



James Fermor
May 1834

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REPORT

FROM

HIS MAJESTY'S COMMISSIONERS

FOR INQUIRING INTO

THE ADMINISTRATION AND PRACTICAL
OPERATION

OF

THE POOR LAWS.

PUBLISHED BY AUTHORITY.

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THE Appendix referred to throughout the Report is that which was laid before Parliament with the Report. Part of it has already been printed by order of the House of Commons; but a considerable portion is still in the press. The latter circumstance accounts for the number of references left blank.

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ADMINISTRATION AND OPERATION

OF

THE LAWS

FOR

THE RELIEF OF THE POOR.

REPORT OF COMMISSIONERS.

TO THE KING'S MOST EXCELLENT MAJESTY.

WE, the COMMISSIONERS appointed by YOUR MAJESTY to make a diligent and full inquiry into the practical operation of the Laws for the Relief of the Poor in *England* and *Wales*, and into the manner in which those laws are administered, and to report our opinion whether any and what alterations, amendments, or improvements may be beneficially made in the said laws, or in the manner of administering them, and how the same may be best carried into effect,—Humbly certify to YOUR MAJESTY, in manner following, our proceedings in the execution of YOUR MAJESTY'S Commission, and the opinions which they have led us to form.

Our first proceeding was to prepare questions for circulation in the rural districts, and afterwards in the towns. Considerable alterations were made in the rural questions, after the earlier answers received by us showed that some of the questions were imperfectly understood, or that additional inquiries might be usefully made. Appendix (B.) contains copies of our questions with their different variations. The town questions, having been prepared after those for rural districts had received their last amendments, were never altered.

As we were directed to employ Assistant Commissioners in the prosecution of our inquiry, our next business was to frame instructions for them. For the purpose of facilitating their preparation, two of the Commissioners made excursions into the country, in order to ascertain by actual experience the sort of duties which the Assistant Commissioners would have to perform. Assisted by that experience and by the information contained in the answers to our circulated questions, we prepared the instructions for Assistant Commissioners, which are contained in the Supplement to this Report. We then proceeded to the appointment of

Assistant Commissioners; a task by no means easy, as the office was one requiring no ordinary qualifications, necessarily involving a great sacrifice of time and labour, likely to be followed by much hostility, and accompanied by no remuneration. The difficulty of discovering a greater number of fit persons whom we could induce to act, by confining the number of Assistant Commissioners, forced us to assign to them much larger districts than would have been in other respects advisable. And different accidents, which prevented several persons who had undertaken the business from proceeding in it, in some cases forced us to confide to one person districts which had been intended for two, and to leave some altogether unvisited. One of these was South Wales, to which two persons were successively appointed, each of whom was subsequently prevented from acting.

Our commission did not extend beyond England and Wales. Mr. Tufnell and Mr. Johnston, however, made inquiries for us in Scotland; Mr. Le Marchant in Guernsey; Captain Brandreth in Flanders; and Mr. Majendie in France. We have inserted their reports in the Appendix, together with some valuable information respecting the public provision made for the poor, and the state of the labouring classes, in the continent of Europe and in America, which have been communicated by the Foreign Office, and by Count Arrivabene, M. Thibaudeau, M. de Chateaufieux, and from other sources.

So much time was taken up in the preparation of questions and instructions, and in the appointment of Assistant Commissioners, that few of them proceeded on their mission before the middle of August, 1832.

They were directed to make their Reports by the end of the following November. Very few Reports, however, were received until the beginning of January, 1833. In the mean time we had received returns to our circulated queries so numerous, that it became a question how they should be disposed of.

The number and the variety of the persons by whom they were furnished, made us consider them the most valuable part of our evidence. But the same causes made their bulk so great as to be a serious objection to their publication in full. It appeared that this objection might be diminished, if an abstract could be made containing their substance in fewer words, and we directed such an abstract to be prepared. On making the attempt, however, it appeared that not much could be saved in length without incurring the risk of occasional suppression or misrepresentation. Another plan would have been to make a selection, and leave out altogether those returns which appeared to us of no value. A very considerable portion, perhaps not less than one half, are of this description; their omission would have materially diminished

the expense of copying and printing, and the remainder would have been more easily consulted and referred to when unincumbered by useless matter.

But on a question of such importance as Poor Law Amendment, we were unwilling to incur the responsibility of selection. We annex, therefore, in Appendix (B.), all the returns which we have received. In order to diminish, as far as possible, the inconvenience arising from their number, they are so arranged that the answer to any one of the 53 questions may be read as a separate subject, without the attention being distracted by the intervention of other matter, the answer from each parish recurring in the same portion of each page. The only alterations which we have permitted have been the omission of disquisitions on matters perfectly irrelevant, and the insertion, in a different part of the Appendix, of some passages which were too long to appear in a tabular form.

The Reports of the Assistant Commissioners, though less voluminous than the Returns, form altogether a large mass; and a large body of testimony consists of the communications made to us from every part of England, and from some parts of America, and of the Continent of Europe.

We felt it to be of the utmost importance that we should ourselves be masters of the contents of all this evidence, and that those whose conduct may be influenced by our suggestions should be enabled to examine all the grounds on which they are founded. For these purposes, it was necessary that it should be in print; any use of it in manuscript being exceedingly fatiguing, and the complete use impossible. We obtained, therefore, the permission of the Lord Chancellor, and of the Speaker of the House of Commons, that it should be printed by the Parliamentary printers, in anticipation of the orders of the two Houses; and it was accordingly placed in the printer's hands in the beginning of February, 1833.

In the mean time we received a communication from Your MAJESTY'S Principal Secretary of State for the Home Department, directing us to "transmit, in detail, the information which we had received as to the administration and operation of the Poor Laws, in some of the parishes in which those laws have been administered in various modes, and particularly any returns to our inquiries, showing the results of the various modes adopted in those parishes." On the receipt of this letter we requested the Assistant Commissioners to furnish us with such extracts from the evidence collected by them as they thought most instructive.

The papers received in consequence of these applications were subsequently published, and obtained an extensive circulation. It has, we believe, been supposed that these extracts were selected

by us, and contained the most striking parts of our evidence. Both these suppositions are erroneous. Neither on this occasion, nor on any other, have we exercised any discretion with respect to our evidence. We left the task of selection to the Assistant Commissioners, very few of whose Reports we had then seen, and we transmitted to the Home Office what they chose to furnish. And on comparing the portions which they thought fit to extract with the whole of their Reports, it will not be found that the Extracts, strange as they must have appeared to any one unacquainted with the system which they describe, differ from the general tenor of the Appendix. For one part of the volume, however, we are responsible, since it was prepared in the offices of the Commission, and that is the Index. As it was considered important that the extracts should appear as soon as they could be got ready, the index, to save time, was prepared from the proof sheets; and, as the paging of those sheets was subsequently altered to meet the corrections made by the Assistant Commissioners, all the references became inapplicable, and a few were ultimately passed over without correction. A graver complaint has been made of the index as containing expressions of opinion. We admit that the complaint is to a certain degree well founded: our apology is, that, as is usually the case, we left the index to be prepared by others, and did not see it until the work had been for some time in circulation.

We have already stated that our Appendix was placed in the printer's hands in the beginning of February, 1833. If it could have been printed, as we hoped, in three months, we should have been able to report before the end of the last session. The outline of this Report had been prepared in the beginning of that session, and all that was necessary was, to add references to the evidence, and to make those additions, qualifications, and exceptions, which the reconsideration of that evidence might show to be necessary; but the vast bulk of the manuscripts, and the degree in which the Parliamentary printers were engaged by other matters, so prolonged the printing, that not one-fifth of it had been executed before the end of the session. It proceeded more rapidly after the prorogation, but even then so slowly, notwithstanding the exertions of the printers, that even now it is not completed. We have been forced, therefore, to take it as it was furnished to us week by week, using the proof sheets, unpagged and unindexed. And this is one of our apologies for the defects of this Report, and for the omissions and occasional false references which, with all our care, must, we fear, be found in it. If it had been possible to wait till the whole Appendix was in a perfect state, we could have completed our Report with far less labour, and in a far more satisfactory manner. But that would have involved a delay of three months longer, a delay which

might, in fact, have occasioned the postponement of remedial measures, so far as they are to be promoted by this Report, until the following year. Such a delay appeared to us a greater evil than the imperfections and inaccuracies to which the course which we have adopted must expose us.

It appears from this narrative, that the magnitude of the evidence has been the great difficulty with which we have had to struggle. But we believe, on the other hand, that that very magnitude gives the principal value to our inquiry. All evidence is necessarily subject to error, from the ignorance, forgetfulness, or misrepresentation of the witnesses, and necessarily tinged by their opinions and prejudices. But in proportion as the number of witnesses is increased, those sources of error have a tendency to compensate one another, and general results are afforded, more to be depended upon than the testimony of a few witnesses, however unexceptionable. The evidence contained in our Appendix comes from every county and almost every town, and from a very large proportion of even the villages in England. It is derived from many thousand witnesses, of every rank and of every profession and employment, members of the two Houses of Parliament, clergymen, country gentlemen, magistrates, farmers, manufacturers, shopkeepers, artisans, and peasants, differing in every conceivable degree in education, habits, and interests, and agreeing only in their practical experience as to the matters in question, in their general description both of the mode in which the laws for the relief of the poor are administered, and of the consequences which have already resulted from that administration, and in their anticipation of certain further consequences from its continuance. The amendment of those laws is, perhaps, the most urgent and the most important measure now remaining for the consideration of Parliament; and we trust that we shall facilitate that amendment by tendering to YOUR MAJESTY the most extensive, and at the same time the most consistent, body of evidence that was ever brought to bear on a single subject.

In the hope of diminishing the difficulty of making use of this voluminous Evidence, we have embodied a considerable portion of it in the following Report; and wherever it has been practicable, we have subjoined to our quotations references to the pages in the Appendix from which they were extracted. But as the Appendix, owing to the obstacles which we have already stated, is still incomplete, and much of it unpagged, many of our references are unavoidably left blank.

We do not think it necessary to prefix to the statement of the result of our inquiries any account of the provisions of the 43d of Elizabeth, c. 2, or of the subsequent Acts for the relief of the

poor. Those Acts are well known, and are to be found in almost every treatise on the Poor Laws, and we have inserted the 43d of Elizabeth in the Supplement. But as the preceding Acts are almost forgotten, and not easily accessible, and as they throw great light on the intentions of the framers of the 43d of Elizabeth, we will shortly state the substance of some of the principal enactments of those which appear to us most to deserve attention.

The great object of our early Pauper legislation seems to have been the restraint of Vagrancy.

The 12 Richard II. c. 7, (1388,) prohibits any labourer from departing from the hundred, rape, wapentake, city, or borough where he is dwelling, without a testimonial, showing reasonable cause for his going, to be issued under the authority of the justices of the peace. Any labourer found wandering without such letter, is to be put in the stocks till he find surety to return to the town from which he came. Impotent persons are to remain in the towns in which they be dwelling at the time of the Act; or, if the inhabitants are unable or unwilling to support them, they are to withdraw to other towns within the hundred, rape, or wapentake, or to the towns where they were born, and there abide during their lives.

The 11 Henry VII. c. 2, (1495,) requires beggars not able to work to go to the hundred where last they dwelled, or were best known, or born, without begging out of the hundred.

The 19 Henry VII. c. 12, (1504,) requires them to go to the city, town, or hundred where they were born, or to the place where they last abode for the space of three years, without begging out of the said city, town, hundred, or place.

The 22 Henry VIII. c. 12, (1531,) directs the justices to assign to the impotent poor a limit within which they are to beg. An impotent person begging out of his limit is to be imprisoned for two days and nights in the stocks, on bread and water, and then sworn to return to the place in which he was authorized to beg. An able-bodied beggar is to be whipped, and sworn to return to the place where he was born, or last dwelt for the space of three years, and there put himself to labour.

Five years after, was passed the 27 Henry VIII. c. 25, (1536.) This Statute is remarkable, both as having first introduced the system of compulsory charity, and as showing that the motive for its establishment was the desire and the difficulty of repressing vagrancy. It recites the preceding Act, and adds, that no provision is made for the support of the impotent, nor for setting and keeping in work the said valiant beggars; and then enacts, that the head officers of every city, shire, town, and parish, to which such poor creatures or sturdy vagabonds shall repair in obedience to that Act, shall most charitably receive the same, and shall keep the same poor people, by way of voluntary and charitable

alms, within the respective cities, shires, towns, hundreds, hamlets, and parishes, by their discretion, so that none of them of very necessity shall be compelled to beg openly, and shall compel the said sturdy vagabonds and valiant beggars to be kept to continual labour in such wise as they may get their own living by the continual labour of their own hands, on pain that every *parish* making default shall forfeit 20s. a month. It then directs the head officers of corporate towns, and the churchwardens and two others of every parish, who are to remain in office only one year, to collect voluntary alms for the purpose of relieving the impotent poor, and that such as be lusty be kept to continual labour. Every preacher, parson, vicar, and curate, as well in their sermons, collections, bidding of the beads, as in the time of confession and making of wills, is to exhort, move, stir, and provoke people to be liberal for the relief of the impotent, and setting and keeping to work the said sturdy vagabonds.

The money collected is to be kept in a common box in the church, or committed to the custody of a substantial trusty man, as they can agree on, to be delivered as necessity shall require. Almsgiving, otherwise than to these common boxes or common gatherings, or to fellow parishioners or prisoners, is prohibited on forfeiture of ten times the amount given. And all persons bound to distribute ready money, victuals, or other sustentation to poor people, are to dispose of the same, or the value thereof, to such common boxes. The overplus of the collection of wealthy parishes is to be applied in aid of other parishes within the same city, borough, town, or hundred.

A sturdy beggar is to be whipped the first time, his right ear cropped the second time, and if he again offend, to be sent to the next gaol till the quarter sessions, and there to be indicted for wandering, loitering, and idleness, and if convicted, shall suffer execution of death as a felon and an enemy of the commonwealth.

It appears that the severity of this Act prevented its execution. Such at least is the reason assigned for its repeal by the 1st Edward VI. c. 3, (1547,) which recites, that partly by foolish pity and mercy of them which should have seen the said goodly laws executed, and partly from the perverse nature and long-accustomed idleness of the persons given to loitering, the said goodly Statutes have had small effect, and idle and vagabond persons, being unprofitable members, or rather enemies of the commonwealth, have been suffered to remain and increase, and yet so do: and, as a milder punishment, enacts, that an able-bodied poor person who does not apply himself to some honest labour, or offer to serve even for meat and drink, if nothing more is to be obtained, shall be taken for a vagabond, branded on the shoulder

with the letter V, and adjudged a slave for two years to any person who shall demand him, to be fed on bread and water and refuse meat, and caused to work by beating, chaining, or otherwise. If he run away within that period, he is to be branded on the cheek with the letter S, and adjudged a slave for life; if he run away again, he is to suffer death as a felon. If no man demand such loiterer, he is to be sent to the place where he says he was born, there to be kept in chains or otherwise, at the highways or common work, or from man to man, as the slave of the corporation or inhabitants of the city, town, or village in which he was born; and the said city, town, or village shall see the said slave set to work, and not live idly, upon pain, for every three working days that the slave live idly by their default, that a city forfeit 5*l.*, a borough 4*0s.*, and a town or village 2*0s.*, half to the King and half to the informer. If it appear that he was not born in the place of which he described himself as a native, he was to be branded on the face, and be a slave for life.

