

attended with its natural consequences, witness mentioned three cases in which relief had never been asked. In two of these the women had secreted themselves before birth of the child, in order to avoid removal; in the third, she had clandestinely returned after removal; in all three, the mothers had struggled on without aid from the parish.*

When we add to these sources of expense the profuseness of the allowances to the mothers in compliance with the order on the father, not half of which is, as we have seen, recovered, the tendency to vice which the hope of those allowances creates, and the number of illegitimate births, and the still greater number of legitimate births which are the consequence, it is impossible to doubt that even the saving, for which all these evils have been let loose has not been effected. Even among the laws which we have had to examine, those which respect bastardy appear to be pre-eminently unwise.

Before we quit this subject we must advert to one class of illegitimate births mentioned in the evidence as productive of great and growing inconvenience. It appears that the Irish in the capital and in large towns, either with a view to effect the consequences which we are going to state, or from ignorance or negligence, are frequently married by Roman Catholic priests alone. These marriages satisfy the conscience of the wife, and while the family requires no relief, their invalidity is unknown or unattended to. But as soon as the man becomes chargeable, and the parish proceeds to remove him and his family, he shows that he is not legally married, and his children claim settlements on the parishes in which they were born. A magistrate who has sat for only a very few months, informs us, that as many as a dozen of these cases have come under his notice in a single day.

We have now reported the result of our inquiry into the practical operation of the Laws for the Relief of the Poor, and into the mode in which those laws are administered; and we proceed to the performance of the remaining part of our duty, that of reporting what alterations, amendments, or improvements may be beneficially made in the said laws, or in the mode of administering them, and how the same may be best carried into effect.

We shall preface this part of our Report by a short statement of the principal amendments which have been suggested to us and to which we cannot add our recommendation.

Many persons, for whose opinion we have a great respect, have proposed that the relief of the poor should be made a national instead of a parochial charge, and be both provided and administered under the direction of the government.

* App. (A.) Part I. p. 133.

The advantages of making it a national charge would be great and immediate.

It would put an end to settlements. With settlements would go removals, labour-rates, and all the other restrictions and prohibitions by which each agricultural parish is endeavouring to prevent a free trade in labour, and to insulate itself by a conventional cordon as impassable to the unsettled workman as Bishop Berkeley's wall of brass. There would be no longer a motive for preferring in employment the men with large families to those with small, the married to the unmarried, the destitute to those who have saved, the careless and improvident to the industrious and enterprising. We should no longer have these local congestions of a surplus, and, therefore, a half-employed dissolute population, *ascripta glebæ*, some driven, not by the hope of reward, but by the fear of punishment to useless occupation, and others fed on condition of being idle; character would again be of some value to a labouring man. Another advantage much smaller than the first, but still considerable, would be the diminution of expense; a considerable sum would be instantly saved in litigation and removals, and we might hope to save a still larger sum by substituting the systematic management of contractors and removeable officers, for the careless and often corrupt jobbing of uneducated, unpaid, and irresponsible individuals.

It may be added, that there is no change that would have so numerous and so ardent a body of supporters; all the heavily burdened parishes, and all those which, though still in a tolerable state, foresee, from the annual increase of their expenditure, the ruin that is creeping on them, all the rate-payers who are hesitating between a voluntary exile from the homes to which they are attached, and remaining to witness vice and misery, and encounter loss and perhaps danger, would hail with transport the prospect of such a relief. Other changes may be submitted to; this alone would have enthusiastic partisans.

Still admitting the force of all these arguments in favour of a national charge, we do not recommend one.

In the first place, it is objectionable in principle. To promise, on the part of the government, subsistence to all, to make the government the general insurer against misfortune, idleness, improvidence, and vice, is a plan better perhaps than the parochial system as at present administered; but still a proposal which nothing but the certainty, that a parochial system is unsusceptible of real improvement, and that a national system is the only alternative against immediate ruin, the only plank in the shipwreck, could induce us to embrace.

