

*The Rev. A. M. Stuart*

THE *With the Author's Conf.*

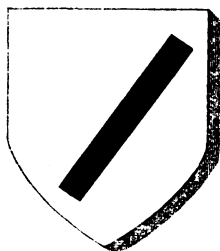
# CAUSES OF ILLEGITIMACY

PARTICULARLY IN SCOTLAND.

WITH RELATIVE APPENDICES.

BEING A PAPER READ IN GLASGOW AT THE FOURTH ANNUAL MEETING OF THE  
"NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR THE PROMOTION OF SOCIAL SCIENCE,"  
ON THE 28TH OF SEPTEMBER 1860.

BY GEORGE SETON, ADVOCATE,  
M.A. OXON, ETC.



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## PREFACE.

NOTWITHSTANDING the generally expressed antipathy to pamphlets, at the earnest solicitation of several persons whose opinion appeared to be well entitled to consideration, and with the sanction of the Council of the "National Association for the Promotion of Social Science," I have been induced to print the following Paper. It has not been thought desirable to make any alterations or additions; and, accordingly, in its present shape, it is almost a *verbatim* reproduction of the original manuscript. By the rules of the Association "not more than *twenty minutes* can be allowed for the reading of any Paper," and any one who has the curiosity to make the experiment, will find that my Essay transgresses the limitation only to a very small extent. To say nothing of a brief introduction and peroration, the mere enumeration of "twenty causes" within a period so prescribed formed a somewhat difficult task; and this circumstance has not been sufficiently borne in mind by some of my critics.

My humble effort has been honoured with more or less favourable notice in many of the principal newspapers, both in England and Scotland, and thus the attention of the public has been called to a subject, of which the importance can hardly be over-estimated. One of my reviewers, however,—in the columns of a journal which, perhaps deservedly, has been styled the *Scottish Times*,—appears, at least in some respects, to misapprehend the scope and object of the Paper. He acknowledges that, in tabling the "twenty causes" at Glasgow, I am entitled to credit "for having attempted so much, and done something towards giving shape, substance, and aim to an 'agitation' which, for upwards of two years, has been wasting its

strength or weakness for nothing, and worse than nothing ;” but he questions “ whether all or most of the ‘ twenty causes ’ are really causes at all, or whether there are not other and greater causes beyond even that sufficiently formidable number.” The chief fallacy of my anonymous critic seems to consist in the assumption (or something very like it), that I consider that *all* the alleged causes exist, more or less, in every part of Scotland ; and he points to the fact of some of the causes adduced being almost entirely absent from certain counties where the vice in question so largely prevails. If this can be established, so far well. We have then, at least, ascertained what is *not* the cause in a particular locality, and the “ necks ” of the dreaded “ Hydra ” are reduced to *nineteen* ! I am quite prepared to admit that my causes “ are very far from containing the whole matter,” and that some of them even appear to “ jostle against ” each other—examples, in short, of what I term the *paradoxes* of Social Economy. (*See page 18.*) We are told, moreover, that “ it would not be very difficult to adduce *other* twenty causes that would stand the test of facts as well or as ill ! ”

Looking to the general tone of my remarks, it is hardly necessary for me to state that I fully concur in the observation made by the Rev. Dr. Taylor, during the discussion at Glasgow, that “ the only way to get rid of the terrible evil is to elevate the moral and religious standard of the people ; ” but then we are met with the question, “ How is that to be done ? ” and surely one obvious means is to endeavour to remove existing opportunities or temptations.

Like the postscript of a lady’s letter, the *Appendices* will be found to constitute not the least valuable portion of my production ; and the *Diagram* will probably prove useful to those of my readers who happen to entertain a horror of *ratios* and *percentages*.

G. S.

## THE CAUSES OF ILLEGITIMACY.

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THE trustworthy statistics of Illegitimacy in Scotland date from the commencement of the year 1858. Towards the middle of the month of May in that year, the public were somewhat startled by the results disclosed in the Registrar-General's Return for the quarter ending March previously, in which was given, for the first time, the number of illegitimate births registered in every parish in Scotland. Since that date a very considerable interest has naturally been taken in the subject; reflecting minds have turned to the investigation of the *causes* of this wide-spread "Social Evil;" and it is hoped that some Christian philanthropists have already made a practical effort to apply a remedy. While the unthinking and unobservant mass of the community had long cherished a fond belief that the northern portion of the kingdom held a proud pre-eminence among the nations in point of religion and morality, a thoughtful few, who continued to keep their eyes open, and who were not afflicted with the too prevalent disease of *colour-blindness*, occasionally ventured to challenge the common opinion, and were, of course, set down as prejudiced and unpatriotic, by the very persons who have now proved themselves entitled to these charitable epithets. Figures, however, are, in this case at least, stubborn facts and stern realities, and accordingly the fostered delusion is gradually ceasing to exist. While, therefore, we ought to feel an honest pride in pointing to the various characteristics which reflect honour and distinction on our native land, let us freely, but sorrowfully, acknowledge, that for drunkenness and illegitimacy she maintains an unenviable notoriety among the kingdoms of Europe. If Scotland is still to be regarded as entitled to the boasted character of being "the most religious country in the world," it is to be feared that her *head* and *heart* do not go harmoniously together, and that the *doctrines* of the national faith are not generally illustrated by *practice*. I have no

wish to witness the revival of the "stool of repentance," of which the bad effects are not entirely extinguished ; but more frequent, as well as more direct allusion to the practical duties of ordinary life appears to be still sadly wanted in many a Scottish pulpit. "Pure religion, and undefiled, before God and the Father, is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep one's-self *unspotted* from the world" (James i. 27).

It appears to be unnecessary, on the present occasion, to refer to the definitions of illegitimacy given by Scotch and English lawyers respectively, as, according to the present practice in Scotland, all children born before the marriage of their parents are entered in the Register as illegitimate, even although such entry should not be made till *after the marriage* takes place. The expression used to describe these children in the Returns of the English Registrar-General, viz., "children born *out of wedlock*," is certainly rather loose and indefinite. In the Scotch Reports, on the other hand, they are called, in plain English, *illegitimate* children, of which expression the Scotch equivalent would probably be *bastard* (or base-born) bairns,—unquestionably a very pithy and significant term, and applied on the honest principle of calling things by their proper names.\*

During the two years 1858-59, the average annual number of illegitimate births registered in Scotland amounted, as nearly as possible, to 9 per cent. (8·9), or one illegitimate child in every eleven births, as set forth in *Appendix* No. I. It appears that in England, Belgium, Norway, and Sweden, the illegitimate births constitute only about 6·6 per cent. ; in France and Prussia 7·1 per cent. ; in Denmark 9·3 per cent. ; in Hanover

\* Exception has been taken to Dr. Guthrie's vindication of the use of "Saxon" plainness of speech in referring to what is now delicately termed "The Social Evil." The Rev. Doctor's opinion, however, is confirmed by the "Saturday Reviewer," who recently alludes to the subject in question in the following terms:—"The very fact that we have lost sight of the old-fashioned language in connexion with this matter is significant. We used purposely the term 'street-walker' just now ; but nobody else uses the phrase, nor that of prostitute, to say nothing of more homely language. The term 'Social Evil,' by a queer translation of the abstract into the concrete, has become a personality. 'Unfortunates' and 'fallen sisters' are the language of the sentimental ; 'lorettes' and '*femmes libres*' have euphemistically taken the place of a more explicit terminology ; and it is said that heterism, with its Phrynes and Aspasias, is so far becoming a recognised institution, that patrician matrons and aristocratic maidenhood allude to the subject with more simpers than blushes."—*Saturday Review*, October 6, 1860.

(See also *Spectator*, No. 286.)

9·8 per cent. ; and in Austria 11·3 per cent. In other words, in six of these nine kingdoms, the percentage is very considerably lower than in Scotland, in two of them it is nearly the same, while only in one—and that Austria—does it decidedly exceed the Scotch ratio.—(See *Diagram*.)

The want of a national system of registration in Ireland unfortunately prevents us from ascertaining the state of that country in the matter under consideration ; but, notwithstanding all its evils and shortcomings, it is well known that bastardy has long been comparatively rare in that portion of the kingdom.\*—(See *Appendix*, Nos. V. 1, and XI.) It may, perhaps, be urged, that the published statistics of the other countries already referred to cannot be depended upon ; and further, that the *compulsory* system of registration, which prevails in Scotland, is the infallible means of securing a record of almost every illegitimate birth, while many of these never find their way into the registers of other countries. Without, however, pausing to consider the force of such an allegation—for which there seems to be no very solid foundation—let us confine our attention to Scotland alone, where the evil under review unquestionably prevails to an enormous extent. Bearing in mind, then, that the average annual number of illegitimate births *registered* in Scotland during the two years 1858-59 amounted to 9 per cent., or one illegitimate child in every 11 births, it is to be feared that these figures are by no means a true index of the actual amount of illegitimacy. To say nothing of, at least, a certain number of illegitimate births which continue to escape registration, even under the compulsory system—particularly in the larger towns—or of the probability that a large proportion of the *still-births* (which are not registered) belong to the class under consideration, there

\* Whether the influences of *Race* have any bearing upon the subject under consideration, might form an interesting subject of inquiry. The honourable position which Ireland holds in respect to the chastity of its female population finds a counterpart among several of the more purely Celtic counties of Scotland, such as Ross, Sutherland, and Argyll ; while in Wales, on the other hand, illegitimacy is far from rare. *Blood* has, no doubt, a certain amount of influence in the production of both national and individual characteristics ; but the effect of *circumstances* is probably much more potent.