It appears also, that taking surety of the impotent poor that they would repair to the places where they were born, or had dwelt for the three previous years, was not effectual. The officers, therefore, are directed to convey the impotent poor on horseback, cart, chariot, or otherwise, to the next constable, and so from constable to constable, till they be brought to the place where they were born, or most conversant for the space of three years, there to be kept and nourished of alms. "Provided always, that if any of the said impotent persons be not so lame or impotent but that they may work in some manner, and refuse to work, or run away and beg in other places, then their city, town, or village, is to punish them according to their discretion, with chaining, beating, or otherwise." The Statute also orders the curate of each parish, every Sunday after reading the Gospel, to exhort his parishioners to remember the duty of Christian charity in relieving them which be their brethren in Christ, *born in the same parish*, and needing their help.

This Statute had a very short existence, for it was repealed by the 3d and 4th Edward VI. c. 16, (1450,) and the 22d Henry VIII. c. 12, revived. The directions, however, that the impotent poor should be removed to the place where they were born, or had been most conversant for three years, and that they should be kept to work, if capable of some manner of work, and punished by chaining, beating, or otherwise, if they refused, were re-enacted.

The 5th and 6th Edward VI. c. 2, (1551,) "to the intent that valiant beggars, idle and loitering persons, may be avoided, and the impotent, feeble, and lame provided for, which are poor in very deed," confirms the 22d Henry VIII. c. 12, and 3d & 4th

Edward VI. c. 16, and commands that they shall be put in execution; and then directs a book to be kept in every city, corporate town, and parish, containing the names of the householders and of the impotent poor, and that yearly in Whitsun week the head officers of towns, and the minister and churchwardens in every parish in the country, shall appoint two persons to be collectors of alms for the relief of the poor, which collectors shall, the next or following Sunday at church, gently ask every man and woman what they of their charity will give weekly towards the relief of the poor, and write the same in the book, and distribute what they collect weekly to the same poor and impotent persons, after such sort that the more impotent may have the more help, and such as can get part of their living the less, and by the direction of the collectors be put on such labour as they be able to do; but none to go or sit openly begging, upon pain limited in the above statutes. If any one, able to further this charitable work, do obstinately and frowardly refuse to give, or do discourage others, the minister and churchwardens are to gently exhort him. If he will not be so persuaded, the bishop is to send for him, to induce and persuade him by charitable ways and means, and so according to his discretion take order for the reformation thereof.

It is a curious example of the fear of our ancestors that Statutes should grow into desuetude, and perhaps a proof that such a fate had actually befallen the 5th and 6th Edward VI. that precisely the same enactments, with precisely the same preamble, are repeated by the 2d and 3d Philip and Mary, c. 5, (1555.) But the Act, however reiterated, seems to have been ineffectual. Neither the gentle askings of the collectors, the exhortations of the minister, nor the charitable ways and means of the bishop, appear to have persuaded the parishioners to entrust to the collectors the distribution of their alms.

The 5th Elizabeth, c. 3, (1563,) therefore, after repeating the same preamble and the same enactments, goes on to enact, that if any person of his froward, wilful mind shall obstinately refuse to give weekly to the relief of the poor according to his ability, the bishop shall bind him to appear at the next sessions; and at the said sessions the justices there shall charitably and gently persuade and move the said obstinate person to extend his charity towards the relief of the poor of the parish where he dwelleth; and if he will not be persuaded, it shall be lawful for the justices, with the churchwardens, or one of them, to tax such obstinate person, according to their good discretion, what sum the said obstinate person shall pay weekly towards the relief of the poor within the parish wherein he shall dwell; and if he refuse, the justices shall, on complaint of the churchwardens, commit the said obstinate person to gaol, until he shall pay the sum so taxed, with the arrears.

The next Statute, the 14th Elizabeth, c. 5, (1572,) is remarkable, as a proof of the inefficacy of the previous Statutes, and as showing how short an interval elapsed between giving to the justices power to tax at their sessions an obstinate person, at the complaint of the minister, the churchwardens, and the bishop, and the giving to them discretionary power to tax every inhabitant in their divisions, and to direct the application of the sums so taxed.

It begins by a recital, that all the parts of this realm of England and Wales be presently with rogues, vagabonds, and sturdy beggars exceedingly pestered, by means whereof daily happeneth in the same realm horrible murders, thefts, and other great outrage, to the high displeasure of Almighty God, and to the great annoyance of the common weale.

And then, "as well for the utter suppressing of the said outrageous enemies to the common weal, as for the charitable relieving of the aged and impotent poor people in manner and form following," it enacts, that all persons thereafter set forth to be rogues and vagabonds, or sturdy beggars, shall for the first offence be grievously whipped, and burnt through the gristle of the right ear with a hot iron of the compass of an inch about; for the second, be deemed felons; and for the third, suffer death as felons without benefit of clergy.

Among rogues, vagabonds, and sturdy beggars, are included all persons whole and mighty in body, able to labour, not having land or master, nor using any lawful merchandise, craft, or mystery; and all common labourers, able in body, loitering and refusing to work for such reasonable wages as is commonly given.

"And forasmuch as charity would that poor, aged, and impotent persons should as necessarily be provided for as the said rogues, vagabonds, and sturdy beggars repressed, and that the said aged, impotent, and poor people should have convenient habitations and abiding places throughout this realm to settle themselves upon, to the end that they nor any of them should hereafter beg or wander about," it enacts, "that the Justices of the peace shall within their several divisions and authorities make inquiry of all aged, poor, impotent, and decayed persons born within their said divisions and limits, or which were there dwelling within three years next after this present Parliament, living by alms, and register their names; and when the number of poor people forced to live upon alms be by that means known, the said Justices shall appoint within their said divisions meet places, by their discretion, to settle the same poor people for their abidings, if the parish within which they shall be found shall not or will not provide for them, and set down what portion the weekly charge towards the relief and sustentation of the said poor people will

amount unto, and that done, shall by their good discretions tax and assess all the inhabitants dwelling within the said divisions to such weekly charge as they and every of them shall weekly contribute towards the relief of the said poor people, and shall appoint collectors, who shall gather the same proportion, and make delivery of so much thereof, according to the discretion of the said Justices, to the said poor people, as the said Justices shall appoint them. If any person able to further this charitable work shall obstinately refuse to give, or discourage others, he shall be brought before two Justices, to show the cause of such refusal or discouragement, and to abide such order therein as the said Justices shall appoint, and if he shall refuse to do so, they shall commit him to gaol until he shall be contented with their said order and do perform the same."

It then provides that the justices, out of the surplus of such collections, (the impotent being first provided for,) shall settle to work the rogues and vagabonds that shall be disposed to work (*i. e.* capable of working) born within the said counties or there abiding for the most part within the said three years, there to be holden to work to get their livings, and to live and be sustained only upon their labour and travail. And "that the justices in sessions within any of the counties, cities, or towns where collection of money cannot presently be had, may license some of the poor, or any other for them, to gather, within such other town, parish, or parishes of the county as the said justices shall name within the division of the licensing justices, charitable donations and alms at the houses of the inhabitants. And the inhabitants of every such parish to which such poor shall be so appointed, shall be coerced and bound, under such pain as to the said justices shall seem convenient, to relieve the said poor in such sort as the said justices shall appoint."

Even its kindness is mixed with much severity, for "if any of the said poor people refuse to be bestowed in any of the said abiding places, but covet still to hold on their trade of begging, or after they be once bestowed in the said abiding places, depart and beg, then the said person so offending, for that first offence shall be accounted a rogue or vagabond, and suffer as a rogue or vagabond in the first degree of punishment; and if he do the second time offend, then be esteemed a rogue or vagabond, and suffer as a rogue or vagabond in the last degree of punishment, (that is, suffer death as a felon;) and if any of the said aged and impotent persons, not being so diseased, lame, or impotent but that they may work in some manner of work, shall be by the overseers of their said abiding place appointed to work, and refuse, they are to be whipped and stocked for their first refusal, and for the second refusal to be punished as in the case of vagabonds in the said first degree of punishment."

The 14th Elizabeth, c. 5, does not appear to have been expressly repealed, as far as the relief of the impotent is concerned. It was replaced, in that respect, by the 39th Elizabeth, c. 3, (1598,) and, with respect to able-bodied vagrants, by the 39th Elizabeth, c. 4. That Statute, which is in fact merely a continuation of the 39th Elizabeth, c. 3, directs that every rogue and vagabond (among whom are included "all wandering persons and common labourers, being persons able in body, using loitering, and refusing to work for such reasonable wages as is taxed or commonly given in such parts where such persons do or shall happen to dwell or abide, not having living otherwise to maintain themselves") "shall, on his apprehension, be openly whipped until his body be bloody, and shall be forthwith sent from parish to parish the next strait way to the parish where he was born, if the same may be known by the party's confession or otherwise; and if the same be not known, then to the parish where he last dwelt before the punishment by the space of one whole year, there to put him or herself to labour as a true subject ought to do; or, not being known where he or she was born or last dwelt, then to the parish through which he or she last passed without punishment, to be by the officers of the said village where he or she so last passed through without punishment, conveyed to the house of correction of the district wherein the said village standeth, or to the common gaol of that county or place, there to remain or be employed in work until he or she shall be placed in some service, and so to continue by the space of one whole year; or, not being able of body, until he or she shall be placed to remain in some almshouse in the same county or place." And "if any of the said rogues shall appear to be dangerous to the inferior sort of people where they shall be taken, or otherwise be such as will not be reformed of their roguish kind of life, it shall be lawful to the justice of the limits where any such rogue shall be taken, to commit that rogue to the house of correction, or otherwise to the gaol of that county, there to remain until the next quarter-sessions; and then such of the same rogues so committed as by the justices of the peace there present, or the most part of them, shall be thought fit not to be delivered, shall be banished out of this realm and all other the dominions thereof, and, at the charge of that county, shall be conveyed into such parts beyond the seas as shall be at any time hereafter for that purpose assigned by the Privy Council, or otherwise be judged perpetually to the galleys of this realm, as by the same justices or the most part of them shall be thought fit and expedient."

The 27 Henry VIII. c. 25, which imposed a fine on the *parish* in which the impotent poor should not be relieved, and directed the surplus collection of rich parishes to be applied for the relief

of poor *parishes* within the same hundred; the 1 Edward VI. c. 3, which directed the curate of any *parish* to exhort his parishioners to relieve those *born in the same parish*, and needing their help; and the 5 and 6 Edward VI. c. 2, which directed the parson, vicar, or churchwardens of each parish, to appoint collectors, and to gently ask for contributions in the church, were all so many steps towards making the relief of the poor a parochial charge. And it appears that the ecclesiastical division of parishes was preferred to any civil division, on account of the part which the clergy were required to take in the business.

The 14 Elizabeth, c. 5, appears to have deviated from this plan; and as it vested the power of assessment in the justices, it threw the burden, not on each parish, but upon all the inhabitants of the divisions within the jurisdiction of the assessing justices. The 39 Elizabeth, c. 3, (1598,) returned to the parochial system; and it differs so little in its provisions from the well-known 43 Elizabeth, c. 2, the basis, but certainly not the origin, of our present system, that we do not think it necessary to state its substance. The following clause, however, deserves to be cited, both on account of its importance, and from its not having been re-enacted:—

"No person or persons whatsoever shall go wandering abroad and beg in any place whatsoever, by license or without, upon pain to be esteemed, taken, and punished as a rogue: Provided always, and this present Act shall not extend to any poor people which shall ask relief of victualling only in the same parish where such poor people do dwell, so the same be in such time only and according to such order and direction as shall be made and appointed by the churchwardens and overseers of the poor of the same parish, according to the true intent and meaning of this Act."

It is now our painful duty to report, that in the greater part of the districts which we have been able to examine, the fund, which the 43d of Elizabeth directed to be employed in setting to work children and persons capable of labour, but using no daily trade, and in the necessary relief of the impotent, is applied to purposes opposed to the letter, and still more to the spirit of that Law, and destructive to the morals of the most numerous class, and to the welfare of all.

The subject may be divided, with respect to the mode of relief, into In-door Relief, or that which is given in the workhouse, and Out-door Relief, or that which is not given in the workhouse; and, with respect to the Objects of Relief, into those who are, and those who are not Able-bodied.

I.

RELIEF OF THE ABLE-BODIED.

THE great source of abuse is the Out-door Relief afforded to the Able-bodied on their own account, or on that of their families. This is given either in kind or in money.

I.

OUT-DOOR RELIEF OF THE ABLE-BODIED IN KIND.

The Out-door Relief of the Able-bodied, when given in kind, consists rarely of food, rather less unfrequently of fuel, and still less unfrequently of clothes, particularly shoes; but its most usual form is that of relieving the applicants, either wholly or partially, from the expense of obtaining house-room. As this last mode of relief is extensively prevalent, and productive of important consequences, both direct and indirect, we shall dwell on it at some length.

Partial relief from the expense of obtaining house-room is given, or professed to be given, whenever the occupant of a cottage or an apartment is exempted on the ground of poverty from the payment of rates. In a few places, among which are Cookham (Berks), and Southwell and Bingham (Notts), every tenement is rated, and the whole rate is collected: but, as a general statement, it may be said that the habitations of the labourers are almost always exempted from rates when the occupant is a parishioner, and are frequently exempted when he is not a parishioner. The distinction thus made between parishioners and non-parishioners is one among the many modes in which the Law of Settlement and the practice of relief narrow the market, and interfere with the proper distribution of labour. It perhaps is better that all the labourers should be exempted than that those who have sought work at some distance from their homes should be thus punished for their enterprise and diligence. But the evil effects of a general exemption of all who plead poverty are shown by Mr. Bishop, in his Report from St. Clement's, Oxford.*

"The only peculiarity (in that parish, as distinguished from the neighbouring parishes) is to be found in the extent of the speculation for building small tenements, and in some of the circumstances which have attended that speculation.

* App. (A.) Part I. p. 902.

"It is impossible to estimate, with anything like accuracy, the number of new houses, but there are whole streets and rows built in the cheapest manner.