It is probable—indeed it is to be expected—that at first it would work well; that there would be a vigilant and uniform

administration, a reduction of expenditure, a diminution of pauperism, an improvement of the industry and morality of the labourers, and an increase of agricultural profit and of rent. But in this case, as in many others, what was beneficial as a remedy might become fatal as a regimen. It is to be feared, that in time the vigilance and economy, unstimulated by any private interest, would be relaxed; that the workhouses would be allowed to breed an hereditary workhouse population, and would cease to be objects of terror; that the consequent difficulty of receiving in them all the applicants would occasion a recurrence to relief at home; that candidates for political power would bid for popularity, by promising to be good to the poor; and that we should run through the same cycle as was experienced in the last century, which began by laws prohibiting relief without the sanction of the magistrates; commanding those relieved to wear badges, and denying relief out of the workhouse; and when by these restrictions the immediate pressure on the rates had been relieved, turned round, and by statutes, with preambles, reciting the oppressiveness of the former enactments, not only undid all the good that had been done, but opened the flood-gates of the calamities which we are now experiencing. If we ought to be on our guard against the unforeseen effects of any untried institution, even when its obvious consequences appear to be beneficial, how much more is there to dread from one that in itself is obviously injurious, and is recommended only as less mischievous than what exists. If a national system had been adopted 100 years ago, it is probable that our present situation would have been worse than we now find it; that the mischief would have been still more general, and the remedy still more difficult. Another objection, is the difficulty of providing the necessary funds. In Guernsey, the poor are provided for by one general fund; but even in that island, one of the most flourishing parts of the empire, it is found necessary to provide for it by a general income tax of not less than three per cent. A property tax would be called for, for that purpose, in England. But all those who are domiciliated in Ireland and Scotland must be exempted from it, as respects their personal property. How should we be able to distinguish between the English, Irish, and Scotch funded property, even if the claim of fundholders to immunity from direct taxation were abandoned? And if funded property were exempted, how could we assess personal property of any other description? If personal property is exempted, and the assessment confined to lands and houses, how bitter would be the complaints of those whose rates are now below what would then be the general average?

OCCUPATION OF LAND BY LABOURERS.

THE plan which we have just been considering, aims at distributing more equally the existing burden, and applies both to the impotent and the able-bodied. Other schemes have been suggested, which propose to remove or diminish the burden created by the able-bodied: 1st. By emigration; 2dly. By enabling them to become occupiers of land in England; 3dly, By enabling and compelling the present occupiers of land to employ more labourers in its cultivation. We shall defer the subject of Emigration to a subsequent part of our Report, and now proceed to consider the probable effects of any legislative measures, for the purpose of enabling labourers to become occupiers of land.

We directed our Assistant Commissioners to inquire in each parish into the mode in which the occupation of land by labourers had been effected. The following are extracts from some of their Reports on this subject.

Mr. Okeden, after stating* that there is scarcely a parish in Wiltshire or Dorsetshire, in which the labourer has not the use of land, concludes his remarks on that subject in the following words:—

“The allotment of land to labourers divides itself into two chief points: first, as to that quantity of land just sufficient for the cultivation of a labourer and his family, during their spare hours; and, secondly, as to that larger quantity, which requires to be worked by the assistance of others, or by the entire dedication of the labourer's time. The day is not long past, since in every industrious cottage family, the wheel and the distaff, the shuttle and the knitting-needles, were in full activity. At present, to compete with machinery, would be a useless waste of time, money, and labour. We must however see, if the hours formerly devoted to manufacture may not be profitably applied, and habits of industry created. I cannot suggest any mode of doing so more profitable to the agricultural labourer and his family, than the cultivation of exactly that quantity of land which will occupy these hours as well as his own spare time. This quantity is calculated to be the one-sixteenth part of an acre, or ten lug or rods, to each individual capable of work.

“To this, or to the system of renting of the farmer, and letting *him* manure and plough, and bring home the potatoe crop, I see no reasonable objection. It has sometimes struck those who have regarded the matter superficially, that the sum given for rent, viz., at the rate of 8*l.* per acre, is enormous; but arithmetic will show us that the profit to the labourer is considerable. The general rent of land thus let is 8*l.* per acre.

* App. (A.) Part I. p. 7—15.

"The farmer's expenses and profits are as under:--

	£	s.	d.
Rent paid his landlord, for the acre	1	10	0
Two ploughings	1	6	0
Twelve loads of manure	1	16	0
Tithe	0	10	0
Rates	0	3	0

£5 5 0

Profit to the farmer upon, let at 8l. per acre 2 15 0

£8 0 0

"The labourer's expenses and profits are:—

To rent	£8	0	0
Labour in setting crop, and housing when brought home	3	0	0
Five sacks of seed potatoes,	1	12	6

£12 12 6

Per contra:—

Fifty sacks of potatoes, at 6s. 6d. per sack	£16	5	0
Small potatoes, for pigs	1	0	0

£17 5 0

Value received in potatoes	£17	5	0
Expenses as stated	12	12	6

Net profit to labourer, on the acre £4 12 6

"If this system of allotment be pursued, one of its benefits is the finding manure for the labourer; the family must cultivate the garden so as to gain a large supply of vegetables for themselves, and of food, at least, for one pig.

