stories of some of the loftiest houses in the vicinity of the High-street (particularly at Covenant-close, Dickson's-close, Skinner's-close, and James's-court.) I have seen numerous and rapid successions of fever cases originating from individual patients; while even at the same time, in the *lower parts* of the same common stairs, *worse ventilated*, and *nearer to the collections of filth* to be found in the closes, but which are inhabited by people better employed and in more comfortable circumstances, *fever has not appeared*.

In two instances which have come under my observation very lately (at the foot of the old Fishmarket-close, Cowgate, and in Douglas'-court, Leith-wynd,) fever had affected many individuals in the upper stories of lofty tenements, while the inhabitants of the lower stories, being generally in better circumstances, although in the close vicinity of very filthy courts or passages, have escaped entirely.

From many such observations I infer that the filth which really most effectually favours the extension of fever, at least in this city, is that which exists *within the inhabited rooms* in many parts of the town, and which is *inseparable from that destitute mode of life* which many of the lowest of the inhabitants, particularly during winter, habitually lead.

The question was put to me, in very distinct terms, by the Poor Law Commissioners, whether I considered the destitution without the filth, or the filth without the destitution, to be more effectual in the production or extension of fever; but it is one which, I am afraid, hardly admits of a direct answer, because, in Scotland at least, we have no destitution without filth. But we have many examples of filth without destitution; *i. e.*, of families living in close ill-aired rooms, of dirty habits, but regularly employed, and suffering no peculiar privations; and although we often see fever affecting several members of such families in succession, yet I can say with confidence, from many such cases as those I have just mentioned, that fever neither makes its way into such families with the same facility, nor extends through them with the same rapidity and certainty, as in the case of the unemployed, or partially employed, disabled and destitute poor.

That the *destitution*, and the irregular mode of life connected with the destitution, of many of the lower ranks in this, as in others of the great towns in Scotland, are the chief cause of the frequent diffusion of epidemic fever in them; and that merely owing to the filth which is always found in connexion with such a mode of life, I conclude from the following considerations:—

1. It is a general principle in pathology, established by the general experience of medical men in all ages, in civil life as well as in military or naval service, that contagion, and indeed every other cause of acute

disease, acts most rapidly and most certainly on the human body when enfeebled by deficient nourishment, by insufficient protection against cold, by mental depression, by occasional intemperance, and by crowding in small ill-aired rooms; all of which are the constant concomitants, as I believe the inevitable effects, of destitution in the poorer inhabitants of this and other great towns.

2. It has been very generally observed, on a large scale, in the history of contagious fever, that it has spread most rapidly and extensively, and assumed the form of an epidemic, in circumstances where most or all of those conditions have been present; for example, after scarcities; after the sudden cessation of the employment for numerous labourers; in exhausted, impoverished, or beaten armies; in besieged towns, &c. Some examples of this kind were given in my former work.

3. This has been more especially the result of very numerous and careful observations made in Ireland on epidemic fevers precisely similar to those lately prevalent in Scotland, and from which, in fact, very many of the cases occurring in Scotland during the present century have obviously originated.

The experience of the physicians in all parts of Ireland, in the great epidemic which began in 1817, was collected and digested by the eminent men appointed by Government for that purpose, and commented on by others; and the peculiar efficacy of *want and misery* in causing the extension of the disease, seems to have been observed and admitted by every one of the practitioners, and confirmed by the inquiries of every one of the reporters to Government, and other authors who have written on that epidemic; and the only question on which these authors appear to differ is, as to whether want and misery are sufficient to engender the disease, or only to give efficacy to the specific contagion.

The following are the statements of the late Dr. Cheyne, first as to the results of his own observations in Dublin, and afterwards as to those of the reports he had received and the inquiries he had made through the whole province of Leinster:—

“Where the disease was introduced amongst such communities of the poor as had little connexion with the higher ranks of society, and were *destitute of employment, and consequently ill supplied with food, and clothing, and fuel*, among such as, from the severe pressure of the times, were *so dispirited* as to be indifferent to the danger of infection, *it spread with celerity, and pertinaciously maintained its influence.*”

“The state of the poor when the epidemic appeared was *worse than it had at any former time been known*, in consequence of a succession of unfavourable seasons. In Wexford, at the period of my inspection, it was still very miserable. In some places *not one-half of the labouring poor had employment*; many of the farmers had discharged all the labourers they were wont to employ; and few, if any, retained the usual number. *Turf in most places was uncommonly dear; the clothes of the poor were nearly worn out*, and many of them slept in their body-clothes for want of blankets. *Thus depressed in strength and spirits, they were thrown open to the disease*, which everywhere existed among them, and which it was generally thought was propagated not merely from one neighbour to another, but by the *swarms of beggars* who overran the country. From Dublin to Gorey I heard complaints

of the injury which the country had sustained from the beggars, who were banished from Dublin last year by the Mendicity Association. Many of these wanderers laboured under fever, and others probably conveyed contagion from house to house in their clothes. The disease *has been most destructive in those parts of the country where the poor have had least intercourse with the rich.*"*

The following statement is made by one of those authors on the Irish epidemic fevers, who has expressed himself most strongly (and on good grounds) against the idea of destitution being the *sole* cause of fever:—

"The author is far from denying the *powerful agency of want and misery* in diffusing epidemic fevers; he has ever regarded those evils, in conjunction with certain moral habits, which he looks upon as *their natural and inevitable consequences, to be the chief, the great, he would say it emphatically, predisposing causes of fever in this country.* The existing causes act with tenfold effect on an impoverished and enfeebled multitude."†

I shall only add the emphatic expressions of Dr. Grattan, one of the physicians who had seen the most, and given the most accurate description, of the fevers in Dublin.—"Next to contagion I consider a *distressed state of the general population of any district* the most common and most extensive source of typhoid fever. The present epidemic in Ireland is principally to be referred to the miserable condition of the poorer classes in this kingdom; and so long as this state shall continue unimproved, so long will fever prevail, probably not to its present extent (1818), but certainly to an extent sufficient to render it a national affliction."