"The rents are, in fact, levied to a considerable degree upon those who pay rates. In the first place, by the abstraction of so much property from rateable wealth, the remainder has to bear a heavier burden; secondly, the rents are carried to as great a height as possible, upon the supposition that tenements so circumstanced will not be rated; the owner, therefore, is pocketing both rate and rent; and thirdly, the value of his property is increased precisely in the proportion that his neighbour's is deteriorated, by the weight of rates from which his own is discharged. Neither is this all; as it is always regarded by the tenant as a desirable thing to escape the payment of rates, the field for competition is narrowed, and a very inferior description of house is built for the poor man. In order to make out a case for the non-payment of rates, it is necessary to have inconveniences and defects; and thus it happens that a building speculation, depending upon freedom from rates for its recommendation, always produces a description of houses of the worst and most unhealthy kind. Those who would build for the poor with more liberal views, and greater attention to their health and their comfort, are discouraged, and a monopoly is given to those whose sole end is gain by whatever means it may be compassed."

In a great number of cases, the labourer, if a parishioner, is not only exempted from rates, but his rent is paid out of the parish fund. North Wales is a district of comparatively good administration; but the following extracts from Mr. Walcott's Report* show both the extent of these practices in that country, and some of their effects:—

"The payment of rent out of the rates is nearly universal; in many parishes it is extended to nearly all the married labourers. In Llanidloes out of 2000*l.* spent on the poor, nearly 800*l.*, and in Bodedern out of 360*l.* 113*l.* are thus exhausted. In Anglesea and part of Carnarvonshire, overseers frequently give written guarantees, making the parish responsible for the rent of cottages let to the Poor. I annex a copy of one from a parish officer, on behalf of the parish, from himself as overseer, to himself as landlord:—

"*Copy of Guarantee for Rent of Pauper's Apartment.*

"We, the Overseers of the Poor of the parish of Llanfachraeth, will pay the rent of A. Jones, pauper of our parish, to W. Hughes, of Bodedern, the sum of 1*l.* 5*s.* yearly, commencing to-morrow the 13th November, 1827, for an apartment of a house in Bodedern.

(Signed) 'WILLIAM HUGHES.'

"I examined William Hughes, who stated that he signed the above on behalf of the parish, and was the person mentioned in the body of it.

* App. (A.) Part II,

"Paupers have thus become a very desirable class of tenants, much preferable, as was admitted by several cottage proprietors, to the independent labourers, whose rent, at the same time, this mode of relief enhances. Of this I received much testimony; amongst others, an overseer of Dolgelly stated that there were many apartments and small houses in the town not worth to let 1*l.* a year, for which, in consequence of parochial interference with rents, from 1*l.* 14*s.* to 2*l.*, was paid; and the clerk to the Directors of Montgomery House of Industry mentioned an instance of a person in his neighbourhood who obtained ten cottages from the landowner at a yearly rent of 18*l.*, and re-let them separately for 50*l.*; eight of his tenants were parish paupers.

"This species of property being thus a source of profitable investment, speculation, to a considerable extent, has taken that direction; and it is further encouraged by exempting pauper cottages from rates, or paying them out of the parochial funds; a mode of relief as universal as the last.

"In general, all the tenements in a parish are rated, but the rates are very rarely collected from the smaller class, except in the case of non-parishioners. One or two instances will suffice to show the extent to which the exemption is carried.

"The middle division of Welch Pool contains 535 tenements, which are all rated; but of this number 207 are at a rent not exceeding 6*l.* a year, from which no rate is obtained; and the Rev. Mr. Trevor states, as to the town of Carnarvon, that whole streets have been built on speculation by three or four persons, the houses in which are let under 4*l.* a year, and pay no rates. Except the landlords, few doubted but that the rent in these cases is augmented by the amount of rate remitted; and there was much complaint that this class of proprietors not only escaped contributing to the burdens of a parish, but actually increased them, by creating a cottier pauper population. In and near towns the proprietors are of all classes, chiefly however builders and tradesmen. The following is the evidence on these points of the vicar of Bangor in Carnarvonshire: he states, that the proprietors of cottages are persons who, having saved small sums, build cottages as a means of procuring the highest interest for their money; that at least the half of the town of Bangor consists of cottages, many of which are exempted from rates on account of the poverty of the occupier, there being no law to compel the owner to pay the rates; that a law to that effect seems very much wanted, and that the poor tenant is given to understand by his landlord that his cottage will be free from rates, and thus is induced to give a higher rent for it.

"The proposition of rating the owner of small tenements is one of great popularity, and was received with delight by parish officers. I met with only one dissentient, an assistant overseer, who on further examination proved to be a proprietor of several exempted cottages. On the other hand, the assistant overseer of the township of Bangor, in Flintshire, also a proprietor, said that he was so convinced of the expediency and advantage of rating the landlord, that he would cheer-

fully assent to an enactment for the purpose, although it would lessen the value of his property."

The practice in Suffolk is thus stated by Mr. Stuart:

"The payment of rent is a mode of furnishing relief which few parishes recognize, yet it is unquestionably a very frequent way of giving relief, not always to the extent of paying the whole rent, but of giving some assistance towards it. It is in general difficult to ascertain the length to which this practice is carried, as in the entry of the charge in the parish books it is usually described as relief 'in distress,' without specifying the purpose for which it is granted. It is most prevalent in towns and large villages, in which tradesmen, who are commonly the owners of cottages, have a greater influence in the distribution of the poor fund. There is no kind of property which yields a higher rent, or of which the rent is better paid, than that of houses occupied by the lower orders. When the landlord once adopts rigorous measures to enforce his demands, the parish takes good care that the payment shall afterwards be regularly made, under the plea of avoiding the expense which would be incurred if a whole family were thrown on it for support, by being deprived of their goods. An overseer mentioned the following case, for the purpose of convincing me of the policy and necessity of paying rent:—A baker, with a family of eight children, had his rent of 13*l.* a year, paid for him by the parish, besides an allowance of 2*s.* 6*d.* a week for his children. It was determined to discontinue the payment of rent; his goods were immediately distrained, he lost his business, and he and his family were obliged to be taken into the workhouse. It was soon found that it cost the parish about 5*s.* per head per week, or about 130*l.* a year, to maintain them in this way, and it was judged most prudent to hire a house for him, and buy furniture, for the purpose of setting him up in his trade again. The parish, after having incurred all this expense and outlay, have again been obliged to return to the payment of his rent, which is now 12*l.* 4*s.* a year, and to his former out-allowance. It is evident that when the landlord has such an easy remedy for securing his claims, he can command any rent he chooses to ask, which the poor man does not scruple to agree to pay, provided the outward appearance of the house is suitable to a person in his condition, for the parish is particular in this point."*

The following is an extract from Mr. Maclean's Report from Surrey and Sussex:—

"The practice of paying rent is, I may say, universal: for although in but few parishes it is acknowledged, and in many the parish officers seemed surprised at my question, and referred to the books, where nothing is entered as rent, still I found that it is frequently paid indirectly; (*i. e.*) though the pauper does not feel that he can ask the vestry or the parish officer to pay his rent, yet he knows that an application for a pound or two, to enable him to pay it, or to stay a threatening execution, will not be made in vain. The other indirect

* App. (A.) Part I. p. 337.

modes in which rent is paid, are either by an allowance of 1s. a week for the third child, which is retained by the parish officer for that purpose, by an exemption from the rate, or by an application to the vestry from time to time, which is so invariably successful, that those with families do not think it necessary, by foresight or industry, to lay by any thing to meet the demand. To enumerate all the parishes in which one or other of these practices exists, would be to name nearly every parish which I have visited.

"In Pulborough parish 1s. a week is allowed for the third child, but this is retained by the parish officer to pay rent.

"In the purely agricultural parish of West Grinstead, containing a population of 1292, the amount of rent entered in the parish books last year amounted to 267*l.* 11*s.* 6*d.*

"In the similar parish of Shipley, with a population of 1180, the amount entered last year was 254*l.* 14*s.* 2*d.*

"At Horsham the same custom prevailed, and has done so for years. I attended the select vestry there, and found Mr. Simpson, the clergyman (who always attends), in the chair. The applications were numerous, and were, with few exceptions, for the payment of a half or a whole year's rent, and were in every case granted without apparently any regard to the size of the applicant's family or his earnings; indeed, relief is given in addition for the third child. No entry is made in the parish books as 'rent;' but it is charged under the head of 'weekly relief,' and amounted to upwards of 200*l.* last year.

"In the parish of Steyning, with a population of 1436, near 120*l.* was paid last year for rent. If a man has two children, it has been the custom for the last twenty years and upwards to pay his rent, to the amount of 1*s.* a week; and this is not considered to furnish a sufficient ground upon which to discontinue his allowance of 1*s.* 6*d.* a week for the third child.

"The parish of Epsom pays rent to the amount of 50*l.* a year, the rule being to pay none. The chief applicants are those who have large families, or persons of idle and dissolute character."*

Mr. Tweedy states, that,

"The practice of giving relief by payment of rent is found to prevail in a greater or less degree throughout the West Riding, though the opinion is gaining ground that it is a mode of relief mischievous in its effects, and liable to great abuse.

"There can be no question that the renting of cottage property by overseers, and the consequent exemption of it from the poor-rate, has more or less, according to the circumstances of each case, a tendency to increase the rate at which other cottage property is let. And when one pauper has been accustomed to receive it, another thinks himself ill used if it be not allowed to him also. The example becomes contagious, insomuch that I find in some places, where the greatest abuse has existed, young people destitute of all means of livelihood have married, and come immediately to the overseers to demand work, and

* Mr. Maclean, App. (A.) Part I. p. 537.

1. Relief without labour.

with it, what in their slang language is called "harbour;" that is a house."*

"In Millbrook, Southampton," says Colonel Hewitt, "it was imagined that houses letting under 10*l.* a year are not rateable, which was found to act as an encouragement to the building of small tenements, and introduced into the parish a very objectionable description of residents."†

2.

OUT-DOOR RELIEF OF THE ABLE-BODIED IN MONEY.

THE out-door Relief afforded in money to the Able-bodied on their own account, or on that of their families, is still more prevalent. This is generally effected by one of the five following expedients, which may be concisely designated as:—I. Relief without Labour,—II. The Allowance System,—III. The Roundsmen System,—IV. Parish Employment,—V. The Labour-Rate System.

I.

RELIEF WITHOUT LABOUR.

By the Parish giving to those who are or profess to be without employment a daily or a weekly sum, without requiring from the applicant any labour. Sometimes relief (to an amount insufficient for a complete subsistence) is afforded, without imposing any further condition than that the applicant shall shift, as it is called, for himself, and give the parish no further trouble. In many districts the plan has become so common as to have acquired the technical name of "Relief in lieu of Labour."‡

Mr. Villiers, in his Report from the counties of Warwick, Worcester, Gloucester, and the north part of Devon, states, that,—

"The practice of granting small sums of money to able-bodied men without requiring labour in return, is adopted in some parishes in each county,—in the Atherstone and Stratford division in Warwickshire, in the Halfshire hundred in Worcestershire, and in the Slaughter hundred of Gloucestershire; and is known to be in use in other parts of these counties. This practice is favoured by parish officers, from a notion that the parish must gain the difference between the cost of the pauper's maintenance, or the minimum allowed by the scale, and what the

* Mr. Tweedy, App. (A.) Part I. p. 728. † App. (B.) Question 21, p. 424 b.

‡ Mr. Majendie, App. (A.) Part I. p. 166.

pauper consents to take; it is also supposed that it may give the pauper an opportunity to seek work for himself, which he could not if he was employed by the parish.

"In the Stratford division, the overseer of Alverston stated that there were young men receiving 2s. 6d. and 3s. a week, and that though it was barely sufficient for their support, and that they lived in lodgings at 6d. a week, yet they greatly preferred it to more pay with labour, as it afforded them time for depredations of various sorts, from which the farmers each year became great sufferers. At Kidderminster, in Worcestershire, young able men were observed to receive small sums of money, such as 1s. 6d. and 2s., and it was said that the convenient form in which relief was thus afforded them, was their chief inducement in seeking it, and that they would not accept it in any other shape. At Stow-on-the-Wold, in Gloucestershire, the overseer and churchwarden stated that this practice had been adopted after the failure of many others, and with great expectation of its advantage, since by it relief was granted without the trouble of finding employment for the pauper, and upon the condition that the application would not be immediately repeated. They stated, however, that it had completely failed, as the same men soon returned, and they were again compelled to relieve them. The object in view is to save trouble and present expense; the result proves a bounty upon idleness and crime, and is, in the end, not less expensive." *

But it is more usual to give a rather larger weekly sum, and to force the applicants to give up a certain portion of their time by confining them in a gravel-pit or in some other inclosure, or directing them to sit at a certain spot and do nothing,† or obliging them to attend a roll-call several times in the day, or by any contrivance which shall prevent their leisure from becoming a means either of profit or of amusement. ‡

In a still greater number of instances the relief is given on the plea that the applicant has not been able to obtain work; that he has lost a day or a longer period, and is entitled, therefore, to receive from the unlimited resources of the parish, what he has not been able to obtain from a private employer.

* App. (A.) Part II. p. 10.

† App. (B.) Question 39. Chadlington, Oxford, p. 369 d.

‡ See App. (A.) Part I. p. 345.

II. ALLOWANCE.

By the parish allowing to labourers, who are employed by individuals, relief in aid of their wages.

The word *allowance* is sometimes used as comprehending all parochial relief afforded to those who are employed by individuals at the average wages of the district. But sometimes this term is confined to the relief which a person so employed obtains on account of his children, any relief which he may obtain on his own account being termed "Payment of Wages out of Rates." In the following Report we shall use the word "allowance" in its former or more comprehensive sense.

In some places allowance is given only occasionally, or to meet occasional wants; to buy, for instance, a coat or a pair of shoes, or to pay the rent of a cottage or an apartment. In others it is considered that a certain weekly sum, or more frequently the value of a certain quantity of flour or bread, is to be received by each member of a family.

The latter practice has sometimes been matured into a system, forming the law of a whole district, sanctioned and enforced by the magistrates, and promulgated in the form of local statutes, under the name of *Scales*.

The following are copies of some of the scales:—

"COUNTY OF CAMBRIDGE.*

"The Churchwardens and Overseers of the Poor are requested to regulate the incomes of such persons as may apply to them for relief or employment, according to the price of bread; namely,

"A single woman, the price of . . .	3	quartern loaves per week.
"A single man	4	ditto.
"A man and his wife	7	ditto.
"Ditto . ditto and one child . . .	8	ditto.
"Ditto . ditto and two children . .	9	ditto.
"Ditto . ditto and three ditto . . .	11	ditto.
"Man, wife, four children and upwards, at the price of two quartern loaves per head per week.		

"It will be necessary to add to the above income in all cases of sickness or other kind of distress, and particularly of such persons or families who deserve encouragement by their good behaviour, whom parish officers should mark both by commendation and reward.