"The allotment of larger portions of land than ten rods to an individual, has this evil—if the labourer cultivates it himself with only the aid of his family, he over-forces his strength, and brings to his employer's labour a body exhausted by his struggle.

"This I have witnessed, and of this I have heard frequent complaints.

"But, let us consider a still more enlarged allotment, one which will occupy the *whole* time of the man and his family to obtain support. The labourer then becomes a petty farmer, without capital, working land inadequately manured and half cultivated, and yielding, of course, insufficient crops as the return of fruitless exertions. Nor is this the only evil of the large allotments; a hovel perhaps is erected on the land, and marriage and children follow. In a few years more, the new

generation will want land, and demand will follow demand, until a cottier population, similar to that of Ireland, is spread over the country, and misery and pauperism are every where increased."*

"Of the acquisition of land by labourers (says Mr. Majendie) the effect is invariably beneficial; their character and conduct seem immediately raised, by having means of exerting themselves in some other mode in addition to the uncertain demand for labour. It is contrary to the principles of human nature that labourers should be happy and contented when they are turned off at short notice to the parish-roads or gravel-pit, or degraded by what they term convict-labour; while land immediately before their eyes is passing out of cultivation.

"There is no class in society whose feelings and opinions are so much known to each other as the labourers; it can be no secret to them that the crops which may be raised by their exertions on small plots of land are infinitely greater than those produced by ordinary cultivation. The denial of land to them will constantly produce an increase of ill-feeling on their part. It is to the proprietors that they must look for this boon; and it seems probable that nothing can more effectually tend to restore the good feeling which formerly prevailed between the different classes of society than the allotment system under prudent regulations.

"In the minds of many occupiers there exists considerable prejudice on this subject; they are afraid of making labourers independent; and some look with an evil eye to a supposed diminution of their profits by introducing a new class of producers. The favourable reports which are made from all quarters will, it is hoped, diminish these prejudices. The system of cottage allotments is one of the most effectual modes of doing away with the noxious practice of allowance according to the number of children; many instances have occurred in which labourers have preferred retaining their land without relief, rather than give it up and return to parish pay, which in money would be at least an equivalent. Other instances of good feeling have occurred of labourers to whom land had been allotted, making a voluntary relinquishment of weekly relief. It is generally considered that a quarter of an acre can be cultivated by a labourer with a family at his leisure time, still making his dependence on regular farming employ. The danger of giving a further stimulus to population does not seem to attach to small allotments; on the contrary, the tendency to reckless improvidence in marriage seems rather to be checked by placing before the labourers something to look forward to beyond the resource of daily labour for a master. Extraordinary instances of accumulation of capital from small beginnings are reported; and the mere circumstance of enabling a labourer to sell so many days' labour to himself, diminishes the demand either on the farmers or the parish purse.

"The following practice may be worthy of notice. A farmer gives up to a labourer a portion of a field for a single crop of potatoes, dividing the produce with him. The farmer has the advantage of spade culture without expense; the labourer has a stimulus to exer-

* App. (A.) Part I. p. 26.

tion, an interest in the soil; and this plan steers clear of any danger of the introduction of the cottier system, by a permanent subdivision of the land."*

Mr. Walcott, in his Report from North Wales, states, that

"A few leases for lives are occasionally met with, chiefly in Montgomeryshire, which have been granted by the lords of manors with from five to fifteen acres of land; not enough to make the tenants farmers, and too much to permit them to be labourers. On comparing the condition of these small freeholders with that of labourers, who have only just sufficient land to occupy their leisure time, the result is greatly in favour of the latter. My own observation was confirmed by the testimony of others. Mr. Davies, the rector of Aberhavesp, stated that in his 'neighbourhood, several persons had obtained leases for lives of a few acres of land which had been recently enclosed, and that the majority of them are now actually in a worse condition than paupers. They trust solely to the produce of the land, and if there is a bad season, or they are improvident, which is often the case, in the consumption of a short crop, they are reduced to a dreadful condition, as the possession of the land operates against their obtaining parochial relief.'