Now although we have not seen in Scotland so general and complete destitution, nor so wide-spreading epidemic fever as these gentlemen have witnessed and described in Ireland, yet it appears, from the facts already stated, that a considerable proportion of the lower orders in Edinburgh, and I believe in every great town in Scotland, are reduced every winter, and especially on occasion of the suspension of any considerable works, or of scarcity of provisions, to a condition very similar to that above described as existing so generally in Ireland; and the accounts given by the Irish practitioners—of families partially or wholly unemployed, scantily and irregularly fed, and depressed in spirits, obliged to part with their bed-clothes and part of their body-clothes for subsistence; collecting in town in winter, because there are no resources for them in the country; crowding together into small rooms in the dirtiest and worst-aired (because the cheapest) parts of the town, and frequently infected with fever by mere wandering in search of employment, or by travelling beggars—might really stand for a description of the circumstances of that portion of the inhabitants of Edinburgh (partly Scotch and partly Irish) among whom I have most frequently seen fever introduced, and almost always observed it to spread most certainly and most rapidly. In one instance, I remember a poor family wandering in search of employment, and infected with fever, who were driven from one part

* Medical Report of the Hardwicke Fever Hospital, by J. Cheyne, M.D., from the Dublin Hospital Reports, 2nd vol., pp. 45 and 49.

† Dr. O'Brien, in Dublin Medical Transactions, New Series, vol. i., part 2, p. 260.

of the town to another, and introduced the disease into three different districts, all inhabited by very poor people; and I traced not less than fifty cases of the disease to communication with that family, notwithstanding that several of its members were successively taken into the hospital.

I think myself justified, from the very frequent observation of such facts, in applying the experience of physicians in general in all countries, and especially of those who have witnessed the fever in Ireland, to its extension in Edinburgh, and concluding that the "want and misery" of a certain portion of the inhabitants, and the filth *within* the houses, the crowding, the negligent and reckless habits, and the occasional intemperance, which are the usual concomitants, and I believe the natural results, of this want and misery, are with us, as in Ireland, the great predisposing causes of fever, to which its frequent and general diffusion in this and other large towns in Scotland is chiefly to be ascribed.

And when I compare this state of things in these towns with the comparatively limited extension of contagious fever in most of the great towns in England, of which I have elsewhere given some examples,* and reflect on the resources which are there provided for persons likely to fall into a similar state of destitution, I cannot doubt that it is to the existence of the compulsory provision against indigence in England that the comparative exemption of the great towns from this great evil, of which I have elsewhere quoted proofs, is mainly to be ascribed.

I need hardly say that, according to the practical administration of the poor laws in Scotland, there is no legal provision for that destitution which results merely from want of employment; and that the allowances to aged, infirm, and disabled persons, and to widows and orphans, are so small, as in many instances not to preserve them from the state of destitution which, in the judgment of all experienced observers, gives the strongest predisposition to attacks of epidemic fevers.

The account of the Leeds House of Recovery for 1839 gives a striking illustration of the difference, in this respect, between the English and most of the Scotch and Irish towns. It is there stated that fever had appeared during the year in no less than 101 different streets or courts in that town; but the whole number of patients received from all these districts was only 201. This fact I consider as much stronger evidence of the efficiency of some cause or causes there acting, and resisting the extension of the disease, than the more partial introduction of fever into the town would have been.

In like manner, in the Report just published by Dr. Jenks, on the Sanatory State of Brighton, it is stated that the whole number of cases strictly designated as fever occurring there, in a population of about 40,000 persons, was 76 in a year (1839), notwithstanding that *the disease appeared in almost all parts of the town*, and furnished more in that and the preceding year than for fifteen years previously.

I must admit that the number of deaths from fever, reported in the two first Reports of the Registrar-General of England, is considerably greater than I expected, although not more than 16·7 per cent. of the general mortality, and not more than one-third of the mortality from

* On the Management of the Poor in Scotland, 2nd Edition, p. 16.

consumption; whereas in Glasgow it exceeded the mortality from "consumption and decline of the lungs" in one year (1837), and in Dundee it exceeded that mortality for four years consecutively. But besides that the extension of fever was greater in England in the year 1837-38, to which the Reports apply, than in any other year during the present century;—and besides that great part of the mortality from fever in England takes place among the poor Irish, who have no such protection against destitution as the native English;—I can give decisive proof that the difference in this respect between the English and Scottish towns is much greater than appears on the face of the registers, in consequence of many cases being recorded in England as deaths from fevers, which were deaths from febrile diseases indeed, but not from that idiopathic contagious typhoid fever which is the curse of the great towns in Scotland. This appears distinctly from a table communicated to me by Mr. Chadwick, shewing the deaths from fever in the Bethnal Green parish (the worst in London in this respect) in 1838. There are 264 deaths by fever, which would imply about 3,000 cases; but of the 264 it is stated that 115 were below ten years of age. Now we know that the mortality from the idiopathic fever in children is trifling, not more than 1 in 35, according to Dr. Cowan's Tables, in Glasgow, and at least as small in Edinburgh. Therefore 115 fatal cases of true fever below ten would imply about 4,000 cases at that early age alone. From this it is quite obvious that many of the deaths returned as fever below the age of ten, must have been from diseases essentially different from the idiopathic fever. And this is fully confirmed by the statement of Dr. Jenks, who says, that of 31 cases returned as fever by one of the parish surgeons at Brighton, 19 were children under ten, "not one of whom had any typhoid symptoms, *the fever in all these cases being symptomatic*; and that of the whole 31 cases only 7 should have been registered as fever." And again, that of 68 cases styled fever in the dispensary books, "*many attended as out-patients*, many more were children under ten," and, by the surgeon's own statement, "not more than one-fourth could be said to be cases of typhoid fever."* I apprehend it, therefore, to be quite certain, that the exemption from continued fever, which is co-existent with the legal claim to relief for destitution in England, is much greater than the Reports to the Registrar-General indicate.

For these reasons I beg to express my firm conviction that any inquiry into the sanatory condition of the lower orders, and especially into the extension of contagious fever, in this or other great towns in Scotland, must necessarily be incomplete, and can lead to no permanently useful result, which does not include a thorough investigation of the nature and administration of the legal provision for the poor, not only in these towns but generally throughout the country, and a comparison between that provision and that which exists in those countries where epidemic fever in the great towns is found by experience to be more effectually controlled. And in order to shew that I entertain no visionary ideas of improvement of the condition of the people from an extension of the legal provision, I shall state more explicitly what I would anticipate as the practical result, in the great towns of Scotland, of a

* Report on the Sanatory State of Brighton, pp. 9, 10.

general and compulsory system of relief of indigence throughout Scotland, similar to that which exists in England, Holland, or the greater part of Germany.