Since writing the above, my attention has been called by Mr. Reynell Morell to his Report on the Roman Catholic Schools in the north of England and in Scotland, contained in the Report of the Committee of Council on Education for 1859-60, where he alludes to Dr. (now Sir John ?) Forbes' Tour in Ireland in 1852, from which a quotation will be found in the *Appendix* (No. XI.)

are other features in the social condition of Scotland which seem to establish the conclusion at which we have been compelled to arrive. "After a careful consideration," says Dr. Strachan of Dollar, "of the records of my own practice for many years, and of the registers of this and the neighbouring parishes, I am convinced, that of the first children amongst the working-class, not less than ninety out of every hundred are either illegitimate, or are saved from this reproach only by the marriage of the parents within a short period of the birth of the child ; or, to put this in other words, that nine out of every ten young women of this class are unchaste. But as, even amongst married women, one out of every ten have no children, we are almost forced to the conclusion that, amongst women of the working-class few or none preserve their chastity till their marriage. This is a dreadful statement, and yet I fear it is strictly true." \* In the quarterly returns published by the Registrar-General since the beginning of the year 1858, two remarkable results have been repeatedly noticed :—

- (1.) The different proportion of illegitimate births prevailing in the *town* and *country* districts ; and,
- (2.) The very striking differences in the proportion prevailing in the various *counties*.

(1.) During the years 1858-59, the percentage of illegitimate births registered in 125 *town* districts of Scotland, (containing as nearly as possible one-half of the population at the census of 1851,) amounted to rather less than 8·5, or one illegitimate child in every 11·5 births ; while in the remaining 875 *country* districts, (embracing the other half of the inhabitants,) the percentage was very nearly 9·5, or one illegitimate child in every 10·5 births. The difference in the proportion, however, may perhaps be partially accounted for by the non-registration of a few illegitimate births in the larger towns, already referred to ; but, on the other hand, it ought to be borne in mind that a considerable number of the illegitimate births which occur in towns, are the children of mothers belonging to the rural districts, who endeavour to hide their

\* *Address upon Illegitimacy to the Working-men of Scotland*, p. 2 (1859). It is gratifying to learn that this excellent and practical address continues to be largely circulated. During the past year the issue is believed to have amounted to about 10,000 copies.



shame by taking up a temporary abode in a Maternity Hospital or elsewhere. Similar results are exhibited in England, but on the continent of Europe the proportions are reversed—the illegitimate births in the large towns greatly exceeding those of the rural districts—which circumstance is, no doubt, partially accounted for by the existence of Foundling Hospitals. It appears from recent official statistics, that the average annual proportion of illegitimate births registered in the whole of France during 17 years, amounted to 7·2 per cent.; but while the proportion in Paris was no less than 32·5 per cent., over the rest of France it constituted only 4 per cent.—(See *Diagram.*)

(2.) A still more remarkable peculiarity, exhibited in the Registrar-General's quarterly returns, is the vast difference in the proportion of illegitimate births in the different *counties* of Scotland. Thus, during the years 1858-59, in the counties situated in the northern and north-western divisions of Scotland (the Highland and Island districts), the illegitimate births constituted only about  $5\frac{1}{2}$  per cent.; in the west-midland and south-western divisions (the mining and manufacturing districts), about  $7\frac{1}{4}$  per cent.; and in the southern and north-eastern (or more purely agricultural) divisions, no less than 13 and 14·7 per cent. respectively. Taking the counties separately, (1.) Orkney, (2.) Ross and Cromarty, and (3.) Sutherland, exhibited the smallest proportion of illegitimate births—ranging from 3·3 to 3·8 per cent.; while in Dumfries, the proportion rose to 14 per cent.; in Aberdeen, to 15·3 per cent.; and in Banff, to the alarming figure of 16·3 per cent., or one illegitimate child in every 6 births! (See *Appendix*, No. II.)

As in the case of the counties, the proportion of illegitimate births varies considerably in the eight chief *towns* of Scotland, which, speaking generally, may be marshalled according to the moral precedence of the counties in which they are situated. Thus, during the two years already referred to (1858-59), the average annual proportion of illegitimate births registered in these towns was as follows:—Aberdeen, 15·3 per cent.; Dundee, 10·3 per cent.; Edinburgh and Perth, 8·8 per cent., respectively; Paisley, 7·7 per cent.; Glasgow, 7·6 per cent.; while in Greenock and Leith respectively, the proportion was only 4·9 per cent. It is only fair, however, to mention, with

reference to the Metropolis and the suburban town of Leith, that a considerable number of the mothers of the illegitimate children whose births take place in the Edinburgh Maternity Hospital belong to Leith ; and accordingly, the true proportion for Leith is considerably greater, and for Edinburgh, considerably less than is stated above. (See *Appendix*, No. III.)

Such, then, being a brief statement of the *facts*, I have now to make a few remarks on some of their certain and probable *causes*. During the last few years, I have endeavoured, by means of observation and reflection on the one hand, and of conversation and reading on the other, to ascertain the principal causes of illegitimacy, particularly in Scotland ; and I trust my hearers will not be unreasonably alarmed when I state that my list now far surpasses the most characteristic of Scottish sermons, in the number of *heads* which it contains,—amounting as they do to no less than 20 ! Of course, the necessary limits of this Paper prevent the due consideration of these various causes, the mere enumeration of which, along with a few brief comments, (which must necessarily be very fragmentary,) is all that can be attempted on the present occasion.

1. *Insufficient house accommodation, and the consequent non-separation of the Sexes.*

Adults of both sexes, sleeping and dressing in the same room, must inevitably be the means of outraging, and eventually destroying, that purity and delicacy of thought, word, and action, which constitutes the strongest protection of female virtue. The difficulties in the way of effecting improvements in the dwellings of the humbler classes have been greatly over-estimated. Much has already been done in this matter, both by individuals and associations—in some instances perhaps *too* much—the independence of the objects of attempted amelioration being sometimes materially affected, and their efforts for self-advancement at least checked, if not paralysed. In many instances, after the most unexceptionable houses have been supplied, a great practical difficulty has been experienced in persuading the occupants to abandon their pig-sty habits, and take advantage of the comforts and conveniences with which they have been provided. This difficulty, of course, must be steadily met and overcome by conciliation and encouragement.

We must not, however, be surprised and disappointed by its existence, so long as thriving farmers in the lowlands of Scotland persist in turning the inventions of civilisation to an improper use, and, to the utter dismay of their noble and enlightened landlord, point with feelings of satisfaction to the ingenious adaptation, to the purposes of a *dairy*, of an apartment which it would be indelicate to particularize !

The subject of defective cottages, and some of the other evils referred to in this Paper, are ably discussed by the Rev. Harry Stuart, minister of Oathlaw, in his Pamphlet on the "Social Condition of Agricultural Labourers," published in 1853.

## 2. *The Bothy System.*

It is well known that the term "Bothy" (originally signifying, in Gaelic, a cottage or hut) has latterly been extended to a house for the accommodation of unmarried farm-labourers of the male sex, fitted up in the rudest manner, in which the inmates prepare their own food and live without any domestic restraint or control. In the far-famed county of East Lothian, and also in other localities, groups of unmarried *female* farm-labourers are similarly lodged ; and in both instances the consequent laxity of morals has proved so great that the system is now very generally condemned as one of the worst of our social abuses. According to the Rev. Dr. Begg, it "prevails more or less in the eastern and north-eastern districts of Scotland,—the shires of East Lothian, Fife, Forfar, Kincardine, Aberdeen, Banff, Elgin, and Caithness, and partially even in other counties. . . . In Aberdeenshire there are at present (1859) 99 bothies, inhabited by 569 males and 159 females ; while in East Lothian there are not fewer than 600 Highland girls lodged in bothies." "I have found," says Sheriff Barclay of Perth to the Poor-law Commissioners, "that these bothies are just so many *nests of crime*." The extracts from the Registrar's notes relative to the bearing of this objectionable mode of life upon illegitimacy are worthy of consideration.—(*Appendix*, No. IV., 1-4. *Ib.*, No. V., 1.)\*

## 3. *Employment of Females in Agriculture.*

Independently of the Bothy system, which in many parts

\* Considerable variety of opinion seems to prevail with regard to the influence of bothies upon their occupants, and several letters on the subject have lately appeared in the newspapers. As usually happens, however, in such cases, extreme views seem to be held on both sides.

of the country is hardly known to exist, the all but universal employment of females in agricultural and other out-door labour is by no means calculated to foster purity of manners. The primeval curse, with reference to the cultivation of the ground, although specially imposed upon their "lords and masters," in Scotland at least, has long been extended to *women*, as if, forsooth, their own peculiar punishment, combined with the cares and anxieties of domestic life, was not in itself sufficient. The age of chivalry has indeed departed ! The greater proportion of illegitimacy which prevails in the more purely agricultural districts, as compared with other parts of the country, has been repeatedly established, and the remarkable freedom of the *fishing* population from this national reproach is a highly creditable characteristic.—(See *Appendix*, No. IV., 5-8.) Whether it may not result in some degree from the system of irregular marriages, appears to be well worthy of inquiry ; and such an opinion is entertained by some intelligent clergymen and others residing near the Border.—(See *Appendix*, No. IV., 20. *Ib.*, No. X.)

#### 4. *Prevalence of Drunkenness.*

It is hardly necessary to state that the species of immorality under consideration is one of the many sad consequences of indulgence in ardent spirits, for which the Scotch have obtained so unenviable a notoriety. By the use of strong drink, the grosser passions of both sexes are inevitably excited, and, under its baneful influence, the attempts of the seducer are successful in the case of many a young woman, who, in her sober senses, would sooner die than part with her honour.

#### 5. *Hiring Markets.*

Perhaps the occasions on which drunkenness and licentiousness most frequently go hand in hand are the feeling-markets or fairs for farm-servants, which are so common in various parts of Scotland, and especially in some of those counties (such as Dumfries and Kirkcudbright) where illegitimacy is most prevalent. That many young women date their ruin from these fairs is abundantly proved in actions for aliment in the Sheriff-Courts. The chief difficulty in the way of their abolition appears to arise from the circumstance of their being almost the only holidays which fall to the lot of

the rural population ; and if the proposed system of local Registers were to be substituted, some equivalent for the loss of the recreation afforded by the feeing-market would require to be provided.—(See *Appendix*, No. IV., 23, and V., 1.)\*

6. *The want of Education* (in its widest sense) *and Mental Cultivation.*

It appears to be established, that the greatest amount of ignorance is by no means invariably accompanied by the greatest amount of crime, and perhaps, I may add, of *vice*. In other words, the existence of mere knowledge and learning, of the most extensive and varied character, is perfectly compatible with profligacy of every kind. Surely, therefore, there can be no better argument than such a result for the *indissoluble union* of religious and secular education, which is simply the meaning which I attach to the expression, “Education in its widest sense.”†

The absence of rational amusements, both of an intellectual and a physical kind, is one of the saddest features in the ordinary condition of our poorer brethren. Under such circumstances, the cessation of labour appears to be as necessarily succeeded by vice as light by darkness. A vacant mind is the devil’s best opportunity ; and even in the case of the most degraded, it must be fed with something. The want of proper thoughts and resources cannot fail to be productive of serious evils ; and, accordingly, in our attacks upon any species of vice, we must be prepared to supply its place with something of an elevating and refining character.