"The quantity of land which a labourer can beneficially occupy, without interfering with his ordinary labour, is admitted, with scarcely an exception, to be about one quarter of an acre, and certainly not more than half an acre. I examined, on this subject, several small farmers who, from working on their own land as labourers, were the best judges of the matter; and in giving the testimony of one or two, I in effect give that of all. A farmer of the parish of Guildsfield, in Montgomeryshire, stated that a labourer could not do justice to his master and the land, if he had more than half an acre, and that he must be a very industrious and good workman, and be assisted by his wife and family, to work up even that quantity, which he thought was too much. He added, that if he wanted a labourer, and two men, equally strong and equally skillful, were to apply, one of whom had a quarter of an acre, and the other one or two acres of land, he should, without hesitation, prefer the former. A farmer in Kerry likewise stated, that if a labourer had more than a quarter of an acre, he is not a valuable servant, since he is apt to curtail the time which belongs to his master in order to attend his own land; this, he said, he had found to be the case. The Rev. Mr. Jones, of Treiorworth, in Anglesea, says, on this point, that he is the owner of several cottages let to labourers, and he finds that he has committed an error in giving to each half an acre, as they rely too much on the land, to their own detriment.

"Over the greater part of North Wales the labourers are permitted, on payment of so much a bushel, either in money or in kind, to plant as many potatoes as they may need, on the fallow land of the farmer, who, in most instances, manures and prepares it ready for use. If the

* "This practice is mentioned as a very common one in France, by M. de Chateaufieux, in his excellent Essay on the Condition of the Labouring Classes in France, which he has kindly enabled me to present to the Board."—App. (A.) Part I. p. 170.

labourer finds manure, which is sometimes the case where a pig is kept, he has the use of the land without any charge. The plan is advantageous to both parties; the labourer obtains a crop at a cheaper rate than if he rented in the usual way and manured the land, and the farmer, besides the remuneration in money, produce, or manure, has his ground carefully cleaned and better fitted to receive a crop, after the potatoes are reaped, than if it had continued fallow.

"Where a labourer was possessed of a small portion of land, sufficient, and not more than sufficient, to occupy his leisure time, and furnish his children with employment, I found a striking improvement in the general condition of the whole family. The children were early and practically taught the beneficial effects of industry, and the man appeared to be more contented with his lot, and had less inducement to keep loose company. From what I witnessed, therefore, I cannot too strongly recommend that every facility should be granted to encourage the occupation of land to this extent, by the labouring classes. The measure was warmly advocated by all classes, and is universally popular."*

Mr. Power, in his Report from Cambridgeshire, states, that

"Allotment of small portions of land to labourers, for the purpose of employing their leisure hours, giving them a feeling of dependence on their own exertions, and bettering their condition by increased sustenance and comforts, is beginning, much to the credit of the land-owners, to be very generally adopted in this county. Of the excellent effects of this practice, I am provided with testimony from many quarters; but as separate details would present few varieties of circumstance, it will be sufficient to say generally with regard to the objects above specified, that they have been invariably realized, to a greater or less degree, in all instances which have come within my observation. Those cases in which I have found those effects combined also with a reduction of parochial expenditure, distinctly assignable to the adoption of this practice, I regret to say are not many; but the universal increase of rates from various causes, may have frequently prevented a demonstration of this effect, where actually existing. That the effect ought to exist universally, and that it would, under a strict system of relief, I have no doubt, from the representations made of the considerable profits which the rent leaves in the hands of the occupiers of these small allotments. This is confirmed by the regularity with which the rents are paid, and the anxiety of the labourers to obtain occupations or additions to them, in parishes where the experiment has been tried. Under the present state of things, these advantages, which certainly are most desirable as accessions to the comforts of the labourer, are little looked upon by himself as a means of keeping him from the necessity of parish relief, when for a season unemployed, or when visited by the infirmities of sickness or age. Much of this is due to the habit of not saving, at this time too generally established by the Poor Laws.

"The farmers object very generally to the introduction of allotments. They are jealous of such deductions from their holdings; they have to go farther for their manure; and they object to the increased indepen-

* App. (A.) Part II.

dence of the labourers. As to the first, if the allotment system is regarded in its proper light, namely, as a cheap charity on the part of the landlord, there seems little reason to apprehend its trenching materially on the large farms; for, the instant it should change its character, and be viewed as a source of rent, those influences which have caused the absorption of small farms into large ones, will check the breaking up of the latter into small ones again. As to the increased independence of the labourers, there is no doubt that leisure hours will not always be sufficient, and that absence of half-days and days must occasionally not only deduct from the market of labour, but place the allotment occupier on a better footing as to the terms of the contract with his employers. But who does not exult in this, who considers at what advantage the farmer has the labourer during the greater portion of the year, and remembers how little, during the times of dear bread, wages kept their due proportion to the price of corn; and reflects that pauperism, in its present aggravated shape, almost dates from that period of immense farming profits?