1. I expect that a considerable number, probably several hundreds, of destitute persons, natives of other parts of the country, or even recently arrived from thence, who are now found in Edinburgh every winter, seeking for irregular employment, or for public or private charity, would remain at home, or could be sent back, having a decent provision made for them in their own parishes.

2. I expect that another considerable number, probably several hundreds, of persons able for work (some of them men, but the greater number widows or single women, chiefly field and garden labourers) who are thrown out of employment during several months of the year, and reduced to the miserable state of destitution above described, would be admitted into workhouses, and kept there in confinement, but in comparative comfort; and, if they should take fever, would be prevented from communicating the infection to others. Thus a larger portion of those destitute persons by whom fever is so often imported into the town, or among whom it spreads most readily, would disappear from our streets and closes; and this more especially if the Irish poor-law shall be effectual in offering an asylum or home to many disabled or destitute inhabitants of that unfortunate country.

3. I expect that many disabled or destitute poor, and widows and orphans, natives of Edinburgh, or long resident there, who now receive either no allowances, or such scanty allowances as condemn them to constant and numerous privations, would have their allowances considerably raised; they would be better fed and better clothed, and instead of being compelled to crowd together in the close and filthy districts of the town (where their rooms or lodgings are cheapest) they would be enabled to find habitations in healthier situations. Thus an adequate legal provision, although not directly removing the filth from the people, would, in many instances, remove the people from the filth in which they are now irretrievably involved.

4. I expect that a much stricter *surveillance* would be maintained over the destitute poor than under the present system, and that by refusing out-door relief to destitute persons whose conduct is found to be profligate, at the same time offering them the workhouse—and then putting the law strictly in execution against them if they were found begging—a much better security would be given to the public than under the present system, that money intended for the relief of suffering, shall not be applied to the indulgence of habits of intemperance.

I think it cannot be denied, that in all these respects the provision against destitution is much more effectual in the great towns in England, and in the greater part of the continent of Europe, than in this country; while, on the other hand, it has in Ireland, up to this time, been generally still worse than in this country: and when I reflect on the evidence already stated as to the connexion of contagious fever with destitution, and remember that Ireland has suffered more from this disease, for many years past, than any other country in Europe, and the great towns of Scotland very much more than those in England, and I believe more than those of any other country in Europe, except

Ireland, I cannot doubt that the extension and improvement of the provision against destitution in Scotland is the method by which alone, under Providence, this great and increasing evil can be permanently and effectually restrained.

And I will only add, that if the argument usually employed in this country *against* an adequate provision against destitution, viz., that such provision necessarily in the end increases the evil it is intended to relieve, had been a sound one, I think the inevitable consequence would have been, that in most parts of England where such provision has existed for above two centuries, the extension of epidemic fever would have been remarkably greater than in Scotland or Ireland, the reverse of which is unquestionably the fact.

If it be true, as I have stated, that the inadequacy of the legal provision in Scotland is a powerful cause of disease in the great towns beyond what exists in England, it will naturally be expected that the mortality will be decidedly greater, and I have no doubt that this is the case; but, after taking some pains on the subject, I have come to the conclusion that we must wait another year before we can give perfectly satisfactory evidence in regard to it. All estimates of the increase of population since the last census in 1831 are somewhat uncertain, and of course all statements of mortality having reference to such estimates are only approximations. I shall, therefore, only add here the mortality in Edinburgh for 1837-8, as compared with the population of 1831, including the West Church and Canongate, ascertained with much trouble by Mr. Watt, and compare it with the mortality of the same years in a few parts of England:—

Population in 1831	136,280
Deaths in 1837	5,300, 1 in 25·7
„ 1838	4,512, 1 in 30·2
Population in London in 1831	1,594,890
Deaths in London in 1837-8	53,597, 1 in 29·7
„ „ 1838-9	46,768, 1 in 30·3
Population of Manchester in 1831	236,935
Deaths in Manchester in 1837-8	8,373, 1 in 28·2
„ „ 1838-9	9,276, 1 in 25·7
Population of Liverpool, &c. in 1831	218,233
Deaths in Liverpool in 1837-8	9,042, 1 in 24·1
„ „ 1838-9	8,467, 1 in 25·7
Population of Birmingham in 1831	110,914
Deaths in Birmingham in 1837-8	3,317, 1 in 33·4
„ „ 1838-9	3,305, 1 in 33·5
Population of Leeds in 1831	135,581
Deaths in Leeds in 1837-8	3,572, 1 in 38·
„ „ 1838-9	4,690, 1 in 28·9

Thus it appears, that there is no town in England which has shewn a greater mortality, compared to the population of 1831, than Edinburgh did in 1837, except Liverpool in that year, when it was afflicted with a very fatal epidemic small-pox; and as I believe it to be quite certain that the population of all these towns had advanced much more rapidly between 1831 and 1837 than that of Edinburgh, I have not the smallest doubt that the true rate of mortality in the latter was very considerably

greater than in any of them ; besides which, it is to be observed, that all these are trading or manufacturing towns, in which various occupations are necessarily unhealthy, and the fluctuations of industry much greater than in Edinburgh.* Within the ancient Royalty of Edinburgh, as I am certain that the mortality was much greater than in the West Church or Canongate, and the increase of population between 1831 and 1837 very small, I think it certain that I was within the truth in the conjecture which I formerly hazarded, that the mortality in 1837 must have been as high as 1 in 24.

But I am aware that the defenders of the Scotch system of management of the poor have not lately urged the argument as to its effect in restraining the growth of the population with any confidence, and that they have not even offered any decided opposition to the statement which I conceive that a fair examination of the experience of various nations entitles us to lay down as a first principle in this department of political economy, viz., that a legal provision for the poor, managed even with common prudence, maintaining certain artificial wants and habits of comfort among the lowest of the people, and enabling them to obtain and to appreciate a good religious and moral education, *has a most powerful tendency to check excessive population.*

The main reliance of the defenders of the Scotch system is, on its alleged effect on the *character* of the people, and particularly on that quality which in all such discussions is always brought forward as the most valuable to themselves (as it certainly is in the first instance, the most economical to their superiors), their *independence*. I shall offer a few observations on this point, chiefly in the view of shewing in what manner the effect of different systems on this quality of the lower orders can be illustrated by numbers, and therefore be fairly brought under the view of this meeting.