"By order of the Magistrates assembled at the Shire Hall,
Cambridge, December 15th, 1821,

"Robert Gee,

"Clerk to the Magistrates."

* Mr. Cowell, Extracts, p. 374.

2. Allowance.

"TOWN OF CAMBRIDGE. *

"The Churchwardens and Overseers of the Poor are requested to regulate the incomes of such persons as may apply to them for relief or employment, according to the price of fine bread; namely,

"A single woman, the price of	3½	quartern loaves per week.
"A single man	4½	ditto.
"A man and his wife	8	ditto.
"Ditto ditto, and one child	9½	ditto.
"Ditto ditto, and two children	11	ditto.
"Ditto ditto, and three ditto	13	ditto.

"Man, wife, four children and upwards, at the price of 2½ quartern loaves per head per week.

"It will be necessary to add to the above income in all cases of sickness or other kind of distress; and particularly of such persons or families who deserve encouragement by their good behaviour, whom parish officers should mark both by commendation and reward.

"By order of the Magistrates assembled at the Town Hall, Cambridge,

A. Chevell,

"November 27, 1829.

"Clerk to the Magistrates."

"ESSEX.—DIVISION OF CHELMSFORD, 1821.†

"At a special meeting of the Magistrates acting in and for the said Division, held at the Justice Room, in the Shire Hall, on Friday, the 15th day of June, 1821.

"It was resolved,

"That the under-mentioned scale of relief, for the assistance of the overseers of the poor within the said division in relieving the necessitous poor, be recommended: That they do provide each person in every family with the means of procuring half a peck of bread flour per week, together with 10d. per head for other necessaries, if the family consist of two only; 8d. per head, if three; 6d. per head, if four; and 5d. per head, if more than four.

"N. B. The above-mentioned sums are exclusive of fuel.

"By order of the Magistrates,

"T. Archer, Clerk."

* Mr. Power, App. (A.) Part I. p. 241.

† Mr. Majendie, App. (A.) Part I. p. 223.

Price of Flour per Peck.	NUMBER IN FAMILY.									
	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.	10.	
s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	
1 6 3	2 4 3	5 0	5 10	7 0	8 2	9 4	10 6	11 8		
1 9 3	5 4 7½	5 6	6 5½	7 9	9 0½	10 4	11 7½	12 11		
2 0 3	8 5 0	6 0	7 1	8 6	9 11	11 4	12 9	14 2		
2 3 3	11 5 4½	6 6	7 8½	9 3	10 9½	12 4	13 10½	15 5		
2 6 4	2 5 9	7 0	8 4	10 0	11 8	13 4	15 0	16 8		
2 9 4	5 6 1½	7 6	8 11½	10 9	12 6½	14 4	16 1½	17 11		
3 0 4	8 6 6	8 0	9 7	11 6	13 5	15 4	17 3	19 2		
3 3 4	11 6 10½	8 6	10 2½	12 3	14 3½	16 4	18 4½	20 5		
3 6 5	2 7 3	9 0	10 10	13 0	15 2	17 4	19 6	21 8		
3 9 5	5 7 7½	9 6	11 5½	13 9	16 0½	18 4	20 7½	22 11		
4 0 5	8 8 0	10 0	12 1	14 6	16 11	19 4	21 9	24 2		
4 3 5	11 8 4½	10 6	12 8½	15 3	17 9½	20 4	22 10½	25 5		
4 6 6	2 8 9	11 0	3 4	16 0	18 8	21 4	24 0	26 8		
4 9 6	5 9 1½	11 6	13 1½	16 9	19 6½	22 4	25 1½	27 11		
5 0 6	8 9 6	12 0	14 7	17 6	20 5	23 4	26 3	29 2		
5 3 6	11 9 10½	12 6	15 2½	18 3	21 3½	24 4	27 4½	30 5		
5 6 7	2 10 3	13 0	15 10	19 0	22 2	25 4	28 6	31 8		
5 9 7	5 10 7½	13 6	16 5½	19 9	23 0½	26 4	29 7½	32 11		
6 0 7	8 11 0	14 0	17 1	20 6	24 11	27 4	30 10	33 4		
6 3 7	11 11 4½	14 6	17 8½	21 3	25 9½	28 4	31 10½	34 5		
6 6 8	2 11 9	15 0	18 4	22 0	26 8	29 4	32 13	35 8		
6 9 8	5 12 1½	15 6	18 11½	22 9	27 6½	30 4	33 14	36 11		
7 0 8	8 12 6	16 0	19 7	23 6	28 5	31 4	34 15	37 2		

"HUNDREDS of UTTLESFORD, CLAVERING, and FRESHWELL, in the County of ESSEX. *

"Parish officers are desired to regulate allowances according to the price of fine bread; viz.

Quartern Loaves .	9d.	9½d.	9¾d.	9¾d.	10d.	10½d.
	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.
Single Woman . . . 3	2 3	2 3¾	2 4½	2 5¼	2 6	2 6¾
Ditto Man . . . 4	3 0	3 1	3 2	3 3	3 4	3 5
Man and Wife . . . 7	5 3	5 4¾	5 6½	5 8¼	5 10	5 11¾
Ditto and 1 Child . . 8	6 0	6 2	6 4	6 6	6 8	6 10
Ditto and 2 Children . 9	6 9	6 11½	7 1½	7 3¾	7 6	7 8½
Ditto and 3 ditto . . 11	8 3	8 5¾	8 8½	8 11¼	9 2	9 4¾
Ditto and 4½ ditto . 12	9 0	9 3	9 6	9 9	10 0	10 3
Ditto and 5 ditto . . 14	10 6	10 9½	11 1	11 4½	11 8	11 11½
Ditto and 6 ditto . . 16	12 0	12 4	12 8	13 0	13 4	13 8

* App. (A.) Part I. p. 227.

† A man and his wife, with four children and upwards, to be allowed the price of two quartern loaves each, weekly.

"It will be necessary to increase the above allowances in some cases, and the deserving should be particularly encouraged.

"By order of the Magistrates of the Walden Division, 1826,
"Thos. Hall, Clerk."

"ARUNDEL BOROUGH, Nov. 19, 1830.*

"At a meeting of the inhabitants, held this day, the masters agreed to give able-bodied men 2s. per day, wet and dry, and an allowance of 1s. 6d. per week for every child (above two) under 14 years of age.

"Lads from 14 to 16, 8d. per day; lads from 16 to 18, 1s. per day; young men from 18 to 21, 1s. 6d. per day, from this time to Lady-day.

"It was also agreed that from Lady-day to Michaelmas the able-bodied men should have 14s. per week, wet and dry, with a like allowance of 1s. 6d. per week for every child (above two) under 14 years of age; the boys, from 14 to 16, 9d. per day; from 16 to 18, 1s. 2d. per day; and young men from 18 to 21, 1s. 8d. per day.

"Agreed to by the Magistrates assembled at their meeting this day."

In perhaps a majority of the parishes in which the allowance system prevails, the earnings of the applicant, and, in a few, the earnings of his wife and children, are ascertained, or at least professed or attempted to be ascertained, and only the difference between them and the sum allotted to him by the scale is paid to him by the parish. The following extracts from Mr. Tweedy's Report from Yorkshire; and Mr. Wilson's from Durham, show the mode in which this branch of the allowance system is extending itself over the North of England:—

"In Gisburn, the rule and practice of the town is to inquire into the circumstances of each case, and to make up the wages of a man and his family to 1s. 6d. per head. This rule is adopted, because it is the rule by which the magistrates govern themselves on application to them. The course of the magistrates is to inquire of a weaver (for instance) how many pieces he can weave per week, and how much he gets for it. A man will say, perhaps, he can weave three pieces in a week, and would get 1s. 3d. a piece for weaving them; then if he had a family of a wife and four children, they would allow him 5s. 3d. a week."—"A man had a sickly wife, and was allowed 5s. a week for her and for a woman to attend her. She died, and in about a year he married again; and on the very day of his marriage, said, 'Now I have married again, I'll work Gisburn another round;' and he has been as good as his word, having had three children by the second wife, on account of which he received 2l. 11s. from January to September in last year.

"At Dent, in the same neighbourhood, 'relief to the able-bodied is afforded by payments of a weekly or monthly sum in the name of a pension, the amount of which is regulated according to the number of a man's family, after the rate of two shillings a head per week: poor

* Mr. Maclean, App. (A.) Part I. p. 547.

people, especially those who have become pensioners, marry early, more frequently under twenty years of age than above; they are induced to this, no doubt, from a reliance upon relief from the poor-rate. Instances have been numerous in which this has been known to be the case, and in a majority of cases relief is applied for on the birth of the *first* child: the most profligate and dissolute are amongst this class, and if they get a little extra pay at any time, they spend it in drinking, leaving their families to be maintained by the township.

"At Kettlewell (in Craven) and the neighbourhood, the same system prevails. 'The rule of the magistrates is to allow so much as will yield one shilling and sixpence a head per week, and the overseers take this rule therefore as their guide. The overseer has sometimes called upon little farmers for their rates, and found that they had no provisions of any kind in the house, *nor* money to buy any; while on the other hand, he has not unfrequently been obliged to give relief to men who, there is no doubt, could have procured work if they had exerted themselves: they speak of it as a matter of right; and, if what they ask be not granted, they threaten to appeal to the magistrate; and, as he lives *fifteen* miles off, the overseers are often induced to yield to their demands, on account of the *expense* of meeting the claim before him.'

"The places above-named are within the jurisdiction of one bench of magistrates.

"At Pateley Bridge many are relieved in degree when the wages they earn are not sufficient. It is reckoned that 1s. 9d. per head for each member of the family is necessary, except for infants, and that rule the overseers act upon. One magistrate, however, allows 2s. 6d. each for husband and wife, and 1s. 6d. for each child. Relief is demanded as a matter of right, and sometimes with insolence. An instance is mentioned as occurring some years ago, in which a man came and said, 'We have been getting married; can you find us a house?' and another instance occurred two years ago, in which a man came out of Craven, and claimed relief a few weeks after marriage, and was insolent in his demand.

"At Knaresborough the paupers are chiefly weavers of linen and flax dressers; if they are wholly out of work, the rule is to allow a man and his wife 6s. a week, and 9d. for each child: a single man 3s. a week. This rate is allowed, because the magistrates allow it; but in fact, in many cases, it amounts to *more* than a man, when trade is flourishing, could earn. If a man has partial work, they give him 1s. 6d. or 2s. a week, or as little as they can satisfy him with, knowing that, if he goes before the magistrate, he will allow him such a sum as, with his earnings, will make up the rate above mentioned. Immediately that a man is out of work *now*, he comes for relief; and, if he be not relieved at once, he goes to a magistrate, who grants a summons, and makes a memorandum upon it, directing the overseer to relieve him in the mean time*."

"In Darlington, in the county of Durham," says Mr. Wilson, "allowances to able-bodied labourers are graduated according to the

* Mr. Tweedy, App. (A.) Part I. p. 732.

2. Allowance.

numbers in their families; and whenever the wages of any class of labourers (for example, of the linen weavers, who have latterly been the most distressed) fall below the amount appointed by the scale, the difference is made up as a matter of course by the parish. The scale awards 2s. a head a-week to heads of families, and 1s. 6d. for each of the children under 12 years of age. This is the minimum of allowance paid by the parish in all cases. Suppose a single man to earn 2s. a week, he could put forward no claim to relief.* Suppose another, earning the same wages, but possessing besides a wife and six children, then 2s. a head for himself and his wife, and 1s. 6d. a head for each of his children, give a total amount of 13s. weekly. In this second case the *family man* has a recognized claim on the parish for an allowance of 11s. weekly, making up his earnings of 2s. by the above-mentioned graduated scale.

"Some remarkable instances of this occurred on Wednesday, January 9th, at the meeting of the parish committee. One applicant owned he had earned 21s. during the last fortnight; but because he had not applied within the last month to the parish, and his average during that period had not been made up (he had four children), he now applied to have the deficit made up, which was done accordingly.

"Another man was earning 9s. a week; he had six children; 4s. were handed over the table to him immediately.

"A third had seven children, with himself and his wife, making nine in family. He stated that his average earnings were 9s. a week. Last week he had been out of work for a day or two, and consequently had earned only 5s. The parish had found two days' work for him, which made up his earnings to 7s. 17s. 6d. additional were handed to him over the table.

"I need not report a dozen similar cases, which were dispatched like the foregoing, in my presence. Yet do people in this district talk as glibly as any of the abuses of the Poor Laws in the South †."

The abuses of the South are, however, still more striking.

"I was able," says Mr. Villiers, "to examine some parishes in nearly every magisterial division in the county of Warwick, in the three principal hundreds of the county of Worcester, and in the adjoining parts of Gloucestershire; and I communicated personally with the overseers and other officers from the hundreds and principal towns in North Devon.

"In each of these counties the relief is regulated upon the same general principle, namely, to relieve all claimants according to their alleged actual necessities; and in each a separate table of relief, varying with the condition of the pauper and the price of bread, has been drawn up and published by the magistrates for the guidance of overseers.

* "I merely mean to state that 2s. is the utmost weekly pension or allowance *gratuitously* given to a single able-bodied labourer. An applicant of this description, if he said that he could not live on his wages, would probably be taken into the poor-house, or set to work by the parish at perhaps 5s. a-week; but he would not receive for doing nothing more than 2s. a-week, while the sums which a married labourer receives for doing nothing increase with the birth of every additional child."

† Mr. Wilson, App. (A.) Part I. p. 140.

2. Allowance.

"Allowance of money to men, regulated by the number of their families, was seldom, if ever, denied. The exceptions are in some few parishes, where, by a better system of management, the labourers have been encouraged to maintain their own children. The system is defended by some persons, and by others it is not considered as a mode of supplying the deficiency in wages from the rates. A magistrate lamented to me that a practice of paying the wages out of the rates did exist in the southern and eastern counties, and was happy to think that it had never been adopted in his division; but he admitted and defended the custom of allowing a sum for the third or fourth child of every labourer. In one parish I asked the overseer if it would be possible for a man and his family to be earning a guinea a week, and receiving allowance for his children; he said, 'Certainly, as we never suppose that a man earns more than the farmers usually give.' Upon asking several other overseers why such inquiry was not made, the reply generally was, that they either had not time, or that it was not usual, and that, should they refuse the allowance applied for, they would be summoned before a magistrate, who would order it.*"

"The statement of the vestry clerk of Old Swinford was, that men with families were in the habit of being relieved who were known to earn 16s. or 18s. a week, and that unless it were shown that the earnings of the family amounted to 25s. a week, allowance was not refused. This I was hardly able to credit at first, but he stated that, when the trade was good, people were able to earn these wages, and that it had been considered since that time as a standard for allowance. The character of a large portion of these people was described as being reckless and dissolute beyond any others. They were said to be living almost promiscuously, and that large families, legitimate or not, were considered by them as an advantage. Nails are manufactured in their houses, and children, who can be employed early in this trade, become a source of profit to the parents, if the trade is good, and, if it should fail, they are maintained by the parish.