"I regret, however, to say, that in several cases I have found these considerations operating to the exclusion of allotments; at the same time it must be added, in justice to the class, that in some instances, after a successful introduction of the system, these prejudices have yielded to humanity and good sense."*

"The principal cases of allotments of land," says Capt. Chapman, "which came under my observation, were at Wells, West Looe, St. Germans, Warminster, Frome, Westbury, Trowbridge, Shepton Mallet, and Bradford.

"At WELLS, fifty acres are now granted by the Lord Bishop of Bath and Wells to 203 persons, in quantities varying from $\frac{1}{2}$ to $\frac{1}{4}$ of an acre, at a rent of 12s. 6d. the quarter of an acre. Of these persons not above ten are unmarried, and many are widows. The average of each family being taken at five, upwards of 1000 persons are thus benefited.

"The conditions are, that no lot shall exceed half an acre; that the land shall be tithe and tax free; that the holders shall pay their rents regularly, and previous to the crop being dug up, unless the agent shall allow a part to be removed (not exceeding the half) for the purpose of paying the rent; that the land shall be kept properly manured; that no damage shall be done to the walls or fences round the land; and by way of encouragement, the sum of 2s. 6d. annually is allowed to each on punctually paying his rent, and who has not broken any of the above conditions (thus reducing the rent to 10s. the quarter acre); and the Bishop also annually gives premiums to those occupants who produce the largest quantity of potatoes on the same portion of land. The tenure is considered as secured during the life-time of the Bishop, and during good conduct.

"No stipulation is made against the receipt of parochial relief, but the result has been to the same effect, as only three of the number actually receive such relief; two of whom are infirm persons who would otherwise be in the workhouse, and the third, also infirm, belongs to Bris-

* App. (A.) Part I. p. 254, 256.

tol; twenty-nine names were pointed out of persons who formerly had received relief, but had discontinued it since they had got land. Many Dissenters have allotments.

"The system was commenced in 1826, with three pieces amounting to thirty acres, which were given in lots to 109 families; a fourth portion was added in 1831, and a fifth has been given in 1832, but has not yet been brought under cultivation, making the whole amount to fifty acres.

"The land, which was previously worked out, is much improved, and the crops very abundant:

"The following is an account, on an average of six years, of the profits of a quarter of an acre. (Furnished by the Agent.)

	£	s.	d.
Rent for a quarter of an acre	0	12	6
Digging	0	8	0
Manure	0	10	0
Seed	0	3	0
Planting	0	4	0
Hoeing, &c.	0	8	0
Digging and hauling	0	10	0
<hr/>			
Supposing the man to hire and pay for everything	£2	15	6
<hr/>			
Produce:			
Twenty sacks potatoes	£4	10	0*
Other vegetables	1	0	0
<hr/>			
	£5	10	0
Less, Labour, &c. as above	2	15	6
<hr/>			
Clear Profit, supposing man to hire and pay for } everything }	£2	14	6
<hr/>			
If all be done by the man	£4	4	6

"The opinion expressed by the agent was, that a man who works for a farmer for twelve hours, from six to six, with the help of his wife and family, can manage half an acre, supposing it half potatoes, keep a pig, and support his family; and that a mechanic can do more.

"The continued increase in the demand for allotments is the best proof of the advantage derived from them.

"There is a general improvement in the character of the occupiers, who are represented as becoming more industrious and diligent, and as never frequenting those pests, the beer-houses. Frequently they have been known to work by candle-light.

"Not a single instance has occurred in which any one thus holding land has been taken before a magistrate for any complaint.

* It will be observed that Captain Chapman states the amount of produce per acre higher than Mr. Okeden, but the price of a given quantity of produce lower. Mr. Okeden's estimates of prices appear to us much too high.

"The rents are collected without difficulty; and, as a proof of the good feeling produced, the pheasants in the adjoining wood, so far from having been destroyed, as was foretold by some, have been most carefully preserved; and at the time of the Bristol riots, the occupiers offered to come to the defence of the Bishop's palace.

"This is, however, a very peculiar case, as few instances can occur in which land situated so close to a town, and of such quality, can be procured on terms so favourable to the holders. The nature of the soil, which is clay, is also peculiarly favourable, as ashes, which are easily procured in a town, form the best manure. Under these circumstances, subsequent inquiries lead me to believe that the land is let considerably below its value.