1. It is quite plain, that to suppose *all* the lower orders to be independent, is to suppose the poor (in the sense in which the term is used in the Scriptures) to cease out of the land, and the duty and the virtue of charity to cease likewise, which is neither consistent with the warnings of Scripture, nor with the experience of any nation that has ever existed. However much we may admire the independence of the lower orders, therefore, we must expect that a large number of them—and this number continually increasing as a nation is peopled up to its resources, unless efficient means are taken to repress it—must necessarily be *dependent*.

The maintenance of independence among as many as possible of the lower orders is undoubtedly an important object ; but it is not the only, nor even the chief, object to be held in view when we contemplate the sufferings of poverty. The first object is, simply to do as we would be done by to our suffering brethren, to mitigate their sufferings as far as may be in our power ; and the maintenance of their independence may be very properly stated as the *limit* to our exertions ; just in so far as this,—that if by our bounty we make persons dependent on others who

* The English towns which are in this respect most similar to Edinburgh, are the cathedral towns Oxford and Cambridge, and Bath, in which I have no doubt that the mortality is much smaller.

would otherwise have been independent, we confer on them no permanent benefit. From which the practical inference seems to me to be, that consistently with the main object of relieving suffering, we do enough for the object of maintaining independence among the poor, if we make the situation of every one to whom relief is given less desirable *on the whole* than that of those who can keep themselves independent. And I think experience abundantly demonstrates that, consistently with this rule, a uniform and effective system of relief to destitution may be safely enforced, and this point, I apprehend, is capable of being demonstrated by statistics. I speak in the presence of men well acquainted with the practical working of the present poor-laws in England, and assert that it is statistically ascertained, that although the improved workhouses give complete relief to the sufferings of destitution, they are so much less desirable, on the whole, than independent industry, that the proportion of able-bodied persons who will resort to them, as long as they can live by their own industry out of them, is quite trifling; and the parts appropriated to the unemployed able-bodied (who have a right to claim admission there when destitute) are very often nearly, or completely, empty.

2. The great error, as it seems to me, in those who have been strongly impressed with this danger, lies in arguing as if there were no dependence but dependence on the law; and therefore *as if all who are kept off the poor-rate are independent*. Whenever any individual of our species is not provided for, either by his own labour, or the labour of his ancestors, or of his immediate relations, he is in a political sense *dependent*, and the moral and political dangers affecting his character, or the good of his country, which are to be apprehended from the loss of his independence, *are already incurred*, whether he is dependent on the law or on the bounty of individuals. When, therefore, we meet with persons who cannot maintain themselves by their own industry, and do not procure subsistence from their immediate relations, we meet with those who have already lost their independence, and the only question that remains is, what is to be, at least for a time, the mode of their dependence on others.

I have elsewhere given various reasons for thinking that the proper answer to this question is, generally speaking, in favour of dependence on the law; that this is, indeed, the only form of dependence which, in a complex state of society, affords *security* against destitution; and that the private bounty of individuals is more properly and beneficially exercised in conferring those innumerable benefits which man may bestow on man, after the mere necessities of life have been already provided for. But, in a political view, the simple answer to this question is to be found by inquiring whether, under the legal provision, or under the voluntary system, the *number* of the dependent poor is ultimately found to be greatest. Thus the question before us resolves itself into that which regards the effect of the legal provision on population, and is to be resolved, as I apprehend, only by experience, *i. e.*, by statistical facts. There are reasons for believing, as I have elsewhere stated, that the number of the dependent poor, as in Ireland, in Brittany, in various parts of Italy, even in some parts of Scotland where the poor-law is not enforced, rises much higher under the voluntary system of dependence

on the bounty of individuals—always in a complex state of society more or less casual and precarious—than it has ever been observed to do under the steady rule of a legal provision, even when injudiciously extended. In Ireland, it is 25 per cent.; in Italy, 45 per cent.; in Brittany, it comprehends at particular seasons nearly all the labourers and many of the farmers; and it is hardly less in some of the unassessed parts of Scotland.

A recent work on pauperism in France, entitled, “*Researches on Pauperism in France, by M. le Viconte Villeneuve de Bargemont, formerly Counsellor of State and Prefêt du Nord,*” contains a striking illustration of the same principle. The author says, that when appointed to the prefecture in the North of France, he made inquiry into the number of *pauvres, i. e.*, poor receiving assistance from public funds, and found that they were in the whole of that district one-sixth, or 16·6 of the population; he states the proportion of the indigent to the rest of the population in Europe in general, at one-twentieth, or 5 per cent.; but in England at one-sixth, or 16 per cent. (in this he is wrong), and attributes the excess of poverty in the northern provinces of France, in Artois, a part of Picardy and Normandy, to the proximity of England, which, he says, has *inoculated the rest of Europe with “le veritable pauperisme.”*

He says he should vainly attempt to give an idea of the nakedness, the sufferings, the abject physical and moral degradation of the indigent labourers of the principal towns of this department, and that in Lille these amounted to “*32 mille, près de la moitié de la population.*” But if it was the imitation of England, it certainly was not the imitation of the English poor-law which produced this result, for he expressly says, that “*all the relief granted consisted in some philanthropic subscriptions, supported by an inexhaustible spirit of charity, but which had become little productive and insufficient.*” “*Up to this day,*” he adds, “*our poor-law has had no other object than the repression of disorders, to which mendicity may lead.**”

I think, therefore, we are enabled, by reference to experience and to statistical facts, to allay the apprehension of those who are so solicitous about the independence of the poor, by assuring them, that the extension of the legal provision is only wished for as applicable to those who have already lost their independence; that this number extends much farther under the voluntary system, in an advanced stage of society, than under the legal provision; and that under the sure guidance of experience, the legal provision may easily be so managed as to be strictly limited to such persons, and offer no obstacle, but every encouragement to their regaining their independence whenever their own exertions will suffice for that purpose.

At all events it seems to me, that until the number of recipients of parish relief affords a better measure of the number of destitute and dependent poor in Scotland, there cannot be a more transparent fallacy than to suppose, that an increase of the number on the poor’s roll implies any increase of poverty or destitution, or any diminution of the independence of the people, or that a diminished number on the poor’s roll implies a diminution of poverty and suffering; and this fallacy runs

* Op. Cit. pp. 16 and 89.

through almost all the statistical statements that we have of the supposed pernicious effects of assessments.

The number of poor of all classes returned as receiving legal relief in the city of Edinburgh, Canongate, and St. Cuthbert's, is 5,004, in a population (in 1831) of 136,230, *i. e.*, about 1 in 27, or 3·7 per cent. of the population. But if we attend to the numbers receiving occasional relief from the different charitable associations in Edinburgh, we shall find that they are very far beyond that number.