"In these districts the truck system has been practised, and doubtless continues to be so; and consequently the owners of the Tommy shops, being the manufacturers, are frequently the persons who are expected to regulate the distribution of relief to their own men." †

The following are extracts from the valuable Answers of Mr. Russell, a magistrate residing in Swallowfield, in the counties of Berks and Wilts, to our printed Queries:—

"The parish gives the labourers, out of the poor-rates, what they call sometimes their '*make up*,' and sometimes their '*bread money*.' The *bread money* is calculated weekly, at the price of two gallon loaves for the husband, one for the wife, and one for each of the children, be the number what it may; and to whatever extent the earnings of the family may fall short of that sum, the difference is *made up* in money. This allowance is given in compliance with an order made many years ago by the magistrates of this county (Berks), and, practically, is in

* App. (A.) Part II. p. 1. 13.

† App. (A.) Part II. p. 34.

2. Allowance.

all cases enforced by them. I have known a magistrate on an application made by a pauper for his *bread money* exclaim that no such thing as *bread money* was recognized by the bench, and then make an order, with the mere omission of the term, for the precise amount demanded.

"No attention is paid to either the character of the applicant or the causes of his distress. In fact, he is considered entitled to it without pleading any distress.

"The *bread money* is hardly looked upon by the labourers in the light of parish relief. They consider it as much their right as the wages they receive from their employers, and in their own minds, make a wide distinction between 'taking their *bread money*' and 'going on the parish.'"^{*}

In other parishes the labourer is not supposed to earn more than a given sum. If that sum be less than the sum to which the size of his family entitles him, he receives the difference from the parish.

At Thaxted, Essex, the overseer states:—

"That allowance is regulated by the price of flour; that the magistrates direct half a peck of flour for each individual of the family, besides 6d. each for the father and mother, and 4d. for each child. If wages do not amount to this, they are to be made up out of the poor-rate. A man's weekly earnings are reckoned at 8s. If he makes more, still he receives his allowance, in order that industry may not be discouraged."[†]

In the Answers to which we have referred, Mr. Russell states that,

"In the Berks portion of Swallowfield, the invariable usage, both in winter and in summer, was to make up the bread money from the actual earnings of the whole family. In the Wiltshire portion they take the man's earnings, let them have been as high as they may, at the fixed rate of day work only, allowing him the benefit of the difference; and under the influence of the panic struck by the fires, our portion has so far yielded to the importunity of the farmers as to adopt this practice during the winter months. For instance, if a family consist of a man, his wife and six children, their bread-money for nine loaves at 1s. 6d. a loaf is 13s. 6d. a week. Suppose, as often happens in the winter, that the man has earned 12s. in the week, and the wife and children nothing, then, according to the rate which used to prevail with us all the year round, and which still prevails in summer, the family will receive a *make up* of 1s. 6d.; but according to the practice which we now follow in the winter, the man's earnings, though really 12s., will be taken at the ordinary rate of only 9s., and he will receive 4s. 6d. in money. Whatever the wife and any of the children may earn, whether in summer or in winter, their real earnings are taken as a set-off against their loaf."[‡]

^{*} Mr. Chadwick, App. (A.) Part II. [†] Mr. Majendie, App. (A.) Part I. p. 228.
[‡] Mr. Chadwick, App. (A.) Part II.

2. Allowance.

It is to be observed, that even in those parishes in which the amount of allowance is supposed to depend on that of the applicant's earnings, the inquiry as to the amount of those earnings is never carried back further than the current or the previous week or fortnight. The consequence is, that many of those who at particular periods of the year receive wages far exceeding the average amount of the earnings of the most industrious labourer, receive also large allowances from the parish. Mr. Cowell and Mr. Bishop found a parish in the Bedford Level, in which a recently drained tract of fertile land requires more labour than the settled inhabitants can provide; and the average yearly earnings of a labourer's family are from 60l. to 70l.; but during a frost, and generally from November to March, almost every labourer comes on the parish. When they commented on these facts in their conversation with a resident magistrate, his answer was, "Why, what are we to do? they spend it all, and then come and say they are starving; and you must relieve them."^{*} "In our vestry," says Mr. Russell, "which meets every Monday, the calculation is confined to the earnings of the past fortnight. No further retrospect is ever taken either for or against the claimant. In some parishes I believe the account is settled once a week instead of once a fortnight."

Sometimes the inquiry does not go back even to the beginning of the week at the end of which the claim is made.

"A case was mentioned to me," says Mr. Stuart, "of nine men who had been able to earn 15s. each by taskwork, in three days, and who came to the parish for the other three days of the week, during which they had no employment. The overseer, aware of the profitable work in which they had been engaged, offered 1s. a day for the lost days, instead of 1s. 6d. a day, which would have been their allowance according to the scale. This the men rejected; left the work which they then had, and went to a magistrate to complain. The magistrate sent an open note by the complainants, appealing to the humanity of the overseer. The men, aware of the contents of the note, backed the recommendation of the magistrate by threats, which induced the overseer to comply."[†]

Again, there are other parishes in which no inquiry whatever is made respecting earnings, but the birth of a child endows the parent with an allowance, whatever be his income.

At Laughton, Sussex, says Mr. Majendie,—

"I attended the vestry with one of the principal farmers. One of his labourers, who was in constant employ at 17s. per week, came for his 'pay,' for a third child just born, at 1s. a week for six months; it will then be raised to 1s. 6d. a week. The plan of allowance, without

^{*} Mr. Cowell, App. (A.) Part I. p. 598.

[†] Extracts, p. 144.

2. Allowance.

inquiry into earnings, is justified on the ground that if the same allowance were not made to all, it would cramp industry."*

In Westoning, Bedfordshire,—

"There is scarcely one able-bodied labourer in the employment of individuals but what receives regular relief on account of his family. A married man and his wife, without any child, receive 5s. per week if he be out of employment; for one child, he is allowed 1s. whether in or out of employment; for two children, 2s. and so on in proportion to the number of children under 10 years; above 10 years, each boy out of employment is allowed from 1s. 6d. to 3s. 6d."†

Mr. Walcott states, that in North Wales,—

"No single able-bodied man in the employment of individuals ever obtains parochial relief.

"Married agricultural labourers in work, and with only three children, although in many cases their rents are paid, and the rates remitted, yet are very rarely considered entitled to regular weekly relief; but if out of work, or with more than three children, in nearly every parish they obtain it on those grounds.

"The allowance is usually 1s. a week for each child above the third. Overton is the only parish I heard of entirely free from the abuse of relieving the able-bodied in the employ of individuals. It is there considered, he states, contrary to law, justice, and humanity.

"The rule of commencing relief with the fourth child, is, however, by no means inflexible; for example, in Kerry, a very well-managed parish, a great portion of the labourers support four, five, and six children, without any parochial assistance, and wages are not higher there than in many other places where it is given.

"The effect of thus placing the married and unmarried man on a different footing as to relief, is clearly to encourage early and improvident marriages, with their consequent evils. Of this there was no lack of evidence; the answers to inquiries on this subject being, that such marriages are now much more common amongst the labouring and lower classes than formerly; that the great majority of young men marry under twenty-four years of age, and frequently under twenty-one. That such is one of the effects of the practice, is evident from the circumstance, that in the parish of Kerry, where a married man is not certain of obtaining relief, even with five or six children, the labourers (according to the testimony of a very intelligent and long-resident magistrate, Mr. Pugh) do not marry earlier than they did twenty or twenty-five years ago."‡

In the Northern Division of Devonshire, says Mr. Villiers,—

"The practice of granting allowance for children is so general and confirmed, that the pauper is in the habit of giving formal notice to the overseer of the pregnancy of his wife. Should the overseer refuse the application for the fixed sum allowed for the second, third, or fourth child, the magistrates' single inquiry, on his appearance before them

* App. (A.) Part I. p. 184.

† App. (B. 1.) Question 24, p. 9 b.
‡ App. (A.) Part II.

3. The Roundsman System.

under a summons, would be as to the custom of the parish or the hundred: 'At what number does allowance begin with you?' is the common mode of putting the question, as I was repeatedly assured by overseers. The previous or present earnings of the pauper, or of any of his family, are never mentioned."*

It is to be observed, also, that under the scale system a child is very soon considered as an independent claimant for relief, and entitled to it, though residing with his parents, and though they may be in full work at high wages. At Friston, Suffolk, Mr. Stuart states, that "a child is entitled to relief, at the rate of 3s. a week, on his own account, from the age of 14."†

At Bottisham, Cambridge, says Mr. Power,—

"A boy of sixteen receives 2s. 6d. for the week; lives at home with his father; the family consists of his father, mother, brother, and himself. His father and brother are both now doing work at full wages, for Mr. Jenyns the magistrate.—(From the overseer:) Seventeen is the age at which we consider a young man entitled to separate relief, as an unemployed labourer; his pay then is 3s. 6d.; this boy is relieved, not as a labourer out of employ, but at the instance of Mr. Jenyns, who has been for some time past endeavouring to obtain him a service.—(From Mr. King afterwards:) The allowance to our young single men out of employ used to be 2s. 10d., according to scale, four quartern loaves, present price 8½d. Last November they came to the sessions in a body to complain of the insufficiency, and it was then raised to 3s. 6d. This sum they receive when above a certain age, although residing with their families. One family, consisting of man, wife, and seven children, are entitled to, and at this time receiving, 19s. 6d. from the parish, several of the sons being grown up. At Little Shelford a worse case than this was given me by the acting overseer, of one family, a man, wife, and four sons, living together, receiving 24s. weekly from the parish. The woman was receiving 3s. a week at that time in the family of Mr. Finch, the clergyman, as Mrs. Finch informed me."‡

III.

THE ROUNDSMAN SYSTEM.

By the parish paying the occupiers of property to employ the applicants for relief at a rate of wages fixed by the parish, and depending not on the services, but on the wants of the applicants, the employer being repaid out of the poor-rate all that he advances in wages beyond a certain sum. This is the house row, or roundsmen, or billet, or ticket, or stem, system.

According to this plan, the parish in general makes some

* App. (A.) Part II. p. 43.

† Extracts, p. 141.

‡ Mr. Power, App. (A.) Part I. p. 247.

agreement with a farmer to sell to him the labour of one or more paupers at a certain price, and pays to the pauper, out of the parish funds, the difference between that price and the allowance which the scale, according to the price of bread and the number of his family, awards to him. It has received the name of the billet or ticket system, from the ticket signed by the overseer, which the pauper, in general, carries to the farmer as a warrant for his being employed, and takes back to the overseer, signed by the farmer, as a proof that he has fulfilled the conditions of relief. In other cases the parish contracts with some individual to have some work performed for him by the paupers at a given price, the parish paying the paupers. In many places the roundsman system is effected by means of an auction. Mr. Richardson states that, in Sulgrave, Northamptonshire, the old and infirm are sold at the monthly meeting to the best bidder, at prices varying, according to the time of the year, from 1s. 6d. a week to 3s.; that at Yardley, Hastings, all the unemployed men are put up to sale weekly, and that the clergyman of the parish told him that he had seen ten men the last week knocked down to one of the farmers for 5s., and that there were at that time about 70 men let out in this manner out of a body of 170.*

The following extracts, from the Answers to our printed Queries for rural districts, are further examples of all these forms of relief:—

"GREAT HENNY, ESSEX.—*William Newport*, Churchwarden; *Edward Cook*, Overseer.

"Having so many labouring men, the income from the land will not allow us to give more than is sufficient for the best characters to subsist upon, and we are obliged to give the same to the worst. A man of bad character, on account of which he is not employed, having two children or more, applies to the parish at the end of the week for relief, through loss of time, and has the same money given him as the honest labourer receives of his master for his labour for the same week."†

"HARLOW, ESSEX.—*Isaac Rogers*, Overseer.

"We are obliged to maintain the family if the man is idle."‡

"CASTLE HEDINGHAM.—*Ashurst Majendie*, Deputy Lieutenant, Member of Vestry.

"Rent was, at one period, paid by the parish, by which an artificial price was kept up; since the practice has been discontinued, the rent of cottages has fallen.§"

* Mr. Richardson, App. (A.) Part I. p. 401.

† App. (B. 1.) Question 26, p. 177 b.

‡ App. (B. 1.) Question 26, p. 179 b.

§ App. (B. 1.) Question 21, p. 178 b.

"GOUDHURST, KENT.—*Giles Miller*.

"Every man having more than three children upon his hands, comes to the parish for support for all above the third: it is granted as a matter of course."*

"The word 'scale' is unknown, but the thing exists as effectually as if it were published by authority at every petty sessions. Every parish officer and pauper knows that a man with his wife and three children is entitled to have his wages 'made up' (such is the phrase) to 12s. a week; and he is entitled to 1s. 6d. per week for every child beyond three; and without entering into any very rigid account as to the average of his earnings. Extra receipts are supposed to go for clothes and extra payments: in reality, they too often go to the beer shop."†

"NONINGTON, KENT.—*W. O. Hammond*, J. P.

"There are at this time (May) 12 or 15 able men disengaged in this parish. The thrashing is over sooner than usual, owing to a deficient crop. The woods are cleared, and pea-hoeing is also finished. The men out of work are allowed at the rate of 6s. for man and wife, with 1s. a head for children. Under the circumstances, the following plan has been adopted:—A married man, having two children, receives 8s. from the poor-rate. He takes at the vestry a ticket inscribed with the name of an occupier in the parish. For this person he is required to work four days, and the employer is pledged to set him at no necessary or essential occupation. This reservation must be obviously ineffectual. The remaining two days the man is at liberty to earn anything elsewhere if he can. The tickets are allotted by rotation. The system cannot be justified on principle or practice. So long as it lasts, necessary work will wait for the turn of a ticket man. The land will become foul, the labourer half employed and half paid, and the parish imposed upon."‡

"PRESTON, near FAVERSHAM, KENT.—*Giles Hilton*, Preston House.

"No regular system for the attached; when unattached, a man, wife and four children, usually obtain the full weekly wages of the attached; with six children, I have known most undeserving parents get 18s. a week all the winter, and the greater part of the summer. The practice of partly paying for work done for individuals did prevail, but the pauper, learning the practice, could seldom be made to do a fair day's work."§

"STOGUMBER, SOMERSET.—*Charles Rowcliffe*.

"An allowance is made, unhappily; beginning at three children. I consider that nearly all the work is partly paid for by the parish, and that this fact is a crying evil, working great mischief, and distress, and carelessness, and indifference about his family, in the mind of the labourer."||

* App. (B. 1.) Question 24, p. 246 b.

† App. (B. 1.) Question 24, p. 257 b.