"The amount of the allotments to which a person can do justice is, therefore, larger than under ordinary circumstances. But even here it will be seen that the quantity in no case exceeds the half acre.

"The favourable effects of this measure, which were admitted by all, have most deservedly directed attention to the subject; and the system has not only been followed up on the Mendip hills by the Bishop, but I was led to believe is very extensively adopted in other parts of the county, the extent of the allotments being generally regulated on the same principle as those at Wells.

"WEST LOOE.—Within the last five years a portion of a common belonging to the borough, and which, from time immemorial, had been waste, was inclosed; it amounted to about twenty-two acres, and was let in acres, half and quarter acres, in no case more than one acre. The price was fixed from 20s. to 15s. per acre; the distribution was made by lot. In the first instance it was confined to the poor belonging to the borough of West Looe. The only conditions were, that the land should be properly cultivated; the rent paid annually to a committee, or, in default, the occupier to give up possession. The money to be applied to the poor-rate.

"The result of this experiment was such as to induce the committee to inclose another portion of about the same extent, which was let to any of the poor resident in the town, without consideration as to their being parishioners.

"The rent of the first portion has been punctually paid, but that of the second was not due.

"The effect on the poor-rate has been a diminution from 10s. in the pound to 3s.; but the moral effect upon the poor is beyond calculation, the population being principally seafaring men, who, in bad weather, had no occupation, and who idled about, a dead weight upon the poor-rate; but who have now occupation, and are happy, contented, and laborious.

"I went over the land, and found it in excellent condition; the men can pick up sea-weed, and procure lime on easy terms, so that they can do justice to a larger portion of land than under ordinary circumstances.

"The borough only contains 100 acres, and the population is only 593.

"ST. GERMAINS.—Allotments have been made under Lord St. Germain, in no case exceeding thirty perches, but without limit as to quantity; this is, however, found to be as much as a man with a family can do justice to. The land is good, and celebrated for its potatoes. The price paid is 6d. per perch, but an annual dinner, with premiums, more than absorbs the whole. Even this small quantity requires occasional assistance in hauling, lime, &c.

"In Cornwall, the miners have a practice of purchasing from three to six acres of rough land, on three lives, but they are a distinct class, having great advantages over the ordinary labourer, so as to form an exception to the rule; but even they frequently find the quantity too great, as may be seen from the following extract from a pamphlet by Dr. Carlyon, a magistrate of Truro, 1827:—

"Above all, no industrious cottager should be allowed to remain unprovided with such a spot of ground as he is capable of cultivating at leisure hours; and from one-eighth to a quarter of an acre will generally be better than more; for without the aid of a lucky start in mining, or some other piece of good fortune productive of means beyond the proceeds of daily labour, no poor man should attempt to cope with several acres, especially of a coarse description. After years of hard struggling, a severe winter, sooner or later, will arrive, and find him ill-provided for the maintenance of his little stock, and a petition, such as may be seen perpetually in circulation, will soon inform the humane and charitable that the loss of a horse or of a cow has brought him to great distress. Besides, when there is too much to be done at home, the labourer will seldom be worthy of his hire elsewhere; so that, whether we have regard to the interests of the labourer himself, or of his employer, or of the parish, with reference to the poor-rate, in which he lives, it will, equally I believe, be found that he cannot be placed better for the maintenance of a family than where the produce of a well-cultivated garden goes to help out the earnings of regular daily labour.

"There may be something very captivating with cursory observers in the praiseworthy efforts of a poor miner who contrives to erect a cottage for himself on a dreary common, and to enclose acre after acre, full of quartz stones, which must be removed at infinite pains before cultivation can begin: yet judging from the usual results, I am persuaded that such attempts should not be encouraged; and with respect to cottagers generally, and miners in particular, that they should confine themselves to gardens, and lay up their little savings in some neighbouring savings' bank."

"Agricultural labourers generally have gardens; those in steady employ have about one-sixteenth to one-twelfth of an acre, given rent-free, for a crop of potatoes; others rent a piece of ground, for the crop at 6d. the pole if they find manure, and for 1s. if the farmer finds it.

"The value of a crop of a quarter acre thus held was estimated at S. Petherwin at 3l., for which the labourer would pay 20s., and have a clear gain of 40s.; but it was stated that, if the labourer had the money to lay out, he might buy a larger quantity of potatoes for the same sum.

ticularly in Cornwall, of letting land at 6*d.* the pole, the labourer finding manure; or (in some cases) of dividing the crop, on the same condition. The quantity of land is thus limited by the supply of manure, and the farmer has it in his power to give whatever quantity he pleases; the poor man and the farmer are both benefited, and a degree of kindly feeling created, instead of jealousy and distrust.