7. *The low standard of Morality* held by the young of both sexes with regard to Illegitimacy, in consequence of its frequency.

“Daughters are very apt to follow the evil example of their mothers ; and in country parishes it is well known how often

\* At the recent quarterly meeting of the “Galashiels Farmers’ Club” (October 9, 1860), a paper on the Abolition of Hiring-Fairs was read by Mr. Dunbar, the intelligent Registrar of Ladhope.

The discussion which followed resulted in the adoption of a motion to the effect, “That this Club is sensible of the evils attending Hiring-Fairs ; and consider it well worthy the attention of agriculturists to devise some suitable remedy.”

† To say nothing of the vast amount of the positively immoral literature of the present day, there can be no doubt that many modern works of fiction, as well as

licentiousness is hereditary, passing from one generation to another."\* It has sometimes occurred to me that the details of illegitimacy, which are quarterly published by the Registrar-General, may, in some degree, tend to foster the evil, by keeping its great prevalence before the eyes of the whole community, but the benefits which accrue probably more than counterbalance any such bad effects; and, moreover, the spirit of the present times imperatively demands unqualified publicity. The too prevalent *coarseness and indelicacy of language* referred to by Dr. Strachan,† may be mentioned in connexion with the cause now under consideration. "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh" (Matth. xii. 34). "The tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity: so is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature . . . It is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison." (James iii. 6 and 8.)

#### 8. *Male Uncleanliness.*

"Another cause of the frailty of women, in the lower classes," says the able author of *Friends in Council*, "is the comparative inelegance and uncleanliness of the men in their own class. It also arises from the fondness which all women have for merit, or what they suppose to be such, so that their love is apt to follow what is in any way distinguished; and this throws the women of any class cruelly open to the seduction of the men in the class above. For women are the real aristocrats; and it is one of their greatest merits. Men's intellects, even some of the brightest, may occasionally be deceived by theories about equality and the like, but women, who look at reality more, are rarely led away by nonsense of this kind."‡

In consequence of the dirty and untidy habits of our countrymen, these remarks (of an English writer) are probably even more applicable to Scotland than to his own country.

dramatic representations (both English and Continental), are largely tainted with impurity. Usually containing false and perverted views of what is termed *love*, they mislead, if not corrupt, the youthful mind; and laxity of morals is the inevitable result. (See Professor Miller's *Prostitution in relation to its Cause and Cure*, 1859, pp. 24, 25.)

\* Report by Committee of Aberdeenshire Prison Board (Mr. Thomson of Banchory, convener), on the Repression of Prostitution, 1860, p. 8, also p. 10.

See also *Appendix*, No. V., 3.

† *Address, ut supra*, p. 4.

‡ *Companions of my Solitude*, p. 100.

### 9. *Love of Dress and Extravagance.*

It is well known that domestic servants constitute a very large number of the mothers of illegitimate children ; and that class of persons, more especially in towns, frequently prove themselves to be the slaves of conventionality, particularly in the matter of dress. This may, perhaps, be at least partially accounted for by the peculiar and somewhat trying circumstances under which they are placed ; but whatever the cause may be, a passion for fine clothes very commonly exists among them ; and the gratification of this passion, it is to be feared, is too often attained at the expense of what they ought to hold most dear. (See *Appendix*, Nos. IV., 9-13 ; V., 1, and VI.)

### 10. *Mode of Courtship.*

The manner of courtship among the working-classes (to whom it is peculiar), is another of the causes specified by Dr. Strachan.\* The secret and stealthy way in which it is carried on must be productive, at least in many cases, of very serious results. Assignations at late hours, and in the darkness and silence of night, are, most assuredly, very apt to arouse the baser passions ; and freedoms and familiarities, very small in their beginnings, not unfrequently terminate in the loss of female virtue. Although by no means confined to the class of persons referred to under the previous head, there can be no doubt that the objectionable system of secret courtship affects them to a very large extent. The proper treatment of domestic servants is, unquestionably, beset with no ordinary difficulties, and probably too much is generally expected on *both* sides ; but the stern and inexorable maxim of "No followers allowed," has been aptly characterized as more suitable for the governor of a prison than the mistress of a household.

### 11. *Want of sympathy between Rich and Poor.*

The memorable remarks of the amiable and talented Judge Talfourd, at the Stafford assizes on the day of his death (March 1854), had reference to this wide-spread social blemish. The last words which he uttered were these:—"If I were to be asked what is the great want of English society—to mingle class with class—I would say, in one word, the want is the want

\* *Address, ut supra*, p. 5.

of sympathy." \* In our intercourse with those beneath us, the influence of a friendly word, or even of a kind look, is sometimes quite incalculable ; while a timely and gentle admonition may often be the means of restoring confidence and hope to the exclusion of suspicion and despair. Cases are constantly occurring where a very limited amount of kindness and watching would be the certain means of preventing the first step in a downward career, which many a young woman is induced to take, in consequence of some untoward circumstance, such as the loss of a parent or other relative on whose guiding and supporting arm she was wont to lean.

### 12. *Low Wages and Scarcity of Employment.*

Taken in connexion with some of the causes already specified, the unsuccessful struggles of poverty, may, perhaps, occasionally be the means of effecting the loss of female virtue ; but such a condition is more likely to perpetuate, than to give rise to, a licentious course, of which the alternate excitement and depression are altogether incompatible with the sustained exertions of honest industry.†

### 13. *The severity of the Conventional Estimate of Female unchastity.*

This cause, of course, also applies to the second and subsequent occasions of a woman's frailty ; and it need scarcely be added, that the most rigid censors are those of her own sex. Here, too, unquestionably, a want of charity is constantly evinced by the proudly virtuous, who, ensconced within the barriers of a more highly favoured position, are very apt to overlook the peculiar temptations to which an erring sister

\* "There is one other thought I would express before I conclude. It is all very well for men to talk about intellectual improvements, but there is another consideration which could not be overlooked. You should remember that your bodily constitutions need refection, just as the brain needs relaxation, and therefore you must have your cup of tea or coffee sold at a low price. I, for one, entertain the opinion, that whatever brings men together upon lawful and common ground is a great gain, and also maintain, that whatever narrows the sympathies, and binds man up in his class-interests, is evil in its tendency ; and that, on the other hand, whatsoever brings men together for kindly intercourse tends to break down the partition between different classes of society, and is productive of the most beneficial results."—*(Address by the Bishop of Oxford on Social Intercourse, at Oxford, 11th Oct. 1860.)*

† The efforts now being made for the employment of women in branches of industry which have hitherto been monopolized by the male sex, appear to be well worthy of support.



may have been exposed. Many of the most distinguished moralists\* dwell upon the incalculable importance of female chastity, regarding it as the very basis of society; and some of them even go the length of holding that a single instance of deviation must inevitably prove a woman's ruin. The poet,† too, follows in a similar strain—

“ When lovely woman stoops to folly,  
And finds, too late, that men betray;  
What charm can soothe her melancholy?  
What art can wash her guilt away?  
The only art her guilt to cover,  
To hide her shame from every eye,  
To give repentance to her lover,  
And wring his bosom, is—to die.”

A sounder and more Christian view, however, is held by the great theorist of “Moral Sentiments,”‡ who appears to challenge the common opinion, that “the ignorance of the mind cannot wash out the stain of the body;” influenced, no doubt, by the recollection of our blessed Saviour's words on that memorable occasion when, without pronouncing any judgment on a heinous *crime*, he directed the downcast *criminal* to “go and sin no more.”§

#### 14. *Excess of Females.*

The marked excess of females over males is pointed out as another cause of illegitimacy by Mr. Valentine, of Aberdeen, in the able paper which he read at the meeting of the British Association, held in that city in September 1859. || It is obvious, as he observes, that such a condition of society, especially when accompanied by scarcity or uncertainty of employment and limited wages, must have a great tendency to prove a prolific source of female licentiousness. The excess in question, of course, greatly varies in different localities. Thus it appears, that while it only amounted to 4·2 per cent. in Greenock at the census of 1851, it reached the enormous ratio

\* See Paley's *Moral Philosophy*, Book III., Part iii., chap. iii. Montesquieu, *Esprit des Lois*, Book VII., chap. viii. Boswell's *Life of Johnson* (Croker's edition, 1848), pp. 192, 234, 636.

† Goldsmith.

‡ Adam Smith, 8vo edition, vol. ii. part vii. § 4.

§ See also Aberdeenshire Prison Board Report, *ut supra*, p. 2.

|| This paper was recently enlarged by Mr. Valentine, with the view of being read at the late Social Science Congress at Glasgow, for which, unfortunately, it was not prepared in time. It has since, however, appeared in the columns of the *Aberdeen Journal*.

of 11·8 per cent. in the city of Aberdeen, which, in common with the county (as already stated) maintains a most unenviable pre-eminence in the matter under consideration. In Scotland generally, the “lords of the creation” were at the same period in a very decided minority—there being no fewer than 110 females to every 100 males, while the proportion in England was only 105 to 100.

#### 15. *Railway Labourers.*

An *incidental* increase of illegitimacy (of which, however, the bad effects may long continue) has been repeatedly laid to the charge of those large bands of railway and other labourers (or navvies) which are so frequently introduced into the remotest corners of the kingdom, and several such instances are mentioned by the Registrars in the Notes to their Quarterly Returns. Taken in connexion with the preceding cause, this proposition may perhaps be regarded as something very like a *paradox*, of which, however, there are many strange examples in the science of social economy.—(See *Appendix*, No. IV., 21, 22, and No. V., 1.)