‡ App. (B. 1.) Question 25, p. 246 b.

§ App. (B. 1.) Question 24, p. 258 b.

|| App. (B. 1.) Question 24, p. 406 b.

"HOGSTHORPE, LINCOLN.—*John Kirkham*, late Contractor; *Joseph Eldin*, Churchwarden.

"The practice of work being done for individuals and partly paid for by the parish has proved more injurious than any measure ever adopted, having brought numbers of the most hale labourers on the list of paupers, who previous to that would have shuddered at the thought of coming to a parish, but are now as contented to receive relief as they were before in a state of labouring independence; the most wages the best labourers could then obtain were no more than from 3s. to 4s. per week, the remainder was made up out of the rates, according to their families. This system is now abolished, and the labourer gets fair wages." *

"BYFIELD, NORTHAMPTON.—*Charles Wetherell*, Rector; *T. Carter*, J. P.

"'Head money' is given indiscriminately to all families of labouring men with more than two children under 10 years of age, without inquiring into their earnings, at the rate of 1s. each for those exceeding two; latterly many petty tradesmen have laid claim to it, and their claims have, in too many instances, been acceded to. "T. C."

"Relief is given generally, according to a scale which the deputy overseer obtains at the magistrates' petty sessions.† "C. W."

"ENSTONE, OXFORD.—*William Gardener*, *F. Elton*.

"All that apply to the vestry for employment have half their money, or more, out of the poor-rates. They allow, with all the earnings, 5s. per week to the man and his wife, and 1s. 6d. per head for the children, many or few; half from the master and the rest from the rates.

"A married man and his wife, with no child, will receive 5s. per week; a single man, perhaps 3s. 6d. and 4s.; half from the master and the rest from the poor's-rates." †

"ODDINGTON Parish, and PLOUGHLEY Hundred, OXFORD.—*Philip Serle*, Clerk and J. P.

"I am sorry to say that all our able-bodied labourers who have more than two children receive regular allowance from the parish, and this is the case generally in the neighbourhood. In some of the adjoining parishes it is carried to such a length that I have known a labourer receive 2d. per diem where he worked, and the rest of his wages made up from the poor's book. The children are usually sent round, and paid wholly by the overseer." §

"(Vale of TAUNTON,) BAGBOROUGH, BISHOP'S LYDEARD, COMBE-FLOREY, COTHELSTONE, KINGSTON, SOMERSET.—*E. J. Esdaile*.

"All farm labourers, during the whole or a part of the year, receive a portion of their wages out of the poor's-rates." ||

* App. (B. 1.) Question 24, p. 293 b. † App. (B. 1.) Question 25, p. 332 b.
 ‡ App. (B. 1.) Questions 24 & 27, p. 372 b. § App. (B. 1.) Question 24, p. 378 b.
 || App. (B. 1.) Question 24, p. 407 b.

"HASILBURY BRYAN, DORSET.—*Henry Walter*, Rector.

"In 1821-22 the overseers had been in the habit of sharing out the pauper labourers amongst the farmers, (including themselves,) and of paying for the work done by them *wholly* out of the poor's-rates; and as certain magistrates in the Blandford division (to which this parish then belonged) declined interfering to check this abuse, the answerer felt it his duty to appeal to the two sessions in 1823, and at the July sessions at Shaftesbury he obtained a verdict, which put an end to the practice. The custom, however, of 'making up the pay' of able-bodied labourers from the poor-rates still continues. So lately as the 25th July last, the answerer being told by the overseers that a complaint was lodged against the parish for not affording relief to an able-bodied labourer in addition to his wages, whose family consisted of a wife and four little children, but who paid nothing for living in a house belonging to the parish; he accompanied them to the petty sessions, and respectfully informed the magistrates that he should feel it his duty to advise his neighbours to resist any order requiring the parish to pay such allowance; to which it was replied, that they felt it was *their* duty, and should sign the order. Eventually, however, they did not sign it, but their signature was withheld on grounds unconnected with the principle opposed, and that principle was still avowed and maintained." *

"WELFORD, GLOUCESTER.—*William Welch*, Assistant Overseer.

"The labourers changed their service much more frequently when they were paid a part of their money by the overseers (called head-money), which was an order from the magistrates, and persisted in by them till we established a poorhouse, which has nearly done it away, and the labourers are become more respectable.

"Magistrates, when applied to, always make their orders according to the head-money system, taking the labourer's earnings at the usual day-work price, without regard to the conduct or ability of the labourer." †

IV.

PARISH EMPLOYMENT.

By the parish employing and paying the applicants for relief.

The 43rd of Elizabeth does not authorize relief to be afforded to any but the impotent, except in return for work. And much as this part of the statute has been neglected, its validity is recognized by the Judges. In the *King v. Collett*, 2 Barnewell and Cresswell, 324, Lord Tenterden decided it to be the duty of overseers to provide work, if possible, before they afforded relief.

* App. (B. 1.) Question 39, p. 141 d. † App. (B. 1.) Questions 38 and 43, p. 205 d.

And whatever may be the difficulty of finding *profitable* work, it is difficult to suppose the existence of a parish in which it would not be *possible* to provide some work, were it merely to dig holes and fill them again. But though such is the law, it appears, from the Parliamentary Returns, that payment for work is the most unusual form in which relief is administered. The Poor Rate Returns for the year ending the 25th March, 1832, state, that out of 7,036,968*l.* expended in that year for the relief of the poor, less than 354,000*l.*, or scarcely more than one-twentieth part, was paid for work, including work on the roads and in the workhouses. This may easily be accounted for.

In the first place, to afford relief gratuitously is less troublesome to the parochial authorities than to require work in return for it. Wherever work is to be paid for, there must be superintendence; but where paupers are the work-people, much more than the average degree of superintendence is necessary. In ordinary cases, all that the superintendent inquires is, whether the workman has performed an average day's work; and where the work is piece-work, he need not make even that inquiry. The practice of his trade fixes the market price of the work, and he pays it without asking whether the workman has been one hour or one day in performing it, or whether it exceeds or falls below his wants. But the superintendent of pauper labourers has to ascertain, not what is an average day's work, or what is the market price of a given service, but what is a fair day's work for a given individual, his strength and habits considered; at what rate of pay for that work, the number of his family considered, he would be able to earn the sum necessary for his and their subsistence; and lastly, whether he has in fact performed the amount which, after taking all these elements into calculation, it appears that he ought to have performed. It will easily be anticipated that this superintendence is very rarely given; and that in far the greater number of the cases in which work is professedly required from paupers, in fact no work is done. In the second place, collecting the paupers in gangs for the performance of parish work is found to be more immediately injurious to their conduct than even allowance or relief without requiring work. Whatever be the general character of the parish labourers, all the worst of the inhabitants are sure to be among the number; and it is well known that the effect of such an association is always to degrade the good, not to elevate the bad. It was among these gangs, who had scarcely any other employment or amusement than to collect in groups, and talk over their grievances, that the riots of 1830 appear to have originated. And, thirdly, parish employment does not afford direct profit to any individual. Under

most of the other systems of relief, the immediate employers of labour can throw on the parish a part of the wages of their labourers. They prefer, therefore, those modes of relief which they can turn to their own account, out of which they can extract profit under the mask of charity.

In those parishes in which labour is the condition on which relief is granted, we have found great differences with respect to the kind and the duration of the labour required, and the amount of its remuneration. In Cookham,* in Putney,† and in many of the metropolitan parishes,‡ the work is irksome, the hours of labour are equal to those which a private employer would exact, and the pay less than he would give. In others, the amount of labour required is far less than that which an independent labourer must afford; but the pay is diminished so far as is consistent with the supposed wants of the applicant. Thus, at Kimp-ton, Hants,§ “the single young men are employed by piece-work, but are restricted to earn only 2*s.* 6*d.* a week, and are then at liberty to go where they like. In the same place, children are employed in picking stones by task, and are allowed to earn the price of a gallon of bread, and 6*d.* over, per week, which they can do in about four days.” At Gamlingay, Cambridge, “the paupers are employed in collecting stones, at the price of 2*d.* a bushel, until they have earned the sum allotted to them by the bread scale; they then do as they please for that week.”|| At Uckfield, Sussex, instead of a part of each week, “they are required to work a part of each day, so as to earn the sum which is considered necessary for their subsistence;”¶ a sum which, according to the magisterial scale of the Uckfield bench, appears to be, for a single man, 4*s.*; man and wife, 7*s.*; man, wife, and one child, 8*s.* 6*d.*; with two children, 10*s.*; and for each child above two, the value of a gallon of flour.** In a parish in Suffolk, “twenty acres were hired by the parish and dug by the paupers at piece-work, the price being proportioned to their families. Either the work was completed by two or three o'clock, and the rest of the day spent in idleness, or the men consumed the whole day in the lazy performance of the work of a portion of the day.”†† “In Pollington, Yorkshire, they send many of them upon the highways, but they only work *four* hours per day: this is because there is not employment sufficient in that way; they sleep more than they work, and if any but the surveyor found them sleeping, they would

* House of Lords' Report, 1830-1831, page 185.

† Mr. Codd, App. (A.) Part I. p. 59.

‡ Mr. Codd, App. (A.) Part I. p. 58.

§ Capt. Pringle, App. (A.) Part I. p. 299.

|| Mr. Power, App. (A.) Part I. p. 295.

¶ Mr. Majendie, App. (A.) Part I. p. 186. ** Mr. Majendie, App. (A.) Part I. p. 179.

†† Mr. Stuart, App. (A.) Part I. p. 346.

laugh at them. In Raneliffe they employed a man in the winter of 1830-1831 to look over them; but they threatened to drown him, and he was obliged to withdraw. If a man did not like his work, he would say, 'I can have 12s. a week by going on the roads, and doing as little as I like.' In Carlton, from 30*l.* to 40*l.* was paid to men last year (1831) for doing nothing."* "In the parish of Mancetter, in the county of Warwick, the overseer stated that young able men received 2*s.* 6*d.* a week, and the magistrates would not allow the parish to employ them more than three days in the week, in order that they might get work for themselves. Upon inquiry, it appeared that their characters soon became so infamous, that no person would employ them, having devoted their spare time to thieving and poaching. In the township of Atherstone, Mr. Wellday, a manufacturer, impatient of contributing his property to the encouragement of vice and idleness by paying men without exacting labour, purchased some water-carts himself, for the purpose of giving employment to paupers. The magistrates refused to allow them to be used after twelve o'clock in the day, in order that these men might procure work for themselves: they were also described as becoming the most worthless characters in the town."†

In some of the agricultural districts, the prevalent mismanagement in this respect has created in the minds of the paupers a notion that it is their right to be exempted from the same degree of labour as independent labourers. In the parish of Swallowfield (Berks), the paupers summoned the overseers before the magistrates. They had been—

"Offered task-work at the gravel-pit at 8*d.* a yard, or 1*s.* a load for digging and sifting without loading. This had been considered a fair price with loading. The complainants contended before the magistrates, that by what they considered 'a right,' they ought not to be employed on the part of the parish more than from eight in the morning until four in the afternoon, although when working for farmers they were usually kept at work from six in the morning until six at night in summer, or from daylight until dark in the winter. This, which they claimed as 'their right,' had, in fact, been the previous practice in the parish, and was and is in a greater or less degree the existing practice in adjacent parishes.‡"

In the course of the examination of Mr. Price from Great Farringdon (Berks), he was asked—

"How did you enforce work on the in-door paupers?—Chiefly by admonition. Their labour was, as might be expected, very slack comparatively. I, however, insisted that they should work during the

* Mr. Tweedy, App. (A.) Part I. p. 733. † Mr. Villiers, App. (A.) Part II. p. 10.
‡ Mr. Chadwick, App. (A.) Part II.

same time as the independent labourers. This they resisted, and appealed to the magistrates against this usage. The ground of their appeal was, that it was a thing unknown before in this parish, or any other, that parish labourers should work as long or as hard as the other classes of labourers."*

But in many places, while the labour required by the parish is trifling, the pay equals or exceeds that of the independent labourer. Eastbourne, in Sussex, is a striking example. In this place, in which the average wages earned from individuals by hard work are 12*s.* a week, the parish pays for nominal labour as much as 16*s.* a week. Two families alone received from it, in the year ending Lady-day, 1832, 92*l.* 4*s.*; and the wives of the few independent labourers regret that their husbands are not paupers.† At the parish farm, occupied by the incorporated parishes of the Isle of Wight, 240 men were employed at one time in the year 1830, at the same wages as those usually given by the farmers; they scarcely did any work, and twice left the farm in a body to threaten the directors. Their wages were consequently raised.‡

In the parish of Hartland, says Mr. Villiers—

"Mr. ———, who had occupied land there for seventeen years, informed me that the magistrates were in the habit of ordering the same wages for the men working on the roads not superintended, as were paid to the labourers in the employ of the farmers; and that on this account, as well as that the poor liked to watch for the wrecks in the winter, they did not seek for work out of the parish."§

Mr. Richardson states, that, in Northamptonshire,

"The plan generally in use in the agricultural villages is, upon the man's applying to the overseer for work, to send him upon some part of the parish roads, where he is expected to work—not the farmer's hours, or anything like them, but to begin at eight, to leave at twelve for dinner, an hour, and to leave the roads finally at four. It is the business of the overseer or the surveyor of the roads, a farmer or a tradesman, who, paid or not, has his own business to attend to, to see that the men are actually working. While he is present, and the farmers take credit to themselves for riding up once or twice a day to the roads, the men bestir themselves a little; but the moment his back is turned, a man who gives himself any trouble is laughed at by his companions. As the overseer at Kettering told me, their remark is,—'You must have your 12*s.* a week, or your 10*s.* a week, whether you work or not; I would not be such a fool as to work—blast work—damn me if I work,' &c.; and, of course, under these circumstances, they do anything but work; if there is a wood near, as at Glapthorne and some other places round Oundle, they run into the wood to steal

* Mr. Chadwick, App. (A.) Part II. † Mr. Majendie, App. (A.) Part I. p. 187, 188.
‡ Capt. Pringle, App. (A.) Part I. p. 306, 307. § App. (A.) Part II. p. 45.

firing, which they hide and carry off at a convenient time; and universally they are in the habit of stealing turnips, or posts, or any little thing of that sort that comes to hand.

"In short, where there were many able-bodied men employed on the roads, there everybody complained of petty thefts, pilfering, poaching, &c., as the natural consequences.

"Whatever the previous character of a man may have been, he is seldom able to withstand the corruption of the roads: two years' occasional employment there ruins the best labourer. Moreover, in very many instances, the difference between parish pay for pretending to break stones on the road, and the real wages given by the farmer, does not amount to more than 1s. a week; and, if the man has a family entitling him to receive a given sum by the scale as head-money, he receives as much from the parish as he would from any other employer. Accordingly, the labourers who are only occasionally employed are nearly indifferent to pleasing or displeasing their employer; they quit with the remark which I heard at least a dozen times from different overseers,—'I can get as much on the roads as if I worked for you.'"^{*}

The following extracts from Mr. Okeden's and Mr. Majendie's Reports afford examples of all these systems, sometimes separate and sometimes in combination.