The Destitute Sick Society, returns annually about	10,500
The Strangers' Friend Society	1,900
The House of Refuge	1,200
The Night Refuge, about	600
The Royal Infirmary of persons admitted, not because their complaints could not be managed at home, but simply because they cannot be regularly provided with the necessaries of life at home, at least	2,000
The Society for Incurables	100
The two Female Societies, and Old Man's Society, about	200
The Society for Clothing the Industrious Poor, about	200
A subscription raised last winter for relieving the most destitute of the poor	5,000
Total relieved not less than	22,600

All this is independent of the charities of individuals. It will be observed, that the amount given to each case, by almost every one of these charities is trifling; but all the persons applying for it are clearly in so far *dependent*, and it is also to be remembered, that to every one of these charities there are a number of applicants every week who receive nothing; and making an allowance for the same individuals being relieved repeatedly, I think we may infer from these data, that the dependent poor in Edinburgh are at least three times the number of the legal poor.

This is fully confirmed by the more specific statements which I formerly quoted, particularly from some of the missionaries employed in Edinburgh. Thus I stated, that of 120 families reported by Mr. Dalziel and Mr. Miller as in a very destitute state, only 30 (one-fourth) had legal relief; of 26 destitute families (out of work several months in the year, and whose earnings when employed seldom exceeded 3s. per week) reported by Mr. Westwater, only 6 had legal relief; of 19 very destitute families reported subsequently by Mr. Dalziel, only 4 had legal relief; and again, of 200 persons absolutely dependent on charity, whose cases were investigated by Mr. Chambers, only 38 had regular legal relief. In Dumfries, I stated that the destitute and dependent poor are fully 15 per cent. of the population, although the regular paupers are under 5 per cent., and all who are admitted to the legal relief only 10 per cent. I am informed by Mr. Stuart, of Hillside, near Lockerby, who has taken much pains in regard to the statistics of poverty in his neighbourhood, that he considers the perfectly destitute and dependent poor as 6 and 7 per cent. of the population, even in that agricultural district, although the paupers receiving any part of the legal provision are not above 3 per cent.

The statements formerly made from St. Andrew's, from the High-

lands and Islands, &c. abundantly confirm the general proposition, that *the pauperism of Scotland represents only a portion, in many places only a small portion, of our destitute and dependent poor.*

Now it were certainly absurd to suppose, that those who constitute this excess of the destitute poor in Scotland, above the recipients of legal relief, are *independent*. They are all dependent, more or less uniformly, on voluntary charity of one kind or another; and, in a great town, they are all dependent on the charity of persons to whom they make applications in one way or other, and who are ignorant of their persons, characters, and history, *i. e.*, they are dependent in one form or another of *beggary*. It is not a mere poetical fancy to say, that "the independence Britons prize too high" may "lead stern depopulation in her train;" and I cannot but think that I have done enough to shew, that the zeal which is so strongly manifested in Scotland for the maintenance of this virtue among the poor, has been carried much too far, when I have shewn that we have sacrificed, and are constantly sacrificing to it, not only the comforts but the lives of many of those unfortunate persons, who in this, as in every other country that ever existed, are dependent in some form or other on charitable assistance, and whose wants in other countries are regularly and effectively supplied. But I think there can be no doubt on this point if it be farther true, as I confidently assert, that this sacrifice has been, and ever will be, *unavailing*; that the number of *dependent poor* in Scotland is already greater than in most other countries; and that, so far as we can judge from the experience of other countries, it seems to be a general law of Providence to attach such a property of *re-production* to unrelieved destitution and suffering, as shall punish unto the third and fourth generation the sin of those who leave it unrelieved.

From all that has been stated, I think we are, at all events, fully justified in drawing this conclusion, that whether we regard the existing system in Scotland as designed to repress the growth of the population and its pressure on the means of subsistence, or to foster the independence of the lower orders, we must admit, that it has been singularly unsuccessful. And I am persuaded that whoever will take the trouble to inform himself correctly and statistically as to the results which have actually flowed from this system, and then carefully compare it, not exclusively as to its pecuniary cost, but as to its effects on life and health, on character and conduct, on the extension of the lower class of the population, and the continual reproduction of sin and suffering among them; with the uniform, regular, and effective provisions against destitution, and its attendant evils now in force in England, in Holland, and Germany, will be compelled to admit that in this department of civil economy we have been excelled by our neighbours.

I beg to state here that I most cordially agree with Dr. Chalmers in all that he said as to the importance of the principle of locality in the administration of relief to the poor, *i. e.*, in the importance of those who are to administer such relief confining themselves to limited districts, and becoming well acquainted with the characters and habits of all applicants for relief within these districts. I agree with him also in thinking that the minister and kirk-session in the landward parishes are a body well fitted for superintending the administration of relief. But

I do not agree with him in thinking that the heritors and kirk-session, who are to pay the tax, are the proper persons to judge what amount of relief is proper; and the reason is, that experience shews that under that system, the relief given is generally quite inadequate, and, in particular, the wish of the minister is very often overruled. Of this I shall only give two proofs. At Kilmuir, in the Isle of Skye, the legal provision is 3*l.* a year, distributed among the destitute of a parish of 2,000 people. This the minister distributes among 60 of the poorest of his parishioners, but says expressly, in his Report to the General Assembly, that if he had funds he would put 200 on the roll, on account of their extreme destitution. Again, Dr. Scott Alison states, "In many parishes in East Lothian there is no assessment for the relief of the poor, and where there are few resident gentry and farmers the privations of the poor are extreme. It generally happens that the minister endeavours to procure relief from the parish, but he seldom ventures to propose more than 1*s.* a week, because he knows that in general the proposition for more would not be listened to."

Thus however excellent the machinery for the administration of the poor fund in the landward parishes may be, it is rendered totally inefficient by the mere want of funds; and I apprehend that there can be no security against this, unless the decisions of the kirk-sessions, as to the amount of alimony to a pauper, were subject to a review of an accessible court of law, which, as late as 1821, was considered by the late Lord Robertson to be the existing law of Scotland, although the majority of the court of session then thought otherwise.