"The portion of land thus rented very rarely, if ever, exceeds a quarter of an acre, and confirms the opinion generally expressed, that the average quantity of land to which an agricultural labourer can do justice, under ordinary circumstances, and at the same time fulfil his duty to his employers, does not exceed a quarter of an acre."*

A large body of testimony to the same effect is to be found in the Appendix, particularly in the Reports of Mr. Stuart, † Mr. Everett, ‡ Mr. Lewis, § Mr. Maclean, || and Mr. Tweedy, ¶ and in the evidence taken before the House of Lords' Committee on Poor Laws, in 1830 and 1831, especially that of Mr. De Maimbray, Mr. Pollen, the Bishop of Bath and Wells, and Mr. Estcourt.

The general results seem to be, 1stly, That the extent of land which a labourer can beneficially occupy is small—seldom exceeding, even when his family is large, half an acre. Such an amount appears to be the utmost which he can cultivate, and continue to rely on his wages as his regular and main support. And if he ceases to rely on his wages; if he becomes, in fact, a petty farmer, before he has accumulated a capital sufficient to meet, not merely the current expenses, but the casualties of that hazardous trade; if he has to encounter the accidents of the seasons, instead of feeling them at second-hand after their force has been broken on the higher classes, his ultimate ruin seems to be almost certain. The following statement by Mr. Day, respecting the effects of large allotments, at Rotherfield, Sussex, is very instructive:—

"I shall here insert part of a series of questions proposed a few years since to the parish officers of Rotherfield, by a gentleman in this neighbourhood, together with the answers returned by them.

"Q. 11. Have the inclosures and system of cottage-building on Crowborough materially contributed to increase the pauper population of Rotherfield?—Yes, very much. 'Resolved, at a vestry meeting, February 22, 1827, that, in consequence of the increasing evil daily arising from huts and small tenements erected in this parish, we are determined to object to all grants and admittances in this parish, requested in future by any person or persons whomsoever.

'Signed by the Churchwardens, Overseers, and several Inhabitants.'

"Q. 12. When were they first allowed to be made?—In a slight degree upwards of 100 years, but at the fullest extent about eight years ago.

* App. (A.) p. 439—443.

† App. (A.) Part I. p. 677.]

|| App. (A.) Part I. p. 575.

‡ App. (A.) Part I. p. 378.

§ App. (A.) Part I. p. 669.

¶ App. (A.) Part I. p. 739.

"Q. 13. By whom?—The Earl of Abergavenny.

"Q. 14. Upon what terms?—In consideration that the person should pay 5*s.* per acre quit rent, and after two years to receive no relief from the parish: if he did, to give up his land to the said Earl. The consequence has been, that the occupier has been obliged to sell his land, thereby bringing other families into the parish, and himself ultimately has become a pauper.'

"I believe the facts at present are much stronger than as represented in these Answers. The evil has now become so great, that the parish buys up the allotments as they are offered for sale, to prevent a succession of families from becoming pauperised on them. The language of the resolution of the vestry uses the word "huts." They are, however, very decent and indeed good, cottages, built of stone found on the spot, with slated roofs. The allotments vary in size, generally about four acres, but some as large as 10 or 12.*"

2dly, That where the system of letting land to labourers has been introduced and carried on by individuals, it has generally been beneficial; and on the other hand, that where it has been managed by parish officers, it has seldom succeeded.

The causes of this difference are well pointed out by Captain Chapman, in the passage which we have cited. Under the unhappy system which has prevailed for the last forty years, charity has been converted from a bond of union into a source of discord. The applicant for relief has been trained to consider the distributors of that relief, the very persons who are to minister to his necessities, as his enemies. He views even their gifts with suspicion, and distrusts still more their attempts to bargain with him. He neither brings to any contract with them the cheerfulness, nor performs his part with the activity and perseverance which would be necessary to the success of the undertaking, even if all that is to be done on their part were wisely and diligently executed. The overseers, on the other hand, anxious to escape with as little trouble as possible from the thankless office that has been forced on them, are likely to bestow little care on the selection of tenants, or in the framing of rules, and still less on enforcing their observance. It cannot, therefore, be matter of surprise, that undertakings which succeed where each party co-operates, should, under opposite circumstances, fail.

3dly, That the occupation of land by the labouring classes may be made, and in fact is made, beneficial to the lessor as well as to the occupier. This appears to us the most important result of our inquiries on this subject.