"At Urechfont, a parish in the district of Devizes, the population of which is 1340, and the annual poor-rates about 1450*l.*, there are above 50 men out of employ for 45 weeks every year. To these the parish pays 3*s.* a week each during that time, and inquires no further about their time or labour; thus creating an annual item of expense of nearly 400*l.*†"

"At the parish of Bodicott, in the district of Bloxham, a printed form is delivered to those who apply for work. The labourer takes this to the farmers in succession, who, if they do not want his labour, sign their names. The man, on his return, receives from the overseer the day's pay of an industrious labourer, with the deduction of 2*d.* The same system takes place in other parishes.

"In the parish of Sidford Gore, in the same district, where the poor-rates are under 650*l.* per annum, 114*l.* was paid last year, in six months, to men who did not strike one stroke of work for it.

"At Deddington, during the severe winter months, about 60 men apply every morning to the overseer for work or pay. He ranges them under a shed in a yard. If a farmer or any one else wants a man, he sends to the yard for one, and pays half the day's wages; the rest is paid by the parish. At the close of the day the unemployed are paid the wages of a day, minus 2*d.* I could multiply instances of this ap-

^{*} Mr. Richardson, App. (A.) Part I. p. 399. † Mr. Okeden, App. (A.) Part I. p. 6.

plication of the scale to the superfluous labourers; but to do so would only waste your time."^{*}

"At Rotherfield, in East Sussex, 120 men were out of employ in the winter 1831-32, and various modes were attempted to dispose of them. First, they were set to work on the parish account; single men at 5*s.*; men with families at 10*s.* per week; the pay being the same as farmers' pay, the men left the farmers in order to get the same pay with less work. Then they were billeted among the farmers at 1*s.* per day from the farmers, and 8*d.* from the parish. This was changed to 1*s.* from the parish, and 8*d.* from the farmer. The men so billeted did not keep the proper hours of work; then the farmers' men, finding that they who worked the regular hours were paid no more than those who were irregular, gave up their employment to become billeted men, and the farmers were induced to throw their men out of employ to get their labour done by the parish purse. The billeting system having failed, a 6*d.* labour-rate was made: it soon failed. Magistrates now recommend 6*d.* in the pound to be deducted from the full rate, and that the occupier should be allowed to pay that proportion of his rate by employment of the surplus hands.

"The labourers are much deteriorated. They do not care whether they have regular work or not; they prefer idle work on the roads. The magistrates at the Uckfield bench told the overseer, the year before last, that if the men made complaint they should be allowed at the rate of 2*s.* 4*d.* per head for each member of the family."[†]

"At Burnash, in East Sussex, in the year 1822, the surplus labourers were put up to auction, and hired as low as 2*d.* and 3*d.* per day; the rest of their maintenance being made up by the parish. The consequence was, that the farmers turned off their regular hands, in order to hire them by auction when they wanted them. The evil of this system was so apparent, that some occupiers applied to the magistrates, who recommended it should be given up. During the last year, the following plan has been adopted:—The names of the occupiers are written on pieces of paper, which are put into a bag; the labourer draws out a ticket, which represents 10*s.* worth of labour, at fair wages; next week the labourer draws another master, and this is repeated till the occupier has exhausted the shilling rate. This has continued two winters; much fraud is mixed up with the practice. Some farmers turn off their labourers in order to have ticketed men; other occupiers refuse to pay the rate, and against them it is not enforced."[‡]

^{*} Mr. Okeden, App. (A.) Part I. p. 2. † Mr. Majendie, App. (A.) Part I. p. 176.
[‡] Mr. Majendie, App. (A.) Part I. p. 177.

V.

THE LABOUR-RATE SYSTEM.

By an agreement among the rate-payers, that each of them shall employ and pay out of his own money a certain number of the labourers who have settlements in the parish, in proportion, not to his real demand for labour, but according to his rental or to his contribution to the rates, or to the number of horses that he keeps for tillage, or to the number of acres that he occupies, or according to some other scale. Where such an agreement exists, it is generally enforced by an additional rate, imposed either under the authority of the 2d & 3d Wm. IV. c. 96, or by general consent on those who do not employ their full proportion. This may be called the Labour-rate System. We shall consider it more at length in a subsequent portion of this Report.

WIDOWS.

In all the cases which have been mentioned, relief is professed to be afforded on the ground of want of employment, or of insufficient wages; but a class of persons have, in many places, established a right to public support, independently of either of these claims. These are Widows, who, in many places, receive what are called pensions, of from 1s. to 3s. a week on their own account, without any reference to their age or strength, or powers of obtaining an independent subsistence, but simply as widows. In such places, they receive an additional allowance if they have children. The allowance for each child is generally about 1s. 6d. a week in rural districts, unless the child be illegitimate, in which case it is more frequently 2s. or more.

II.

OUT-DOOR RELIEF OF THE IMPOTENT.

THE Out-door Relief to the Impotent (using that word as comprehending all except the able-bodied and their families) is subject to less abuse. The great source of Poor-Law mal-administration is, the desire of many of those who regulate the distribution of the parochial fund, to extract from it a profit to themselves. The out-door relief to the able-bodied, and all relief that is administered in the workhouse, afford ample opportunities for effecting this purpose; but no use can be made of the labour of the aged and sick, and there is little room for jobbing if their pensions are paid in money. Accordingly we find, that even in places distin-

guished in general by the most wanton parochial profusion, the allowances to the aged and infirm are moderate.*

The out-door relief of the sick is usually effected by a contract with a surgeon, which, however, in general, includes only those who are parishioners. When non-parishioners become chargeable from illness, an order for their removal is obtained, which is suspended until they can perform the journey; in the mean time they are attended by the local surgeon, but at the expense of the parish to which they belong. This has been complained of as a source of great peculation; the surgeon charging a far larger sum than he would have received for attending an independent labourer or a pauper, in the place of his settlement. On the whole, however, medical attendance seems, in general, to be adequately supplied, and economically, if we consider only the price and the amount of attendance.

The country is much indebted to Mr. Smith, of Southam, for his exertions to promote the establishment of dispensaries, for the purpose of enabling the labouring classes to defray, from their own resources, the expense of medical treatment. Some valuable remarks on this subject, by the Rev. P. Blakiston and Dr. Calvert, will be found in Appendix (C). It appears to us, that great good has already been effected by these dispensaries, and that much more may be effected by them; but we are not prepared to suggest any legislative measures for their encouragement.

It appears from the whole Evidence, that the clause of the 43d Elizabeth, which directs the parents and children of the impotent to be assessed for their support, is very seldom enforced. In any ordinary state of society, we much doubt the wisdom of such an enactment. The duty of supporting parents and children, in old age or infirmity, is so strongly enforced by our natural feelings, that it is often well performed, even among savages, and almost always so in a nation deserving the name of civilized. We believe that England is the only European country in which it is neglected. To add the sanction of the law in countries where that of nature is found sufficient, to make that compulsory which would otherwise be voluntary, cannot be necessary; and if unnecessary, must be mischievous. But if the deficiencies of parental and filial affection are to be supplied by the parish, and the natural motives to the exercise of those virtues are thus to be withdrawn, it may be proper to endeavour to replace them, however imperfectly, by artificial stimulants, and to make fines, distress warrants, or imprisonment act as substitutes for gratitude and love. The attempt, however, is scarcely ever made.

* Mr. Majendie, App. (A.) Part I. p. 188.

GENERAL REMARKS ON OUT-DOOR RELIEF.

We have dwelt at some length on out-door relief, because it appears to be the relief which is now most extensively given, and because it appears to contain in itself the elements of an almost indefinite extension; of an extension, in short, which may ultimately absorb the whole fund out of which it arises. Among the elements of extension are the constantly diminishing reluctance to claim an apparent benefit, the receipt of which imposes no sacrifice, except a sensation of shame quickly obliterated by habit, even if not prevented by example; the difficulty often amounting to impossibility on the part of those who administer and award relief, of ascertaining whether any and what necessity for it exists; and the existence in many cases of positive motives on their parts to grant it when unnecessary, or themselves to create the necessity. The first and third of these sources of mal-administration are common to the towns and to the country; the second, the difficulty of ascertaining the wants of the applicant, operates most strongly in the large towns, and is well displayed in the following extract from the Report of Mr. Chadwick, on the Eastern Division of the Metropolis:—

“George Huish, Assistant Overseer of the Parish of Saint George's, Southwark.

“I HAVE lived in the parish upwards of 40 years, and have served office upwards of 12 years, and before that time I had cognizance of much parochial business with a relation.

“The most injurious portion of the Poor Law system is the out-door relief. I do not serve a day without seeing some new mischiefs arise from it. In the smaller parishes, persons are liable to all sorts of influences. In such a parish as ours, where we administer relief to upwards of 2000 out-door poor, it is utterly impossible to prevent considerable fraud, whatever vigilance is exercised.

“Has the utmost vigilance been tried?—One man to every 20 would be required to watch the paupers living out of the parish, and one man to watch every 100 living within the parish; which is an expense of inspection which could not be borne. Suppose you go to a man's house as a visitor: you ask, where is Smith (the pauper)? You see his wife or his children, who say they do not know where he is, but that they believe he is gone in search of work. How are you to tell, in such a case, whether he is at work or not? It could only be by following him in the morning; and you must do that every day, because he may be in work one day, and not another. Suppose you have a shoemaker who demands relief of you, and you give it him on his declaring that he is out of work. You visit his place, and you find him in work; you say to him, as I have said to one of our own paupers, ‘Why, Edwards, I thought you said you had no work?’ and he will answer, ‘Neither had I any; and I have only got a little job for the day.’ He will also say

directly, ‘I owe for my rent; I have not paid my chandler's shop score; I have been summoned, and I expect an execution out against me, and if you stop my relief, I must come home,’ (that is, he must go into the workhouse). ‘The overseer is immediately frightened by this, and says, ‘What a family that man has got! it will not do to stop his relief.’ So that, unless you have a considerable number of men to watch every pauper every day, you are sure to be cheated. Some of the out-door paupers are children, others are women; but, taking one with another, I think it would require one man's whole time to watch every twenty paupers.

“Does the practice of obtaining out-door relief extend amongst respectable classes of mechanics, whose work and means of living are tolerably good?—I am every week astonished by seeing persons come whom I never thought would have come. The greater number of our out-door paupers are worthless people; but still the number of decent people who ought to have made provision for themselves, and who come, is very great, and increasing. One brings another; one member of a family brings the rest of a family. Thus I find, in two days' relief, the following names:—‘John Arundell, a sawyer, aged 55; his son William, aged 22, a wire-drawer; Ann Harris, 58, her husband is in Greenwich Hospital; her son John, and his wife, also came separately; so does their son, a lad aged 18, a smith.’ Thus we have pauper father, pauper wife, pauper son, and pauper grandchildren, frequently applying on the same relief-day. One neighbour brings another. Not long since a very young woman, a widow, named Cope, who is not more than 20 years of age, applied for relief; she had only one child. After she had obtained relief, I had some suspicion that there was something about this young woman not like many others. I spoke to her, and pressed her to tell me the real truth as to how so decent a young woman as herself came to us for relief: she replied that she was ‘gored’ into it. That was her expression. I asked her what she meant by being gored into it. She stated, that where she was living there were only five cottages, and that the inhabitants of four out of five of these cottages were receiving relief, two from St. Saviour's, and two from Newington parish. They had told her that she was not worthy of living in the same place unless she obtained relief too.

“Indeed, the malady of pauperism has not only got amongst respectable mechanics, but we find even persons who may be considered of the middle classes, such as petty masters, small master bricklayers, and other such persons, who have never before been seen making application to parish officers, now applying. My opinion is, that they apply in consequence of having witnessed the ease with which others who might have provided for themselves obtain relief. They naturally say, ‘Why should we be content with half a loaf when we might have a whole one?’ A few days ago a man applied for relief, stating that he was in great distress. On inquiry, it was found that he held a situation as packer, and actually received wages of the amount of 20s. per week, at the time he made the application, and had been in the receipt of them for some time previous. We found that one woman had received relief from us for two years, whilst she was receiving from the East India Company a

pension of 70*l.* per annum. In one instance, we discovered that a man, named James Peaton, was receiving relief of six different parishes; he belonged to our parish, and he had picked out five other parishes, which gave relief on the five other days. He made it his entire business to live on parish pensions, and he received one week's pension every day.

"Since the inquiry has been made, I have stationed persons at well-known gin-shops to observe the number of paupers who came, and the money they spend; and, from all their statements, I have drawn the conclusion that 30*l.* out of every 100*l.* of the money given as out-door relief, is spent in the gin-shops during the same day."

From the preceding evidence it will be seen how zealous must be the agency, and how intense the vigilance, to prevent fraudulent claims crowding in under such a system of relief. But it would require still greater vigilance to prevent the *bonâ fide* claimants degenerating into impostors; and it is an aphorism amongst the active parish officers that "cases which are good to-day are bad to-morrow, unless they are incessantly watched." A person obtains relief on the ground of sickness; when he has become capable of returning to moderate work, he is tempted, by the enjoyment of subsistence without labour, to conceal his convalescence, and fraudulently extend the period of relief. When it really depends upon the receivers whether the relief shall cease with its occasion, it is too much to expect of their virtue that they shall, in any considerable number of instances, voluntarily forego the pension.

The permanent officers appointed to make inquiries at the residence of the out-door paupers frankly acknowledge, that it is beyond the powers of any individuals to prevent an immense amount of fraud. We add the following instances from Mr. Chadwick's Report:—

Mr. Thorn, assistant overseer of the parish of Saint Giles, Cripplegate, London, states—

"The out-door relief in the city of London would require almost one man to look after every half dozen of able-bodied men, and then he would only succeed imperfectly in preventing fraud. They cheat us on all hands. I have had instances where the masters who have employed out-door paupers have given such answers to my inquiries, as to leave no doubt in my mind that the master concealed the real amount of wages, for fear that if he caused the parish to reduce the man's allowance he should have to pay him higher wages. There is no protection whatever from the growing evil of the increase of the able-bodied out-door poor, which is one of the greatest evils of the system, but in finding them labour out of town."

Mr. Samuel Miller, assistant overseer in the parish of Saint Sepulchre, London, declares that—

"With respect to the out-door relief, there must, from the very nature

of it, be an immense deal of fraud. There is no industry, no inspection, no human skill, which will prevent gross impositions belonging to this mode of relief.

"By far the greater proportion of our new paupers are persons brought upon the parish by habits of intemperance, and the others are chiefly pauper children or hereditary paupers.