As to the administration of relief in towns, this is not managed by the kirk-sessions, but by the magistrates, or by certain bodies of men to whom the magistrates delegate their powers; and I fortunately have it in my power to lay before the section a statement of undoubted authority as to their mode of management in Edinburgh, with some notes on that statement, by Mr. Chadwick, Secretary to the Poor Law Commission in England, from which we may judge whether it is in the Scotch or the English towns that the principle of locality is best acted on.

I know well that Dr. Chalmers has long raised his voice most justly against the massing together of the poor, and putting them under a single inspector, in the administration of relief in Edinburgh and other large towns; but I know also that he has done so unsuccessfully, and the reason of his want of success I believe to be simply the want of funds. And as long as the people of Scotland continue to think it wise to expend on their poor, in the way of legal provision, only about one-fifth of the sum, in proportion to the population, which the people of England spend on theirs, I venture to predict that he will continue to be unsuccessful.

Dr. Wallace, late Professor of Mathematics in Edinburgh, now a zealous manager of the charity workhouse, engaged in admitting the poor as out-pensioners, says, "I attempted to find a system of rules by which I might perform that duty with justice and economy, but found there was no written code. It was not intended to give the poor as much as would support them; they were to get a certain allowance and make up the rest as they best could, only they were not to beg nor seek relief from any other charity. Now these being the only honest ways a

poor person without health, friends, or employment has of eking out the miserable pittance he gets from the parish, I cannot discover the propriety of this rule.* I made various trials to ascertain a rule according to which the amount of relief was granted, but could find none, and was obliged to conclude that there was none. After a year's experience I can state that *the only sure guide I had was the diligence and fidelity of the inspector (one for 55,000 people), and his good sense and kindly feeling towards the poor.* When the inspector has made his report the question arises, what allowance should be given to the applicant? There is no reason why the pension list should not be constructed on a principle of justice and economy as well as assurance offices and benefit societies; but having examined the list with care, I with confidence pronounce it to be formed without any correct notion of order. Thus each of 11 single women in the prime of life receives 6s. 4d. in six weeks, while each of 27 widows, with one child, receives only 6s., and many of this last class receive nothing. The allowances have been determined by the will of the presiding persons, not sitting all at once like a jury, but sometimes singly, and sometimes in pairs, and having no rule to guide them but precedent and their own feelings."

On this Mr. Chadwick observes, "It appears that in Edinburgh there is but one officer to investigate cases for the whole city, containing 55,000 inhabitants, and that the investigation is conducted without much order or method. The central power in England is the security for local strength, by officers acting upon system. Under the Poor Law Commissioners' regulation, in such a town there would be about four relieving officers. In the greater proportion of the unions it is a regulation laid down that there should be a relieving officer for every 5,000 of the population. Every guardian of a parish is expected to communicate anything which he may know of a particular case; but neither the poor nor the rate-payers are left to the discretion of unpaid officers, nor are those officers burdened with a difficult and disagreeable duty.

"Each case must be investigated by the paid officer; he must visit the spot; he must inquire into the reality of the claim, and the cause of the destitution, the capability of relations to contribute aid, and other particulars, entered under various heads as a report, in a book kept for the purpose, called the Pauper Examination and Report Book. For omissions in, or for the want of truth of any part of this Report, the officer is responsible. In general the examination of a case, by a properly-trained officer, is deemed so far superior that it is preferred to a report made by a guardian, with regard to any person of whom he may even have had personal knowledge; in fact, guardians do not consider it prudent to act singly out of the board.

* It is to be observed that I do not object to the expectation that those paupers who are able to do some work should do so. What I object to is the allowances being fixed on the supposition that all such persons can always find employment, as if the demand for labour in any particular locality could be forced by reducing the people to indigence; and the chief ground of the objection is the fact, ascertained by experience, that the expedient is ineffectual, and that the only effect of keeping down the allowances is to make people miserable who might otherwise be comfortable, and to depress the condition and lower the standard of comfort of the whole labouring population.

“ In Edinburgh, as it appears from the statement, the guardians take upon themselves to determine whether the pauper shall have relief at all. It is very rare, except where there are known and well-assured means of employment and subsistence to be obtained by the applicant, that the responsibility of refusing relief absolutely to an applicant is undertaken by a guardian in England ; with the above exception, the only discretion allowed them by the English law is, whether they shall have out-door or in-door relief, and, in case of out-door relief, what is the mode in which it shall be administered. The discretion to refuse relief to a person who has no apparent means of subsistence would be thought equivalent to giving the guardian the power of life and death of any individual, by exposing him to perish by starvation. Various rules of the commissioners might be quoted to prove this point.

“ It is to be observed that for this large population in question in Edinburgh, there appears to be no medical officer. Under the new system of central control in England the local administration would be strengthened by the appointment of four medical officers. In consequence of the absence of any such machinery for Scotland, it was found impracticable to extend to it the provision for the extension of vaccination ; the effect is, that whilst in England the people will probably receive a general protection by vaccination from that disease, the people of Scotland are unavoidably exposed to its ravages.” In Edinburgh this is compensated by the dispensaries, chiefly supported by medical students ; but in the country and many country towns there is no medical charity, even voluntary. “ It does not appear that there is any adequate provision for the proper training of orphan and destitute children. The local power in England is strengthened by the union or aggregation, which admits of such classification, as to afford the means of appropriate treatment of each class ; and the treatment by paid officers of classes of paupers is found to be in the end a cheaper mode of management.”

Nothing can be farther from my intention than to represent the system now in force in England as perfect, or even the principles on which it is worked as in all respects clearly and satisfactorily laid down. The importance of the grand principle of the maintenance of artificial wants among the poor, not only with a view to their present comfort, but as a security against their future increase (which I consider as the most efficient preventive check) has not as yet been distinctly recognized.*

* When I mention the principle of artificial wants and habits of comfort as the true preventive check on population, I may perhaps be allowed to mention two illustrations, both statistical, of that principle, lately suggested to me by different friends.

The first was advanced by a member of the Society of Friends ; speaking of the fallacy of the opinion, that a known security against destitution, on which the poor can rely, will necessarily make them reckless and improvident, he observed (as I think very truly) that if that doctrine had been true, the Society of Friends would by this time have been a society of paupers or beggars, because every one of them knows perfectly, from his infancy, that he never can come to want. Yet there is no more prudent nor more thriving class of the community.