#### 16. *Poor-Law Act.*

The support received by Mothers of Illegitimate Children under the provisions of the Poor-law Act, where they are themselves unable to maintain them, and where the paternity has neither been voluntarily acknowledged nor judicially ascertained, may probably be regarded as affording at least a slight encouragement to illegitimacy. Some curious details relative to the paternity of the illegitimate children registered in the counties of Banff and Dumfries during the year 1858 will be found in the Appendix.—(No. VII., see also No. V., 1.)

On the other hand, it ought to be mentioned that, in the opinion of Sheriff Watson of Aberdeen and other enlightened philanthropists, the *enforced reduction of pauperism* materially tends to aggravate the evil results produced by low wages and scarcity of employment, already referred to.

#### 17. *Law of Marriage.*

The peculiarities of the Law of Marriage in Scotland, and the legitimization of children “born out of wedlock” by the subsequent marriage of their parents, although unquestionably attended by some important advantages, are by many

supposed to exercise an injurious effect upon female virtue. The hope, or perhaps the promise, of a future union induces many of our countrywomen either to yield to the blandishments of the seducer, or themselves to become the tempters; and thus impurity of conduct is indirectly encouraged by the law of the land, the proposed alteration of which has hitherto failed to be carried into execution. (The supposed *prevention* of illegitimacy by the system of irregular marriages has already been referred to, *supra*, p. 12,) and the mode in which these unions are considered to prove beneficial is set forth in a letter which I lately received from a Border clergyman, of which a copy will be found in the Appendix, (No. X.)

As a matter of fact, however, there can be no doubt that the prospect of eventually getting matters put right, usually by a formal marriage ceremony, materially tends to modify and relax the moral views of many a young Scotchwoman. Not unfrequently the *mother* (who may, perhaps, herself have similarly erred) regards her daughter's "slip" with the most frigid indifference, and in reply to a friendly remonstrance on the subject, coolly declares that she is only a "misfortunate lassie," but that the ecclesiastical benediction will solder up the flaw!—(*See Cause, No. 7.*)

In alluding to the frequency of marriages in Scotland months after they *ought* to have been celebrated, an aged minister in one of the north-eastern counties recently said, "Ye may easily ken the bride frae her appearance,"—a good illustration, as a friend of mine once jocularly observed, of the *a priori* argument!

In addition to these seventeen causes of illegitimacy (which, it will be observed, relate almost exclusively to the *working-classes*), a few others may now be specified as applying more particularly to the *male* sex in every rank of society.\*

\* In the earnestness of their efforts in behalf of the poor, modern philanthropists sometimes appear to forget that their superiors in worldly station are beset by temptations of no ordinary kind. "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a *rich* man to enter into the kingdom of God" (Mark x. 25).

The following is an extract from a recent address by one of the truest friends of the working-classes (the Rev. Dr. Norman Macleod, of Glasgow): "Every consideration is now bestowed upon the working-man; almost every paper read at the late Social Science Meeting had reference to working-men, in questions of sewerage, ventilation, education, and so on. That is a great thing; but is it only the poor man that needs this consideration? Is it only Lazarus who needs this? and does not Dives stand in equal need of it? I should have no difficulty in going into the

1st, *The fashionable theory of its being a fine thing for a young man "to sow his wild oats,"* which is simply a polite and figurative mode of expressing personal experience of every kind of vice, or what many unthinking persons complacently describe as "knowledge of the world." Whose world, forsooth? God's or the devil's? The strange and unequal manner in which public opinion regards different sins is thus referred to in the report from which I have already quoted:—"A man known to be in the habit of picking women's pockets of their purses would be at once driven out of all respectable society with contempt, but a man known to live in the habit of debasing and polluting himself and his female associates, and who even boasts of his conduct, is too often received in society without remark. Might not women, especially in the higher ranks, do much good to their sex by bestowing a due share of their reprobation and displeasure on the male offenders, and not reserving it all for the females? Why should they make any difference where the law of God makes none?"\* Most assuredly the conduct of the "softer sex," in this respect, forms a strange and most unfavourable contrast to the indignant attitude already referred to (p. 23), which they almost invariably assume towards a fallen sister. Speaking of seduction, "The law of honour," says Paley, "which abhors deceit, applauds the address of a successful intrigue; so much is this capricious rule guided by names, and with such facility does it accommodate itself to the pleasures and conveniency of higher life."†

2d, The tendency to licentiousness on the part of the male sex is largely fostered by the neglect of various means which are calculated to subdue the baser passions of humanity, such as *games and other athletic sports*. Increased attention to the subject of physical exercise, in the case of boys and young men, is one of the most promising features in the modern

houses of the poor, and it is wonderful how glad they are to see ministers of the Gospel. Ministers do not feel it at all awkward to ask them about their religious views, and about their children and their education; but who thinks of going in the same way to the house of the rich man, and asking him about his knowledge of religion? How are they to come in contact with the rich and fashionable young men and ladies?"—(*Meeting on "Home Evangelization," in Queen Street Hall, Edinburgh, October 4, 1860.*)

The same sentiments were powerfully expressed, on the same occasion, by another genuine philanthropist, the Rev. J. H. Wilson, of Fountainbridge, Edinburgh.

\* *Aberdeenshire Prison Board Report*, p. 6.

† *Moral Philosophy*, book iii., part iii., chap. iii.

system of education ; and it cannot be questioned that, while bodily activity and vigour are essential to the proper development of the moral and intellectual faculties, they are also admirably fitted to counteract the supremacy of those dispositions in human nature which incline towards sensual indulgence. \*

3d (and lastly), *The paucity and postponement of Marriages* unquestionably affects the increase of illegitimacy. In illustration of this proposition, Mr. Valentine introduced into his paper, already referred to, a tabular statement (*Appendix*, No. VIII.) relative to the eight chief towns of Scotland, embracing some very curious and important details. From that statement it appears, that while the marriage ratio (for four years) in the case of Greenock, was one in every 101, and in Aberdeen only one in every 154 persons, the illegitimate births (for eighteen months) in the former town only amounted to 4·8 per cent., and in the latter to no less than 15·2 per cent. It further appears that in Greenock, at the census of 1851, the excess of females over males constituted only 4·2 per cent., while in Aberdeen it reached 11·8 per cent. In like manner, the proportion of illegitimate is higher both in England and France than in Italy, notwithstanding the comparative freedom of manners in that country ; and this circumstance is attributed to the early age at which marriage usually takes place in the south of Europe. Again, while the ordinary birth-rate in England and in Scotland is nearly the same, the proportion of marriages on the other side of the Tweed is very much larger than in this portion of the kingdom, where, as we have seen, the *illegitimate* births amount to 9 per cent. against 6½ per cent. in England. (See *Appendix*, No. IX.) The many artificial wants and the universal love of luxury, which appear to be the inevitable results of civilisation, as well as the formidable expense of rearing and educating a family, according to the standard of modern conventionality, are probably the principal barriers in the way of those early marriages which were so fully discussed, a few years ago, in the columns of the “leading journal.” The proverbial caution of Scotchmen, moreover, has a decided tendency to check the normal progress of matrimony, and the natural consequence appears to be the existence of a numerous fraternity of selfish bachelors, who heartlessly postpone a change of

\* Independently of higher considerations, the bearing of the subject in question upon the *physical* condition of the population ought not to be overlooked.

condition, uninfluenced by the charms of the fair daughters of the north.\* (See *Appendix*, No. IV., 15-19.) So serious, indeed, is the aspect which this phase of society is now threatening to assume, that the time may, perhaps, not be far distant when the noble and learned president of the "Social Science Association"† will feel called upon to revive, by Act of Parliament, the penalties of the Spartans against celibacy, and to introduce the *jus trium liberorum* into his native land.‡

If space permitted, the transition from the causes to the consequences of illegitimacy would be natural and easy. Black, indeed, is the catalogue of these that might here be submitted, and pre-eminent in the sad list, neglect, ill-treatment, and even murder of innocent children, followed, in numerous instances, by the transitory excitement and the profound remorse of debauchery and prostitution!§ Here, alas! we have an affirma-

\* See the Emperor Augustus' "Reproof of Bachelors," *Spectator*, No. 528; also Nos. 500 and 525.

† Lord Brougham.

‡ Many persons consider that a reduction in the rate of proclamation fees would tend to encourage matrimony among the poorer classes in Scotland. The average charge throughout the country is understood to be about fifteen shillings or a guinea (when the banns are published thrice on one Sunday); while in some districts it amounts to a considerably higher sum. (See *Analysis of Scottish Registration Acts*, 4th Edition, *Appendix*, No. XIV.) A crusade has for some time been going on against the present mode of publication of banns, to which, perhaps, some valid objections may be stated. The same agitation embraces within its object the introduction of the English system of marriage before the District Registrar; but surely, in this portion of the kingdom, the facilities for change of condition are already quite sufficient. By the second section of the Act 19 & 20 Vict. c. 96 (1856), on certain very simple conditions, parties contracting an irregular marriage may get such marriage duly recorded on producing a Sheriff's warrant to the Registrar, thus obviating the necessity of a conviction by a justice of peace or other magistrate.

§ "The gradation is—prostitute, thief, criminal. . . . A large proportion, too, of illegitimate children die early in infancy, not a few of such deaths probably involving crime—another dark feature of this sad subject. From a statement prepared by the Registrar (Mr. Leask), it appears that of 683 illegitimate children registered in the district of Old Machar (Aberdeen), in the five and a half years ending June 1860, no fewer than 176 are ascertained to be dead, 125 of them at the age of one year or under (see *Appendix*, No. IV., 30; also No. V., 2). This is by no means an exceptional result, as the inquiries of Mr. Acton, the eminent statist, but too sadly prove."—(*Illegitimacy in Aberdeen and the other principal Towns of Scotland*, by Mr. J. Valentine.)