"After relief has been received at our board, a great portion of them proceed with the money to the palaces of gin-shops, which abound in the neighbourhood."

Mr. William Weale, assistant overseer of the parish of Lambeth, whose chief business is the investigation of the cases of out-door paupers, after specifying the modes of examination, concludes by stating, that after all—

"However diligent an assistant overseer, or an officer for inquiry, may be, there are numerous cases which will baffle his utmost diligence and sagacity; the only test of these cases is making their condition more severe than that of the lowest class of labourers who obtain their livelihood by honest industry."

Mr. Luke Teather, another officer of great experience in the same business, adds, that as—

"It is the study of bad paupers to deceive you all they can, and as they study more their own cases than any inquirer can study each of the whole mass of different cases which he has to inquire into, they are sure to be successful in a great many instances. The only protection for the parish is to make the parish the hardest taskmaster and the worst paymaster that can be applied to."

Another evil connected with out-door relief, and arising from its undefined character, is the natural tendency to award to the deserving more than is necessary, or where more than necessary relief is afforded to all, to distinguish the deserving by extra allowances. The scales which we have already quoted, promulgated by the magistrates for the county of Cambridge, by those for the town of Cambridge, and by the magistrates of the Walden division, Essex, all direct the parish officers to reward or encourage the deserving. The whole evidence shows the danger of such an attempt. It appears that such endeavours to constitute the distributors of relief into a tribunal for the reward of merit, out of the property of others, have not only failed in effecting the benevolent intentions of their promoters, but have become sources of fraud on the part of the distributors, and of discontent and violence on the part of the claimants.

Mr. Masterman, who had served the office of headborough, and also the offices of churchwarden and overseer, in the parish of St. Matthew, Bethnal Green, states,—

"The system of expenditure was bad, in the favouritism exercised as to the parties to whom relief was given. Many of the landlords of the

smaller tenements have always mustered their friends on the days of election, to get them appointed governors or guardians of the poor. When parties came to be relieved, who were tenants of the governors who sat at the Board, the governors have given testimony to their meritorious characters, and urged that they might have relief. I have been present when it has been proposed that 1s. 6d. should be given, when the landlord would say, 'Oh, he is a very good man, give him 3s.:' and the 3s. has been awarded. The working of this system would naturally be, that when one man's tenants were thus favoured, he would favour the tenants of the others in turn when they came to demand relief. Another consequence is, that the landlord or his collector, when they collect the rent, are well aware that the tenant has had money which will pay it."

"I found," says Mr. Chadwick, "that most attempts to administer public relief according to character, even when those attempts have been made under circumstances apparently the most favourable, have created great dissatisfaction. Character being made up of habits, and habits being made up of series of simple acts, (which we sometimes find it difficult to determine on in our courts of law, even with all skilled appliances,) it is not surprising that persons in wealthy or superior stations, who have rarely the means of observing or knowing the daily arts of the labouring classes, usually fail of estimating them, so as to adjudicate justly, according to the estimation of the claimants. The Rev. W. Bishop, the rector of Upton, Berks, stated to me: 'When first I came to this parish, I instituted rewards for virtuous conduct amongst my parishioners, but I soon found that I did more mischief than good by the proceeding, and I was compelled to abandon it. I found that my parishioners, from their situation, knew more of the objects whom I selected for reward than I possibly could. They saw actions of which I could obtain no knowledge. With all my desire to do justice, there were actions which I forgot to take into account; and of those which I did take into account, they probably often made a more correct estimate than I could: under these circumstances, I probably was led to decide unjustly, and excited more ill feeling by my decisions than emulation by my rewards.' He gave up entirely the idea of rewarding according to character, and adopted other courses of proceeding.

"In more rude hands, such attempts often excite fierce discontent, by the inequalities of the distribution amongst claimants, who conceive themselves at least equal in merit. Private charity, being usually dispensed to separate individuals, is unattended with the discontents arising from a comparison of the objects of bounty; but I did not find one magistrate of extensive experience, who had found it practicable to take character into account, except on rare occasions. 'A man,' it has been said, 'may be a very worthy, good sort of man, but so ought we all to be; and if every man who is so were to bring in his bill for being so, who would there be to pay it?'"

A common consequence is, that, to satisfy the clamours of the undeserving, the general scale of relief is raised; but the ultimate result of such a proceeding appears always to be, to aug-

ment the distress which it was intended to mitigate, and to render more fierce the discontent which it was intended to appease. Profuse allowances excite the most extravagant expectations on the parts of the claimants, who conceive that an inexhaustible fund is devoted to their use, and that they are wronged to the extent of whatever falls short of their claims. Such relief partakes of the nature of indiscriminate alms-giving in its effects, as a bounty on indolence and vice; but the apparently legal sanction to this parochial alms-giving renders the discontent on denial the most intense; wherever, indeed, public charities are profusely administered, we hear, from those who are engaged in their administration, complaints of the discontent and disorders introduced. Bedford is a town in which money is profusely dispensed in charity for the partial relief of the labouring classes, without any return of labour. The following is an extract from a communication on the subject by the Rev. James Donne, the vicar of St. Paul's, Bedford:—

"The great Bedford Charity has a bad effect on the minds of all the working classes. They are discontented because they think that there is an ample provision for the poor whenever they are thrown out of work.

"I have heard an engineer (Mr. Bailey), resident in the town, say that he dare not employ a Bedford hand, they are so idle.

"A stranger has lately contracted to light the town with gas. He declared that of all the places where he had undertaken such works, he never met with such idle workmen as the Bedford men. Thus they show by their actions that the charity is no real blessing to them, whatever it may prove to the next generation, who will have the benefit of all the improvements in our schools. But the class above the working people are also affected by this charity, to their injury. They conceive they shall be provided for in the almshouses if ever they come to poverty; and they are not careful and provident, but rather extravagant in their way of living.

"In times of popular excitement the poorer sort will speak out, and say the pauper's charity should be theirs, and if they had justice done them they need not work at all. And having such opportunities of education in our schools, they entirely neglect the religious education of their children at home. No doubt there are exceptions, but I believe the rule to be as I state it.

"There are very few labouring men in my parish who save anything, and yet many contrive, who are beholden to the parish for their subsistence, to spend a good deal at the beer shop. Drunkenness has greatly increased the last two years. The beer houses are much frequented on Sundays."

It appears from all our returns, especially from the replies to question 53, of the Rural Queries, that in every district, the discontent of the labouring classes is proportioned to the money dis-

pensed in poor's-rates, or in voluntary charities. The able-bodied unmarried labourers are discontented, from being put to a disadvantage as compared with the married. The paupers are discontented, from their expectations being raised by the ordinary administration of the system, beyond any means of satisfying them. "They, as well as the independent labourers, to whom the term poor is equally applied, are instructed," says Mr. Chadwick, "that they have a right to a '*reasonable* subsistence,' or '*a fair* subsistence,' or '*an adequate* subsistence.' When I have asked of the rate distributors what '*fair*,' or '*reasonable*,' or '*adequate*' meant, I have in every instance been answered differently; some stating they thought it meant such as would give a good allowance of 'meat every day,' which no poor man (meaning a pauper) should be without; although a large proportion of the rate-payers do go without it." It is abundantly shown in the course of this inquiry, that where the terms used by the public authorities are vague, they are always filled up by the desires of the claimants; and the desires always wait on the imagination, which is the worst regulated and the most vivid in the most ignorant of the people. In Newbury and Reading, the money dispensed in poor's-rates and charity is as great as could be desired by the warmest advocate either of compulsory or of voluntary relief; and yet, during the agricultural riots, many of the inhabitants in both towns were under strong apprehensions of the rising of the very people amongst whom the poor-rates and charities are so profusely distributed. The violence of most of the mobs seems to have arisen from an idea that all their privations arose from the cupidity or fraud of those entrusted with the management of the fund provided for the poor. Those who work, though receiving good wages, being called *poor*, and classed with the really indigent, think themselves entitled to a share of the "poor funds." Whatever addition is made to allowances under these circumstances, excites the expectation of still further allowances; increases the conception of the extent of the right, and ensures proportionate disappointment and hatred if that expectation is not satisfied. On the other hand, wherever the objects of expectation have been made definite, where wages, upon the performance of work, have been substituted for eleemosynary aid, and those wages have been allowed to remain matter of contract, employment has again produced content, and kindness become again a source of gratitude.

III. IN-DOORS RELIEF.

In-doors Relief, that which is given within the walls of the Poor-house, or as it is usually, but very seldom, properly denominated the Workhouse, is also subject to great mal-administration. When Mr. Chadwick's account of Reading* was published, many readers thought that the management of the workhouses, described by him, must be an exception to the general rule. It is probable that the smallness of those workhouses prevents their inmates from suffering so much from the misconduct of one another, as is the case in the larger workhouses. But in all other respects, in the absence of classification, discipline, and employment, and the extravagance of allowances, the Reading workhouses seem to be merely fair specimens of the ordinary workhouses in thriving towns. The description of many of the London workhouses, in the Evidence collected by Mr. Codd, is still less favourable than the Report from Reading.

Mr. W. Lee, who has, for seventeen years, held the office of master of the workhouse of St. Pancras, containing more than 1000 inmates, says,—

"It is a common remark among our paupers that they live better in the house than they ever lived before; and looking to the cleanliness, the airiness and roominess of the apartments, the goodness of the beds and bedding, and the wholesomeness and quantity of the food, this is probably the case. There are 300 children; if we get them places they throw them up, or misconduct themselves so as to lose them, and return to the workhouse as a matter of course, because they prefer the security and certainty of that mode of life to the slightest exercise of forbearance or diligence. As little or no classification can take place, the younger soon acquire all the bad habits of the older, and become for the most part as vitiated. This is peculiarly the case with respect to young girls. We are obliged to have many prostitutes among our inmates: they decoy the young girls, with whom they have met in the house, to leave it, and addict themselves to the same abandoned course."†

Mr. Bryand, clerk to the overseers of St. James's, Westminster, states, that the workhouse contains 811 persons, and that the parish has, besides, about 40 refractory poor in places called farm-houses, who, in consequence of their bad character, are excluded from the regular establishment. The workhouse inmates, therefore, are people of comparatively good character; and Mr. Bryand considers the workhouse to be better managed than most workhouses, or certainly as well.

* Extracts, p. 216, *et post*.

† Mr. Codd, App. (A.) Part I. p. 75.
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He goes on to say,—

"Our paupers are allowed to leave the workhouse for one day in each week. It is a very common occurrence for both men and women, on the days that they are let out, to return in a state of intoxication. They are let out on the weekly days, about one o'clock, after dinner, and on festival days early in the morning: on these latter days, it not unfrequently happens that paupers, especially women, are brought into the house by constables or policemen, before twelve o'clock, in a beastly state of intoxication; they are received as a matter of course, and the care of the governor and matron is applied, not to their punishment, but to keeping them quiet and peaceable: if they can be rendered so, they are put to bed, and no further notice is taken of the case; if they cannot, and they are very violent and riotous, the heads of the house are obliged to have recourse to assistance to hold them or tie them down in their beds.

"We have in the house many women who are known to be prostitutes; we have also notorious thieves. I recollect, in particular, W. Thomas and J. Selburn, now young men; both of them were brought up from infancy in the workhouse; these men are always supported either by the county or in the parish, except what they get by thieving. I am persuaded that parish poor-houses, as at present administered, have the effect of attracting paupers."*

Mr. Stephenson, vestry-clerk of St. Margaret's and St. John's, Westminster, says,—

"For cleanliness, diet, lodgings, and medical attendance, no house can be more remarkable than that of St. Margaret's, and these advantages are extended to the bad as well as the good. The diet and accommodation of all are very superior to that which can be obtained by the most industrious of our independent labourers and mechanics."

He is asked how it happens that there are in that workhouse 100 females between the ages of twenty-one and fifty? and answers, that "it arises from the bad character of the low population of Westminster." "Then I conclude that many of these women are prostitutes?"

"Yes, a large majority. They walk the streets until they are reduced to great distress, and then apply to be taken into the house: they remain with us until their strength is recruited, and they return to their former practices. Indeed, it very often happens that they go out worse than they came in, owing to their intercourse, within the walls, with older and more vicious characters."†

The farm-houses to which Mr. Bryand referred, as places of confinement for the persons whose character is so bad that they are excluded from the society of the thieves and prostitutes of the regular workhouse, are large establishments, containing sometimes as many as 500 persons,‡ apparently with scarcely any

* Mr. Codd, App. (A.) Part I. p. 75, 76.

† Ibid. p. 93.

‡ Ibid. p. 78.

attempt at discipline, and with scarcely any means of enforcing it if attempted.

Mr. Fry, whose parochial establishment contains 270 persons, and among them many discharged convicts, uses "mild remonstrance," unless they are much complained of by their fellow paupers, or act violently, in which case they are put into the black-hole for *two or three hours*.*

Mr. Perry, whose premises contain from 280 to 500, says,—

"The only way in which we can punish them for misconduct is by remonstrance or discharge, but we do not use any system of coercion."†

Mr. Hall, the overseer of St. Botolph, Aldgate, says,—

"We send our poor to farm-houses, paying 4s. 6d. per head per week for them; but it is the interest of the farm-house-keepers to give them so much liberty, on account of the consequent saving of provision, that their residence is not one of restraint nor their life one of hardship. It has been repeatedly said to me by paupers nominally confined in farm-houses, that they got 2d. a day from the keepers of those houses to leave them for the day, by which means the keepers saved their food for the day; and I have constantly seen persons, for whom I knew that we were paying to farm-houses, wandering about the streets, sometimes in a state of intoxication, and often I have had them come to my house in such a state, and insist, with much violence, upon getting further relief."

And yet the London workhouses are not likely to be comparatively ill-managed. The number of persons of leisure and intelligence, who have the power to expose their faults, and are interested in doing so, makes it probable that they are, in fact, comparatively well administered. And we find their general management favourably contrasted with that of the Oxford workhouses.‡

Mr. Bishop's picture of the Oxford House of Industry is, indeed, alarming; but many of its worst features re-appear in the descriptions of similar establishments scattered through our evidence. In some very few instances, among which Southwell, in Nottinghamshire, is pre-eminent, the workhouse appears to be a place in which the aged and impotent are maintained in comfort, and the able-bodied supported, but under such restrictions as to induce them to prefer to it a life of independent labour. But in by far the greater number of cases, it is a large almshouse, in which the young are trained in idleness, ignorance, and vice; the able-bodied maintained in sluggish sensual indolence; the aged and more respectable exposed to all the misery that is incident to dwelling in such a society, without government or classification, and the whole body of inmates subsisted on food far exceeding

* Mr. Codd, App. (A.) Part I. p. 93.

Ibid. p. 94.

‡ Extracts, p. 116.