The second was a fact stated in Mercier's “ *Tableau de Paris*,” that many of those women in Paris, who are instructed in different arts, and by their skill and industry raise themselves in the world, remain unmarried, and are without offspring, whereas the beggar women never fail to have families of children. This I regard

But I believe I am correct in saying that the following more strictly practical principles are those which guide the administration of relief in England :—

1. That there shall be a compulsory and effective provision, defined and regulated by the law, for the relief of destitution, whether resulting from age, or infirmity, or want of employment.

2. That this relief be so administered as to make the situation of every able-bodied pauper receiving it less eligible on the whole than that of an independent labourer.

3. That a system of strict inspection be exercised over all who receive this relief, with a view to its being always apportioned to their real wants, and so suited to their characters as to favour the effect of religious and moral instruction.

4. That in order to fulfil these conditions, particularly in the case of able-bodied persons, in the case of orphan children, in the case of old and infirm persons without relatives, and in the case of persons of immoral conduct, well-regulated workhouses be always at the command of those who administer this legal relief.

These propositions seem to me to contain the general result of the lessons of experience on this subject in all countries where it has been carefully and successfully studied. If we do not choose to examine the practice, or to trust to the experience of England, let us look to the example of Holland, of Prussia, Austria, Bavaria, Würtemberg, Switzerland, Denmark, Sweden, America, Russia, or even Siberia; in all I believe we shall find, under some variety of practice, the same principles admitted and enforced. But if we decline to compare the results of the system now in force in Scotland with the systems elsewhere established, and persist in the belief that our own experience is sufficient to guide us, that our practice is superior to that of other nations, and that the theory on which it has been chiefly rested is a sound one, I venture, with all possible deference and respect for the opinions of others who have thought differently, to assert, that we are trusting to a broken reed; that we are falling behind, not preceding, other nations in the advance of civilization; and, what is far more important, that we are mistaking, and, because mistaking, neglecting a duty which is equally recommended to us by nature and revelation, the faithful performance of which has been expressly enjoined on the more fortunate members of society, as an acceptable service to Him in whom we all put our trust, and without the faithful performance of which we have been expressly warned that “whosoever liveth is accounted dead before Him.”

In the discussion which took place at Glasgow, in the Statistical Session of the Association, after the reading of this paper, Dr. Chalmers, although opposed to a general system of assessment for the relief of the poor, made several very important admissions.

1. He admitted that assessments were advisable to support *medical* charities; and particularly that kind of charity which, he justly observed, is most neglected in Scotland,—institutions for incurables; but as another illustration of that characteristic property of reproduction, which, as we see in Ireland, always attaches itself to destitution and mendicity, and makes it ultimately much more dangerous to a community than pauperism constituted by the law.

he objects to any such provision for the relief of mere destitution ; the distinction lying in this, that the former class of sufferings proceeds from the visitation of Providence, and the knowledge of the provision for their relief can have no tendency to dispose men to incur them, whereas the latter very often proceed from human improvidence or intemperance, which may be encouraged by such provision for their relief. Now, let us consider the true bearings of this admission, and the practical difficulties which immediately meet us, when we attempt to draw this line.

1. It will of itself justify, and even demand, a vastly greater amount of legal relief to the poor, than has ever yet been granted in Scotland ; it would justify, for example, giving to the whole expenditure of the Society for Relief of the Destitute Sick in Edinburgh (the most effective of the voluntary charities, and which annually spends above 2,000*l.* a year,) the authority and certainty of the law ; and it would justify assessments, not only to maintain this or similar charities, which give only temporary relief, but also to maintain either additional hospitals, or some additional provisions, for the permanent relief of that numerous class of destitute patients who are not received into, or are speedily dismissed from, all hospitals supported on the voluntary system, because their cases are tedious and uninteresting, and admit of no cure.*

2. If the legal provision is advisable to relieve the sufferings of those who have been disabled for labour by injury or disease, how can it be justly withheld from those who are incapable of labour themselves, and have been dependent on the labour of those to whom it is justly given ? How can it be justly granted, for example, to a labourer who is struck down by accident or disease in middle life, but denied to his aged parents, whom he had supported, or to the widow and orphans whom he may leave behind him ?

3. If such provision is justly given to those whom Providence has visited with incurable disease in middle life, how can it be justly withheld from those who are disabled by that visitation of Providence which the mere advance of years brings upon all, and whom circumstances *quite beyond their own control* had prevented, during their years of labour, from making any provision for their own old age,—a class who, from the different statements already given, appear to be very numerous in Scotland ?

4. Many of those who are merely destitute, are so from causes over which they have had as little control as over the dispensations of Providence ; for example, the failure of any particular line of industry in consequence of improvements in art, the glut of markets, commercial embarrassments from failure of banks or other establishments, or the general increase of population. In equity, destitution from such causes is equally entitled to a certain relief, as disability from accident or disease.

5. On the other hand, many of those who are disabled by disease, or even by accident, have brought these misfortunes on themselves by improvidence or intemperance. It may be plausibly maintained that these have as little claim, in equity, on charitable assistance as those who

* Knowing, as I do, the great extent of destitution in Scotland, which comes strictly under the head of disqualification for labour, by disease, it is matter of sincere gratification to me to find Dr. Chalmers on my side in maintaining the justice and expediency of a legal provision for all such destitution.

have lost employment by misconduct; but it is impossible practically to distinguish how much of disease is to be ascribed to intemperance, and how much to the visitations of Providence only.

6. Even if all destitution, independent of disease, were referable to misconduct, this misconduct cannot be ascribed to the children, or other dependents of those who become destitute; and if no security is given for their relief, great numbers of innocent persons are unjustly punished for the sins of a much smaller number of guilty.

II. While these considerations shew that the line by which the legal provision is to be circumscribed cannot, consistently with *justice*, be drawn in the way recommended, the *inexpediency* of excluding destitution, independently of disease, from participation in its benefits, becomes more obvious when we consider another admission distinctly made by Dr. Chalmers, that the representation given by myself and others, of the rapid progress of population among persons reduced to a destitute and degraded mode of life, is a true statement. If this be so, the denial of a fixed and certain relief to destitution, from whatever cause it proceeds, must necessarily tend to an increase of the evil,—the sin of neglecting the duty of charity is thus visited to the third and fourth generation of those who have committed it; and the practical question is reduced to that which I have always stated as the true object of the inquiry, viz., under what regulations is it found by *experience* that the sufferings and the evil consequences of destitution, are most effectually and permanently controlled.