One of the most remarkable features in the statistics of Scottish crime is the very large proportion of female offenders; and it is by no means improbable that this peculiarity may result, in some degree, from the prevalence of the vice under consideration, of which the hardening effects are well known. During the five years preceding 1851, while there were only 15 and 19 females in every 100 culprits in

tive answer to the illustrative question of the prophet (Isaiah xlix. 15), so touchingly expressed in the words of the Scottish paraphrase :—

“ Can the fond mother e'er forget  
The infant whom she bore ;  
And can its plaintive cries be heard,  
Nor move compassion more ? ”

How painful the reflection, a fatherless child with a heartless mother ! a stranger to the softening influences of home, and cut off from the happy experience of that parental love,

“ With less of earth in it than heaven, ” \*

which is intended to be the foretaste of a higher state of being. Untrained and uncared for, these unfortunate children are ushered into life with a brand of ignominy upon their brow ; and need we be surprised to find that they occupy a very prominent position in the records of poverty and crime ?

Speaking generally, however, it must be acknowledged that the number of illegitimate births is not, as has been alleged by certain moralists, the exact mathematical expression of the corruption of society, nor the most convincing proof of the demoralization of the country in which they take place. There are unquestionably worse forms of vice than illegitimacy (see *Appendix*, No. V., 1) ; and it is well known that one of the most deplorable of these (already referred to, however, as a *consequence* of the subject under consideration) is invariably attended by no tangible results. After forming an estimate of the probable number of persons in Europe whose parents have not been legally married—which he sets down at no less a figure than twenty millions—a recent French writer thus expresses himself :—“ On ne saurait raisonnablement attribuer au libertinage l'origine d'une telle masse d'hommes ; car l'expérience de tous les temps et de tous les pays nous enseigne que le débauche est frappée de stérilité. Ce sont précisément les filles les plus innocentes qui deviennent mères ; et l'histoire d'An-

France and England respectively, the number in Scotland was nearly 28. It further appears, from the returns of the General Prison Board, that the average number of female commitments, for the ten years ending 1852, was no less than 36½ per cent. —(See Makgill's *Remarks on the amount, character, and distribution of Crime in Scotland*, 1853, p. 12.)

\* *Lady of the Lake*, Canto ii., Par. 22.

nette et Lubin n'est pas un conte fait à plaisir."\* If illegitimacy were to be taken as the gauge of morals, it is to be feared that very false inferences would in many instances be drawn ; and, guided by its statistics alone, the most casual observer would surely hesitate to conclude that, in purity of manners, Palermo, Hamburg, and Amsterdam, are fully three, and London fully eight times better than Paris, Berlin, and Vienna. Be this as it may, the existence of a *beam* in the national eye of Austria is a very sorry argument in favour of allowing even a *mote* to retain undisturbed possession of that of Scotland ! Let the foul reproach be mournfully acknowledged, but at the same time let a sustained and deliberate effort be made for its alleviation, if not for its removal ; and above all, let not the hopelessness of the task be inferred from the common opinion, that the prevalence of the vice in question is a safeguard against evils of a more dangerous kind.

Having thus recapitulated some of the principal *causes* of the wide-spread evil, I trust that, in aiming at the prescribed *brevis*, I shall not be regarded as having altogether failed to avoid the *obscurus* of the bard of Venusium ;† and if the remarks which have been made should, in any degree, be the means of suggesting a remedy, I shall feel gratified by the reflection, that even a tyro in the important science of social economy has not taken up his pen in vain.

\* *Éléments de Statistique*, par M. A. Moreau de Jonnés (1856), p. 215.

† "*Brevis esse laboro,—Obscurus fio.*"



## APPENDIX.

## No. I.

AVERAGE ANNUAL NUMBER of BIRTHS; also, AVERAGE ANNUAL NUMBER, per centage, and ratio of ILLEGITIMATE BIRTHS registered in the Eight DIVISIONS of Scotland during the years 1858 and 1859.

DIVISIONS.	Total No. of Births (including Illegit.)	Illegitimate Births.			Order in point of Illegitimacy.
		Total No.	Per Cent.	Ratio, one in every	
Scotland,	105,463	9431	8·9	11·1	
I. Northern Division,	3,504	182	5·1	19·2	8 Minimum
II. North-Western do.,	4,722	283	5·9	16·6	7
III. North-Eastern do.,	11,904	1759	14·7	6·7	1 Maximum.
IV. East Midland do.,	17,138	1668	9·7	10·2	3
V. West Midland do.,	8,115	586	7·2	13·8	6
VI. South-Western do.,	40,034	2949	7·3	13·5	5
VII. South-Eastern do.,	13,363	1128	8·4	11·8	4 Medium.
VIII. Southern do.,	6,681	875	13·0	7·6	2

## No. III.

AVERAGE ANNUAL NUMBER of BIRTHS; also, AVERAGE ANNUAL NUMBER, per centage, and ratio of ILLEGITIMATE BIRTHS registered in the Eight Principal TOWNS of Scotland during the years 1858 and 1859.

EIGHT PRINCIPAL TOWNS.	Total No. of Births (including Illegit.)	Illegitimate Births.			Order in point of Illegitimacy.
		Total No.	Per Cent.	Ratio, one in every	
Total,	32,786	2791	8·5	11·7	
1. Glasgow, . . .	15,916	1220	7·6	13·0	6
2. Edinburgh, . . .	5,340	477	8·8	11·1	3
3. Dundee, . . .	3,500	362	10·3	9·6	2
4. Aberdeen, . . .	2,403	370	15·3	6·4	1 Maximum.
5. Paisley, . . .	1,821	141	7·7	12·9	5
6. Greenock, . . .	1,779	88	4·9	20·2	7
7. Leith, . . .	1,221	60	4·9	20·3	8 Minimum.
8. Perth, . . .	804	71	8·8	11·3	4 Medium.

## No. II.

AVERAGE ANNUAL NUMBER of BIRTHS; also, AVERAGE ANNUAL NUMBER, per centage, and ratio of ILLEGITIMATE BIRTHS registered in the Thirty-three COUNTIES of Scotland during the years 1858 and 1859.

COUNTIES.	Total No. of Births (including Illegit.)	Illegitimate Births.			Order in point of Illegitimacy.
		Total No.	Per Cent.	Ratio, one in every	
I. Shetland, . . .	865	37	4.2	23.3	30
Orkney, . . .	807	27	3.3	29.8	33 Minimum.
Caithness, . . .	1,260	96	7.6	13.1	23
Sutherland, . . .	572	22	3.8	26.0	31
II. Ross & Cromarty, . . .	2,381	90	3.7	26.4	32
Inverness, . . .	2,341	192	8.2	12.1	20
III. Nairn, . . .	238	23	9.6	10.3	15
Elgin (or Moray), . . .	1,443	172	11.9	8.3	8
Banff, . . .	1,868	305	16.3	6.1	1 Maximum.
Aberdeen, . . .	7,326	1128	15.3	6.4	2
Kincardine, . . .	1,027	130	12.6	7.9	6
IV. Forfar, . . .	7,199	785	10.9	9.1	10
Perth, . . .	3,805	386	10.1	9.8	13
Fife, . . .	5,149	389	7.5	13.2	24
Kinross, . . .	263	30	11.4	8.7	9
Clackmannan, . . .	721	77	10.6	9.3	11
V. Stirling, . . .	3,371	259	7.6	13.0	22
Dumbarton, . . .	1,976	143	7.2	13.8	25
Argyle, . . .	2,341	155	6.6	15.0	28
Bute, . . .	426	28	6.5	15.2	29
VI. Renfrew, . . .	6,458	438	6.7	14.7	27
Ayr, . . .	7,728	683	8.8	11.3	17 Medium.
Lanark, . . .	25,848	1828	7.0	14.1	26
VII. Linlithgow, . . .	1,518	117	7.7	12.9	21
Edinburgh, . . .	8,773	728	8.2	12.0	18
Haddington, . . .	1,257	104	8.2	12.0	19
Berwick, . . .	1,107	100	9.0	11.0	16
Peebles, . . .	358	36	10.0	9.9	14
Selkirk, . . .	349	43	12.3	8.1	7
VIII. Roxburgh, . . .	1,639	175	10.6	9.3	12
Dumfries, . . .	2,432	341	14.0	7.1	3
Kirkcudbright, . . .	1,349	185	13.7	7.2	4
Wigtown, . . .	1,260	173	13.6	7.2	5

## No. IV.

EXCERPTS from the REGISTRARS' NOTES—Appended to the Registrar-General's Quarterly Returns for 1858, 1859, and first half of 1860.

*Bothy System.*

1. The illegitimate births (the first which have been registered for this parish) are those of children of Highland girls employed in farm work. They are the necessary consequences of the "bothy system," which is being gradually introduced into this district.—(*Whitekirk and Tynninghame, Sept. 1858.*)

2. The morale of our parish is in a sound condition,—indeed, before our young girls commenced going to the low country and Lothians to field and harvest labour, an illegitimate child was a *rara avis* in the parish. The immoral and detestable bothy system is the cause of three-fourths of the illegitimacy of our parish. Some years ago, a more moral class of people did not exist than those in this locality, and even now they will not fall far in the scale by a fair comparison with others.—(*Lochbroom, June 1860.*)

3. To remove, to a certain extent at least, the stigma that may seem to attach to us on the score of illegitimacy, it is proper to state that, of the *five* illegitimate births registered this quarter, *four* of the mothers were at service in the *low country*, and came home from their service in a state of pregnancy.—(*Bowmore, June 1860.*)

4. Farmers always prefer married men for servants, and of late years have been making efforts to obtain houses for them. This course has two great advantages—(1.) the farmers get steadier men, who have an inducement to remain in their service; (2.) it tends to counteract the depopulating influence of large-scale farming, which is in some parts destroying the peasantry of Scotland. A *third* advantage (of a moral nature) arising from this plan, is its tendency to prevent illegitimacy by affording inducements and facilities for marriage among that class in which this vice most prevails. I am confident that the large-scale farming, by lessening the number of crofters, is one of the main causes of that immorality which has given Banffshire an unenviable distinction.—(*Forglen, Sept. 1859.*)

*Illegitimacy among the Agricultural Population.*

5. The large proportion of illegitimate births, not only during this quarter, but also in former quarters of the year, may in some measure be accounted for from the fact of there being in the parish a very numerous colony of small hill-crofters with large families, who are sent off to farm work as soon as able, where they receive the rudiments of their education in immorality, and, of course, suffer from their contaminated morals, being without the reach of parental advice. Of the nine illegitimate births registered this quarter, there are six whose paternity has not been established,—a state of morals among the agricultural classes which certainly requires a reformation, and a more rigid supervision by those whose duty it is to attend to their

instruction both morally and spiritually.—(*King Edward, December 1858.*)

6. In 1858 there were 22 illegitimate out of 198 births; but in 1859, of 191 births, there is the large number of 37 illegitimate births. This increase arises partly from the mothers being employed in the neighbouring parishes as farm servants, who come into the town to give birth to their children.—(*Stranraer, Dec. 1859.*)

7. The illegitimate births during the quarter are above the average. Of the six cases registered, three of the mothers, and four of the reputed fathers, are agricultural labourers,—or, as in respect of the mothers, they are locally called “bondagers;” the remaining three are domestic servants of the humbler sort, connected, I believe, with but one exception, with the agricultural portion of the population. It may be remarked, that our fishing population seem less frequently than any other class of working people to err in this respect, which perhaps may be attributed to the early marriages which take place among them—the age at which marriage is contracted ranging from eighteen to twenty-two, seldom above.—(*Coldingham, Dec. 1859.*)

8. Illegitimacy is very near the parochial average, being 21·05 per cent., or, excluding the fishing population, among whom it rarely occurs, 23·53 per cent.—(*Boynzie, March 1860.*)

#### *Domestic Servants.*

9. Nine illegitimate births have been registered during the quarter. It may tend to indicate the class amongst which, particularly in rural districts, illegitimacy seems more especially to prevail, if I mention that seven of the mothers in the above cases were domestic servants, employed, with only one or two exceptions, in farm-houses; that one is a farm-labourer, and the other a laundress. I am unable to assign any extraordinary cause for so large a number of illegitimate births, as I believe only two of them can be accounted for by the circumstance of railway navvies recently residing in the district.—(*Forres, September 1858.*)

10. The proportion of illegitimate births is  $22\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. Of the 14 mothers (of illegitimate children registered this quarter), 12 are said to be “domestic servants.”—(*Burgh of Banff, December 1858.*)

11. In the three cases of illegitimacy recorded, the mothers were domestic servants, and two of them unable to sign their own names.—(*St. Andrew's Lhanbryde, March 1859.*)

12. The mothers of the three illegitimate children registered in August came from household service in other parishes, one from Glasgow, and two from the neighbouring parish of Orwell.—(*Kinross, September 1859.*)

13. This district keeps up the unenviable position of having a large proportion of illegitimate children. More than 20 per cent. are of this class—the numbers are 46 legitimate and 13 illegitimate. The mothers are generally domestic servants.—(*Stranraer, June 1859.*)

14. The illegitimate births are very numerous, being more than 25 per cent. The mothers of these children are principally of that class who are dependent on the sewing of flowered muslin for a living,

which has been at a very low price for a long time past.—(*Stranraer, December 1858.*)

### *Paucity of Marriages.*

15. Illegitimacy appears to be on the increase—one birth in every 73 registered during the quarter being illegitimate. I believe the reasons for this may be found in the decreasing facilities for marriage, such as paucity of housing, scarcity of work, lowness of wages, &c.—(*Canisbay, March 1859.*)

16. I am greatly inclined to attribute the prevalence of illegitimacy, in this district, to the check given to the marriages of farm-servants and labourers, by the unwillingness of proprietors to grant houses. The gradual abolition of small holdings, and the greater distance in point of rank, and consequently of intercourse and sympathy, between employers and employed, may also partly account for it.—(*Banff, September 1859.*)

17. There has been a considerable increase in the illegitimate births. This increase has been going on for some time past, but this quarter it amounts to 16, which is very much above what it has ever been before. The cause of this increase is undoubtedly to be ascribed to the continued depression in trade in this locality. This, wherever it exists, always leads to a diminution of marriages, and is generally accompanied by an increase in illegitimate births.—(*Airdrie, June 1859.*)

18. The proportion of illegitimate births very high. Marriage during the quarter at a discount; the parish full of old and confirmed bachelors.—(*Kirkcowan, September 1859.*)

19. The only birth I have to report for this quarter is an illegitimate one. That old fashioned ceremony called marriage seems at a discount here.—(*Abbey St. Bathans, March 1860.*)

[See also Supplement to Quarterly Return for 1858, p. 4; to Monthly Return for 1858, p. 6; and to Quarterly Return for 1859, p. 4.]

### *Decrease of irregular Marriages.*

20. So far as I am aware, there have been no irregular marriages among the population of this parish for the last two or three years; these marriages, which a few years ago were so much the order of the day here, seem now to be quite out of fashion; but I fear that is no proof of any improvement among our border population, while regular marriages are not increasing, and illegitimate births *are decidedly on the increase.*—(*Hutton, June 1860.*)

### *Railway Navvies.*

21. A very considerable increase of illegitimacy, owing to the large influx of railway labourers brought to the district by the Deeside extension.—(*Banchory-Ternan, June 1860.*)

22. Births greatly above the average; and I am sorry to say that the illegitimate births are very numerous, no less than seven in 21, or at the rate of 33 per cent. This state of matters is partly, but not

entirely, owing to the presence of the Navvies on our line of Railway.—(*Kirkcowan, June 1860.*)

### *Hiring Fairs.*

23. From a comparison of the number of illegitimate births during the past and the previous year with that of the legitimate ones, it would appear that this species of immorality is on the increase among us. Our proportions are 9·5 per cent. in 1858, and 12 per cent in 1859. In addition to the causes of illegitimacy mentioned in the last quarterly return, I would mention the practice of young women attending fairs and markets for the purpose of being hired as servants; they are generally escorted home by their sweethearts, usually under cloud of night, and both parties frequently, if not tipsy, at least *elevated*. Their usual temperance at other times renders them only the more easily affected by intoxicating liquors on the occasions in question, occurring as they do at distant intervals.—(*Old Cumnock, December 1859.*)

### *Miscellaneous Points.*

24. The illegitimate births exceed the legitimate by one: that tells its own tale, which is the reverse of creditable to the locality.—(*Car-laverock, December 1858.*)

25. The illegitimate are double the legitimate births. The mothers of four of these were girls who had gone into other parishes, and returned prior to the birth of the children. The other two were resident in the parish.—(*Cabrach, June 1859.*)

26. The principal feature in the return for this quarter is the large number of illegitimate births, there being no less than five out of a total of eleven births; and in the case of three of the mothers, *it is their fourth illegitimate child.*—(*Culross, June 1860.*)

27. Illegitimacy for the quarter (3 in 14) tells a fearful tale of immorality, which, however, cannot be charged against a “want of the means of grace,” as we have five active and laborious clergymen in the parish.—(*Firth and Stennis, June 1860.*)

28. The illegitimacy, as reported at present, fails to represent the rate of immorality or incontinence, by the omission of the very numerous cases of antenuptial fornication.—(*Crail, June 1860.*)

29. Regarding the illegitimate birth registered in June, the father was not 15, and the mother 15 years and 5 months, at the date of the birth of the child.—(*Scoonie, June 1859.*)

30. With respect to the illegitimate births, my experience suggests two remarks:—The first is, that a great proportion of them, especially of those where the paternity is disputed, go to swell the numbers of infant mortality; the second is, that the number of such births would be materially reduced if there were provision for legalizing, quietly and inexpensively, marriages which morally exist, and to which there is no substantial impediment.—(*Old Machar, March 1860.*)

## No. V.

## EXTRACTS FROM THE REPORTS OF THE DISTRICT EXAMINERS.

(1.)

*Illegitimacy in the Highlands.*

The Dumfriesshire shepherds, I believe, have had laid upon them the *onus* of introducing illegitimacy into the Highlands; and I must say that, if so, it has not suffered by the transplantation, seeming, as it does at the present day, to be indigenous to the soil. In Alvie, Glenshiel, Lairg, Croy, and Edderton, the parishes wherein it attained unenviable superiority, the reputed fathers were thorough-bred Highlanders. Is there any part of Scotland in which illegitimacy exceeds the proportion of 18.18 per cent. found in the thinly populated parishes of Alvie and Glenshiel? I rather think not.

*Rarity of Illegitimacy among the Fishing Population.*

Again, I beg to draw attention to the remarkable circumstance, that no cases of illegitimacy occur among the *fishermen* of Easter Ross, located in the parishes of Avoch, Cromarty, Fearn, Nigg, and Tarbat, and who confine themselves exclusively to their occupation. As must be known to every body, to none is a wife so useful as to the fisherman, the inevitable consequence of which is, that early marriages are the rule in every fishing village.

But illegitimacy does occur among fishermen. I have found it existing among the Banffshire fishermen, and the inhabitants of Latheron in Caithness, many of whom pursued the joint occupations of crofters and fishermen. I am at a loss to account for this immorality in the Banffshire fishermen, unless they are tainted with a custom which I am given to understand prevails in the county to which they belong, that of marriage succeeding the birth of the first child. But, perhaps, as they are the most enterprising of the northern fishermen, long absence from home may have some effect in this particular.

*Evils of the Bothy System.*

In Caithness, the parish of Latheron bears off the palm for illegitimacy. Its population comprises a large number of crofters, many of whom send their daughters, during harvest time, to what geographers term the "plain of Caithness," comprising the agricultural parishes of Watten, Bower, Thurso, Olig, Dunnet, with parts of Halkirk and Canisbay, among some of which the infamous *bothy system* is still in existence. The consequence is, that many of the girls return home pregnant; and thus is explained the cause of the fact above stated.

*Comparative rarity of Illegitimacy among Roman Catholics.*

In those parishes of Inverness-shire, containing a mixed population of Roman Catholics and Protestants, the per centage of illegitimacy is found, with the exception of two cases, to be below the average; while in the district of *North Morar*, where the population, excepting only the Registrar and one of his shepherds, is composed of Roman Catholics, no case of the kind occurred; and I am informed by a good



authority, that only one bastard child had been born there during the last five years. The same cannot be said of the other parishes free of illegitimacy in 1856; their exemption can only be referred to the chapter of accidents.

Turning to Ireland, we find that the chastity of its inhabitants is a universally acknowledged fact. Whether there exists any difference in continency between the Roman Catholics and Protestants in that country, I am not aware; but this is certain, that the vast majority of its people are Roman Catholics, and that early marriage is a universal custom.