These and other considerations seem to me abundantly to demonstrate the wisdom of the rule followed in England, Holland, and Germany, by which the claim to relief is given simply by destitution, and the character and conduct of applicants are considered as determining, not the question whether relief is to be given, but merely the question, what mode of relief is advisable in each case of ascertained destitution; and from the results of which I confidently infer that any nation which undertakes the duty prudently and systematically, may safely and most beneficially take on itself, as a public burden, the relief of all the destitution to be found within its limits, and thereby raise the standard of comfort in the lowest of its members to a point much higher than that which exists in Scotland.

III. The simplest and easiest mode of availing ourselves of the advantages of experience in Scotland appears from a further admission by Dr. Chalmers, that in the northern counties of England, the poor-laws had been well and frugally administered, and that the condition of the people is there good, from which he argued, that instead of contrasting the condition of England with an effective poor-law, with that of Ireland without a poor-law, we ought to contrast the prudent administration of relief to the poor in the north of England, with the profuse expenditure under the poor-law in the south. Here, I apprehend he has not adverted to two facts of the utmost importance, 1st, That the administration of the poor-law in the south of England is now assimilated to that in the north,—the great abuse of indiscriminate out-door relief to the able-bodied poor, which was the true difference of the system pursued in the south and in the north, having been done away; and 2nd, That the allowance to aged and disabled persons, and to widows and orphans, and the extension of the right of relief to able-bodied poor in work-

houses, have been long, and are now, as liberal in the north of England as in the south; the reason of the great difference of expenditure formerly having been that, in the south a great part of the wages of labour were paid out of the poor-rates, which abuse never existed in the north.

It is to be observed, therefore, that the only forms of legal relief to destitution which any one proposes for Scotland, have long existed in the north of England equally as in the south, and that the general and admitted absence of abject destitution in the northern counties of England, without any excessive pressure of the poor-rates on the richer inhabitants, is precisely a case to prove to the inhabitants of Scotland what results are to be expected from a prudent but liberal extension of their legal provision for the poor.

IV. Dr. Chalmers laid some stress, on this as on other occasions, upon the supposed influence of a legal and efficient provision for the poor, in extinguishing family affection among them; but he has as yet made no answer to the following objections to his statements on that head.

1. Although there may have been many individual instances of neglect of relatives in England, which might be attributed, at least in part, to the system of indiscriminate out-door relief to able-bodied persons (now abolished), yet there is certainly no evidence of any deficiency of indications of family affection among the English poor, under the present system of legal provision there. Mr. Felkin, of Nottingham, and several other gentlemen, who have recently had ample experience as guardians of the poor in England, have fully confirmed, in conversation with me, the statements which I formerly made on this subject, chiefly from the testimony of several medical men who have seen much of the lower orders in England. The following is a strong additional testimony to the same purpose from Dr. E. Haward, an intelligent and zealous practitioner in the south of England, who has studied medicine in Edinburgh.—“I can testify that the assertion of there being less family affection among the English poor, even under the old law, than there is in Scotland, is *entirely* without foundation. I have, for many years, been accustomed to visit the poor, both under the old law and under the amendment, having had the entire charge of the poor of a district comprising six extensive parishes; and under both, I consider the English standard of domestic affection superior to the Scotch.”

2. It appears from what has been stated above, in strict conformity with what I have elsewhere observed, that among the most destitute of the Scottish poor, even of tolerably regular habits, there is often a very great deficiency of family affection, or care of relatives; so that the Scotch system of management of the poor, if designed to promote this virtue among them, has been equally unsuccessful in that respect, as in the others already considered. Thus, it has been already stated, that in several different parts of Scotland where careful inquiry was made, the number of persons living in a very destitute state, who received any assistance from their relatives, was not more than one-fifth of the whole; and several persons well acquainted with the habits of the lower orders in our large towns have confirmed my observation, that the greatest number of desertions of families among them occur in those whose character partakes of the recklessness and improvidence usually accompanying habitual destitution, and whose wandering habits have prevented their acquiring any certain claim to parochial relief.

3. In all countries it is found that the strongest feelings of family affection are seen in persons of the *middle* or *even of the higher ranks*, whose minds have undergone more or less of that cultivation which is necessarily out of the power of those who are constantly and anxiously occupied in the pursuit of the first necessities of life. From which we may infer, that security against destitution, if accompanied by religious and moral education, can have at least no injurious effect on family affection; and that, by reducing people to destitution, we are much more likely to weaken than to strengthen those sacred ties.

As to what was said, on this occasion, of the experience of St. John's parish in Glasgow, during the time (from 1820 to 1838) when the poor in it were provided for without assessment, it seems sufficient to say that no answer was made to the observations on that experiment, which I had made in my reply to Mr. Monypenny (pp. 62 to 64). There was no evidence as to the amount of destitution in the parish not admitted on the poor's roll during the continuance of that experiment, as compared with other parts of Glasgow—as to the extent to which fever spread in it during the late epidemic, nor to which extraordinary assistance was sought, or appeared to be required in it in times of general distress. It was admitted that many of the elders and deacons, who took charge of the poor in that parish, belonged to other parts of the town, and often procured employment in those other parts for persons likely to become destitute in St. John's; and it appeared farther, even on a cursory inspection of the parish, that although a poor, it is by no means a destitute district, being for the most part suburban; and containing very little of that depressed, degraded, and rapidly migratory population, which constitutes so great and so dangerous a part of the inhabitants of the central and poorest districts of the large towns in Scotland.

Vital Statistics of Glasgow, illustrating the Sanatory Condition of the Population. By ROBERT COWAN, M.D., Professor of Medical Jurisprudence and Police in the University of Glasgow.

[Read before the Statistical Section of the British Association, 21st September 1840.]

“La misère, avec les privations qu'elle amène à sa suite, est une des causes les plus influentes sur la mortalité.”—QUETELET.

IN the following paper it is proposed to lay before the Statistical Section of the British Association—

I. Tables of the climate of Glasgow—of the progress of the population—of the marriages, births, and deaths, and the ratio which they bear to the estimated population—of the still-born, and the baptisms, distinguishing males and females, and their relative proportion—of the deaths under five years of age—of the relative mortality under, at, and above five years of age—of the relative mortality of the different months and seasons of the year—of the increase and decrease of deaths at each age, and of the proportion of burials at the public expense.

II. Causes of the high rate of mortality in Glasgow—existence of epidemic diseases affecting the adult and infantile portions of the population respectively—tables of the numbers affected with fever treated in the hospitals of Glasgow—and in their own houses at the public