#### *Feeling Markets in Banffshire.*

I have occasionally noticed, while examining the Registers of Banffshire, that the births of the greater number of bastard children occurred at a time corresponding to one or other of the *feeling markets* of May and November; and instead of a page recording the births of three children, two legitimate and one illegitimate, the case was frequently reversed; in fact it was not unusual to find the entries of four or five of the latter in close proximity. In the parishes of Bòtriphnie and Ordiquhill the proportion of these births was so enormous (33 and 28 per cent.), that it must be regarded as influenced in part by accidental causes.

#### *Sea-Board Parishes.*

The proportion in the sea-board parishes is always below what it might be, owing to the habits of the fishing population. Among this class sexual intercourse frequently takes place before marriage; but a child is seldom brought into the world before the parents are linked in the bond of matrimony; indeed, it seems to be the custom that the breeding powers of the woman are tested before she is considered fit to be a wife.

#### *Parochial Relief.*

The assistance rendered by Parochial Boards very much tends to cause the abandoned, in the language of Bunyan, "to lay the rein on the neck of their lusts;" and has, it is feared, a most material influence in inducing concealment of paternity. When the father of an illegitimate child is a married man, it need not be a matter of surprise if collusion take place, and the child be thrown upon the parish for support. The father may say to the mother, "I'll give you all I can spare, but don't say that I'm the father; and then what you get from the Board and from me will be much more than what you would have by obtaining a decree of paternity against me." I am perfectly satisfied that there is little room for difference of opinion upon the subject, and that the testimony of Parochial Boards would bear out my observation.

#### *Railway Labourers.*

The introduction into districts of a temporary population, consisting, in great part of unmarried men employed in the construction of rail-

*ways*, must have some effect on the number of illegitimate births there. This was probably the case in the counties of Nairn, Elgin, and Banff, in the last two of which railways are still in process of formation.

#### *Love of Dress.*

The love of dress, which has now become a passion indulged in even by females of a humble grade, it may be suspected, is not always gratified without the loss of virtue. Low wages and much finery are not compatible; and she who outshines her mistress in dress suffers the imputation of improvidence, if nothing worse.

#### *Prostitution.*

To show that prostitution has an effect in reducing the proportion of illegitimacy, I need give only one example. The burgh of Wick, a seaport in which there is quite enough of prostitution, presented a percentage of 4·8 illegitimate births, while the parish, with a nearly equal population, exhibited the proportion of 10·3, or more than double. To say, therefore, that the parish was more immoral than the burgh would be rather a hazardous statement. I am consequently induced to consider that, in making an estimate of the immorality of a country, these two heads ought not to be taken separately. The comparison already made between Scotland and some of the continental kingdoms, where the manners of the people are avowedly and palpably more licentious, does not, considering all things, do justice to the former.—(*Examiner of Northern District—Registers of 1856.*)

(2.)

#### *Illegitimacy on the East Coast.*

Along the east coast, where the bothy system is comparatively little known, and married men live in the family of their employers, while their wives are in towns at a little distance, cases of adultery are most numerous. Another feature in the statistics of illegitimacy, in Aberdeenshire, is the comparatively great number of *farmer's daughters* who become mothers of illegitimate children. I ought to mention that the farms in the upper districts are small, and those who can employ two horses, or more, are accounted farmers; others who employ less, are called crofters. I need not add that the daughters of all such who are able to work, are engaged, along with the hired men-servants, in out-door and barn-work, &c., and have their meals at the same table—a state of matters which, taken altogether, shows the mistaken views advocated by Mr. Harvey in his late pamphlet on bettering the condition of agricultural labourers.—(*Examiner of Eastern District—Registers of 1856.*)

#### *Infantile Mortality.*

There are certain striking features in some of the Register-books of Deaths, particularly in those of Dundee, which deserve special notice—such as the great number of children that are reported to have died “at birth,” or soon thereafter; and a number of cases, throughout the district, in which “bowelhive” is given as the cause of death. In the 2d District of Dundee alone, 32 children are reported to have died at

birth, and 19 from within five minutes to an hour after birth. There were medical attendants only at five of these cases, 46 of them being attended by neighbours or midwives. . . . The informants in these cases are commonly elderly women of suspicious appearance and character, who had been present at the time of birth, and who can scarcely tell their errand to the Registrar without betraying a guilty blush. It will be seen from these facts that there is too good reason for suspecting that a great proportion of the *illegitimate* children that are born annually in Dundee die under suspicious circumstances, which will appear with still more probability when the awful truth is told that, on more than one occasion, abandoned females, while under the influence of liquor, have been heard to boast openly on the street, that half-a-crown would save them all further trouble in such cases!

Nor is it in Dundee alone that those diabolical practices are supposed to exist, for in several other manufacturing towns in the district the same melancholy disclosures regarding like proceedings have been made to me by people of the greatest integrity and worth.

But apart from the more revolting cases of supposed infanticide, there is, as before hinted, another suspicious "cause of death," which deserves to be noticed, and of which a great number of the infant population are reported to die in all parts of the district. The disease alluded to is commonly called "bowelhive," which respectable medical practitioners consider neither more nor less than a convenient term for accidentally overlaying or smothering a child. Those cases which occur mainly in the manufacturing, mining, and fishing districts, have rarely (indeed, so far as I have noticed, with only two or three exceptions) any medical attendant, and the victims are almost universally children of the lowest and most intemperate class of society. Such cases commonly happen on the night which follows "the pay-day" of the public works in the locality where the death is registered. During last year, four of those cases occurred at the small fishing village of Auchmithie in Forfarshire, and happened after a night's debauch. That such cases ought to be made the subject of inquiry by Procurator-Fiscals is a matter I would humbly suggest for consideration.—(*Examiner of Eastern District—Registers of 1855.*)

(3.)

#### *Illegitimacy Hereditary.*

Referring to cases of illegitimacy, I may mention that bastardy may be almost in some cases deemed *hereditary*, from the following fact coming under my notice:—In the parish of Kirkcowan there is an old woman named Elizabeth —, who has had seven or eight illegitimate children, all by different fathers. These children are now all grown-up, but three of the daughters have followed in the mother's footsteps, one having three, and another four children, not two of these seven owning the same father. There are other instances in the parish, I learned from the Registrar, almost as bad as this.

At Hawick I found seven widows, who during 1857 had given birth to illegitimate children; and in one case, the mother had borne eleven illegitimate children; and, what was curious, the mother's mother, and the mother's grandmother, had each exactly the same number of children born bastards.—(*Examiner of Southern District—Registers of 1856.*)

## No. VI.

OCCUPATIONS of the MOTHERS of the ILLEGITIMATE CHILDREN Registered in the Counties of *Banff* and *Dumfries* (being the two highest in point of Illegitimacy in 1858 and 1859) during the year 1858.

	Banffshire.	Dumfriesshire.
Domestic Servants, . . . . .	113	144
Out-Door or Farm Servants (including } Farmers' Daughters), . . . . }	42	50
Dressmakers, &c., . . . . .	4	14
Millworkers and Weavers, . . . . .	0	13
Washerwomen, . . . . .	0	3
Miscellaneous, . . . . .	3	5
Not Specified, . . . . .	138	120
Total Number of Illegitimate Births,	295	349
Per centage, . . . . .	16·1	14·4
Ratio, one in every . . . . .	6·1	6·9

## No. VII.

DETAILS relative to the PATERNITY of ILLEGITIMATE CHILDREN Registered in the Counties of *Banff* and *Dumfries* during the year 1858.

Total Number of Illegitimate Births.	Banffshire, 295.	Dumfriesshire, 349.
(1.) Paternity Registered as acknowledged (17 & 18 Vict. c. 80, sect. 35), . . . . .	84	32
(2.) Paternity found by Decree of Court subsequently to Registration (17 & 18 Vict. c. 80, sect. 35), . . . . .	20	29
(3.) Children Legitimated by subsequent Marriage of their Parents (17 & 18 Vict. c. 80, sect. 36), . . . . .	6	7

*Note.*—In the case of Nos. (2.) and (3.), the figures may yet be considerably augmented, as several years sometimes elapse, after the registration of an illegitimate birth, before the raising of an action relative to the child's paternity, or the occurrence of the marriage of its parents.

## No. VIII.

TABLE showing the bearing of MARRIAGE, and the DISPARITY of the SEXES, upon Illegitimacy in the eight chief *Towns* of Scotland.

TOWNS.	Marriage Ratio for 4 years.	Birth Ratio per 10,000.	Excess of Males over Females.	Illegitimacy for 18 months.
			Per cent.	Per cent.
Greenock,	1 in every 101	491·25	4·2	4·8
Leith, .	" 124	331·25	9·8	6·8
Glasgow, .	" 111	405·75	5·8	7·5
Edinburgh,	" 130	290·00	9·8	8·2
Paisley, .	" 129	357·75	8·0	8·3
Perth, .	" 116	277·75	4·6	9·3
Dundee, .	" 101	370·00	9·2	10·4
Aberdeen,	" 154	299·25	11·8	15·2

## No. IX.

NUMBER OF BIRTHS, DEATHS, AND MARRIAGES registered in ENGLAND and SCOTLAND during the Four Years 1856-1859.

The average annual number of Births, Deaths, and Marriages registered in England and Scotland respectively, during the four years 1856-59, was as follows:—

(1.) ENGLAND—					
Births,.....	666,443	being 3·42 per cent., or 1 in every 29 persons living.			
Deaths, .....	425,638	" 2·20 " " 45 "			
Marriages, ...	160,693	" ·82 " " 120 "			
Total, .....	1,252,774				
(2.) SCOTLAND—					
Births,.....	104,075	" 3·44 " " 29 "			
Deaths, .....	61,416	" 1·99 " " 50 "			
Marriages, ...	20,632	" ·67 " " 149 "			
Total, .....	186,123				

## No. X.

Copy LETTER to the Author from the Minister of the Parish of —, in the County of Berwick, on the bearing of Irregular Marriages upon Illegitimacy.

*Manse of —, August 31, 1860.*

MY DEAR SIR,—On thinking over the subject to which you referred, it does not seem to me that I have much information to impart with regard to it, but you are welcome to what I have. Before coming to —, now fifteen years ago, circumstances had called my attention to the apparently utter want of chastity in the young females among the peasantry of my native district—the Upper Ward of Clydesdale, where the labouring population is otherwise very well conducted and very intelligent, indeed decidedly above the average standard. It is the agricultural, not the mining population to which I allude. You may understand the extent of the evil there from the replies which clergymen, who had been ministers of their respective parishes, gave to my question. Do you often marry young women who should have been married months before? One replied, Oh yes, frequently. Well, I said, think and tell me when you did it last. On reflecting, he answered, I really do not remember when I last married a young woman who was not in the family way. The other minister at once replied, No, I seldom, if indeed ever, perform the service where it should not have been performed long before.

On becoming minister of —, I was struck with the apparent absence of everything of this kind. Marriage was hardly ever performed by the clergyman; it took place at Lamberton Toll; but the parties subsequently appeared before the session to be rebuked and admitted to church privileges, either at the approach of the Communion or when Baptism was required. On such occasions the certificate of marriage, which must be produced, almost invariably showed that the parties had been legally united in due time. No doubt, I have recently been informed that it is usual to antedate the certificate as circumstances may demand. This may, to a certain extent, be the case, but still I am of opinion, that, as a general rule, a girl does not permit a man to have intercourse with her until what she considers to be a legal, binding marriage has taken place, and that thus her self-respect is to a considerable degree preserved. Matters are considerably changed in the parish within the last six or seven years. Since the passing of the Registration Act, marriage by the minister after banns is much more frequent than it used to be; but at the same time four or five bastards have been born, a thing hardly known before; while prostitution, or at least promiscuous intercourse, has become too prevalent—a state of things which older residents assure me was utterly unknown in —. I do not, however, think that the deterioration proceeds in the slightest degree from the working of the Registration Act. It proceeds, I am convinced, entirely from the great wealth which of late years has flowed in upon the fishing population—from the more unrestricted mingling of the rising generation with the world at large, and from their having got quit of the superstitious feelings of their predecessors without having

acquired much sound religious principle. I am still of opinion that the freedom of marriage at the Toll, to which the young couple can have access at any moment, has been, and is a great safeguard. My observations apply exclusively to the inhabitants of —, not to the rural population, with regard to whom I have no adequate means of forming a judgment. I believe that most, if not all of my brother clergymen, view the border marriages with great disapprobation. Some of them have told me that in the under-peopled state of the country, the possession of a family is a matter of great importance to the hinds; and that, consequently, it is very usual for a couple to cohabit in order to ascertain whether the woman is likely to prove fruitful. If this should be the case, matters are immediately soldered up at the border Toll, when it is within reach; and if there should be no prospect of a family, the temporary union ceases. I do not think that this practice can be very prevalent.

I am sorry that my information is so limited, but if there is any question which you wish answered, if you will be so good as send it to me, I shall do my best to answer it.—I am, &c.

---

The following is an extract from a second letter received from the writer of the above while my Paper was passing through the press:—

The meeting of the young at undue hours is much blamed for the evil (illegitimacy). Now, nothing could be worse than the style of wooing in Lanarkshire, the parties being together alone till far on in the morning. But the same system, so far as I could learn, had existed for many generations; and yet the woeful state of things which now prevails, does not seem to have commenced more than perhaps two generations ago, if so long. There must, therefore, be some other concurrent cause. It may seem extravagant to say so, but from my intimate knowledge of the peasantry in the Upper Ward, I am convinced that that cause is to a certain extent to be found in perverted views of religious doctrine. They are a superior race, the Upper Ward peasantry, and used to be keen theologians; and I know that they had, many of them, argued themselves into a belief that the minister was cheating them out of their privileges as sharers in the covenant of grace, if he did not prominently preach to them an easy quittance for sins committed or to be committed.

I have not had the same opportunities of judging of the feelings of the peasantry here; but I am inclined to think that the operation of an exaggerated and unreasonable dissent has had considerable effect in loosening, in the minds of the people, due reverence for morality and godliness.

## No. XI.

## ILLEGITIMACY IN IRELAND.

## (1.)

"In more than one page in the preceding narrative, I have adverted to opinions generally prevalent in Ireland respecting the very correct behaviour of the women of the lower classes of society; and I have in more than one place avowed my belief in the accuracy of the statements which place the chastity of the unmarried women of Ireland on a much higher level than that of the women of England and Scotland in the same class of society. A reference to the unquestionable evidence supplied by the Records of the Workhouses, proves that these statements, when taken in a relative point of view, are strictly true; but the same evidence, when regarded absolutely, likewise proves that the purity of female life in Ireland falls not a little below the standard which common opinion has set up. While our stern statistics unquestionably show that the proportion of illegitimate children among the workhouse population in Ireland is greatly less than in England and Wales, I fear they will hardly justify the belief formerly expressed by me as the result of my general inquiries, that 'unmarried mothers are quite a rarity in Ireland.' Still, I think the statistical details which follow will be allowed to justify, to a considerable extent, the proud position usually accorded to the young women of the labouring classes in Ireland.

"In both the Irish and English Poor-Law Reports, tables of classification are given (not every year), which set forth to a certain extent the social and domestic relations of the persons receiving relief. One of the subdivisions contains the number of children in the houses belonging to inmates, and classed according as their parents are able-bodied or not able-bodied. These children are further classed under the heads of legitimate and illegitimate. We have thus an opportunity of comparing the two countries together in regard to this point, as far at least as regards one class of the community, the lowest or working class.\*

"Before proceeding, however, to make this comparison, it will be necessary to notice a difference that exists in the mode of setting forth the same data in the two countries, otherwise erroneous conclusions, as to the *actual amount* of illegitimacy, may be deduced from the figures. The difference is this: the Irish tables give the *total number of children in the houses during the whole of each half year*, while the English tables merely give the *number in the houses on one particular day*, viz., the last day of each half year. Consequently, if we were to compare the total number of any of the classes in the two sets of tables, one with another, we might be comparing two very different things, viz., a sum total comprehending all the children in the houses at any time during a period of six months, with a sum total comprising only those present on a single day. But this circumstance affects

\* It is singular that the Poor Law Reports for Scotland do not give this information. I hope my countrymen are not ashamed of this portion of their domestic history.



in no way the accuracy of the *proportions* of the respective classes in the tables of the two countries, which is the only part of the subject now under examination. With this explanation, I shall give the figures exactly as I find them in the Irish and English Reports; and, to avoid all chance of partiality, shall give the whole of the tables to be found in each national series, viz., those for the two half years in the Irish tables ending on the 31st March 1849 and 1851, and those in the English tables for the years 1848-49-50-51.

“ The results, even of this proportional collation, as already hinted, are certainly far less complimentary to my fair barefooted clients than could have been wished; but ‘everything by comparison,’ as the adage says; the darker blot from the eastern side of St. George’s channel, which we place beside this stain on Irish chastity, seems to blanch it wonderfully :—

“ *Total number of the children of the Inmates of Workhouses in Ireland, England, and Wales, with the proportion of Illegitimate to Legitimate in each Country.*

COUNTRY.	Legitimate.	Illegitimate.	Total.
Ireland (two half years) . . .	274,788	16,677	607,868?
England (four years) . . . .	92,820	62,066	154,886
Wales (four years) . . . . .	2677	3070	5747

“ These numbers give the following as the proportions between the two classes of illegitimate and legitimate children in the workhouses of the three countries :—

	Illegitimate.		Legitimate.
Ireland, . . . . .	1	to	16·47
England, . . . . .	1	to	1·49
Wales, . . . . .	1	to	0·87
England and Wales, . . . .	1	to	1·46

“ It seems thus fairly established as a fact, that incontinency is a vice much less prevalent among the lower classes in Ireland than in England and Wales. It would be an interesting subject of inquiry to endeavour to come at the cause or causes of the difference. I formerly adverted to one circumstance which is regarded in Ireland as powerfully operative in preserving the good fame of the women who profess the Catholic religion, viz., the practice of confession. Admitting that this is really an influential cause, as I believe it is, the habit of early marriages must no doubt be also considered as another, and one probably of equal importance.”—(“ *Memorandums made in Ireland in 1852.*” By JOHN FORBES, M.D., F.R.S., &c. &c., pp. 240-44).

(2.)

"From the morning on which I had visited the great model National School in Marlborough Street, Dublin, to the hour of my arrival at Galway, I had remarked, in the Irish female countenance, an innate or native modesty more clearly legible than it has ever been my fortune to read in journeying through any other country on the globe. . . .

"But I have lived long enough to know that outward appearance cannot always be trusted, and, accordingly, wherever I went, I made inquiries, the result of which was not only to confirm, but to over-confirm, my own observation; indeed, from the resident Commissioner of the Board of National Education in the metropolis, down to the governors of gaols and masters of the remotest workhouses, I received statements of the chastity of the Irish women so extraordinary, that I must confess I could not believe them; in truth, I was infinitely more puzzled by what I heard than by the simple evidence of my own eyes.

"I resolved, therefore, that before I concluded my trifling tour (the sole object of which had been to inform myself as correctly as possible of the real character of the Irish people), I would, instead of generalities, come to particulars on the subject in question, and I accordingly put to the head constable (of Galway) the following questions, the answers to which I wrote as he pronounced them:—

"How long have you been on duty in Galway?

"Above nine years.

"Have there been here many illegitimate children?

"Scarcely any. . . . Being acquainted with every family in Galway, I have never known of a child of that description being born.

"Does that fact apply to the fishing village of 'The Claddagh'?

"Particularly so.

"Do you mean to say that, to your knowledge, there has never been an illegitimate child in the town of Galway?

"I have *heard* that a servant-girl has had one, but at the present moment there is no such case in my mind. In the village of 'Claddagh' they get their children married very young."—(*A Fortnight in Ireland*, by Sir Francis B. Head, Bart., pp. 226-8.)

After alluding to the wretched and slovenly appearance of the inhabitants of Galway, Sir Francis Head adds:—"What ornament can these poor young people put on equal to that virtuous character which they wear wherever they go, and which, in spite of their poverty, it appears no human power can deprive them of!"

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