If letting land to the poor, though beneficial to the occupier, required a sacrifice on the part of the lessor, it is clear that it could not prevail extensively, unless it were effected at the expense

* App. (C.) p. 154.

of the public. And that, if such a system were adopted, as the land applicable to that purpose, or indeed to any other purpose, is limited, and the number of applicants is rapidly augmenting, every year would increase the difficulty of supplying fresh allotments, and diminish their efficiency in reducing the increasing mass of pauperism, until the arrival of a crisis when it would be necessary either to give up the system, resume the land, and clear it as we could of its inhabitants, or abandon the whole country to a helpless and desperate population. Still the immediate advantages of allotments are so great, that if there were no other mode of supplying them, we think it might be worth while, as a temporary measure, as a means of smoothing the road to improvement, to propose some general plan for providing them. And in that case, it would be necessary to collect the fullest possible information as to the quantity which ought to be awarded to each family, or to each member of a family, the terms as to rent, taxes, mode of cultivation, and other points which ought to be imposed on the lessees, and the assistance in stock, manure, seed, or otherwise, which ought to be supplied to them; and it would be necessary to inquire far more diligently than has yet been done, into the amount and the situation of the land which might be thus employed, into the means of keeping up, for a time at least, the supply of allotments, and into the mode by which the population bred up on them could be disposed of.

But since it appears that land may be let to labourers on profitable terms, the necessity for any public inquiry on these points seems to be at an end. A practice which is beneficial to both parties, and is known to be so, may be left to the care of their own self-interest. The Evidence shows that it is rapidly extending; and we have no doubt that as its utility is perceived, it will spread still more rapidly; and that experience will show, if it has not already shown, on what mutual stipulations it can be best effected. It would, probably, be facilitated by some legislative provisions respecting settlement, rates, tithes, and ejection. The two first we shall advert to in the course of this Report. As to the two last, tithes and ejection, though we think it probable that in time the liability of small allotments to tithes would be found dangerous, and that the lessors' present legal remedies would prove too expensive and dilatory, we do not think it necessary that this Commission should propose any alteration. Both subjects have been already brought before Parliament, and we have no doubt that they will be considered with reference, among other things, to the occupation of land by labourers.

LABOUR-RATE.

WE now proceed to a third Scheme for removing or diminishing the burthen created by the able-bodied—namely, that which proposes to effect it by compelling the rate-payers to provide employment, at a given rate of wages, for those labourers who are, or profess to be, unable to procure it for themselves. The mode by which this is effected, we have already designated as the Labour-Rate System. Under this system each rate-payer is required either to employ and pay at a certain rate a certain number of labourers, or to pay to the overseer the wages of those whom he makes default in employing and paying.

Before the 2 and 3 Will. IV., c. 96, was passed, such an agreement was not binding on those who refused to accede to it; any one rate-payer, therefore, who would not employ or pay for his proportion of labourers, was able to set the rest at defiance, and profit by the immediate diminution of rate, without bearing his share of the cost.

This difficulty was attempted to be removed by the first clause of that Act, which enacts, "that when a majority of three-fourths of the rate-payers of any parish, the votes being taken according to the provisions of the 58 Geo. III. c. 69, shall come to any agreement, solely for the purpose of employing or relieving the poor of such parish, such agreement, when approved of by a majority of the justices at petty sessions, shall be binding on the contributors to the poor-rates of such parish, for any period not exceeding six months, therein specified."

Clauses follow, declaring that the Act does not sanction the custom of paying labourers less than the common rate of wages, and making up the deficiency from the poor-rates; that it shall not be lawful to employ any part of the poor-rates of one parish in the employment of persons in any other parish, and confining its operation to those parishes in which the rate exceeds 5s. in the pound. But as no penalty is imposed on disobedience to the agreements thus declared to be binding, the Act has contributed to the increase of labour-rates, rather by the sanction which it gives to them, than by the actual force of its enactments.

The agreements generally set forth that the labour-rate is made "for the better employment of the poor;" and go on to state that all or certain of the rate-payers shall employ labourers in proportion to their assessment or acreage, or to some other standard.

Considerable difference exists, varying almost with each parish adopting the system, as to the classes of rate-payers who are to furnish employment, as to the degree in which it is to be furnished by each class, and as to the working men who are to be considered within the agreement.

One of the three following plans is generally adopted as regards the rate-payers who are to find employment.

The principal, as being by far the most common, is—

That each rate-payer shall employ labourers in proportion to his assessment to the poor's rates.

This plan is almost exclusively adopted in Surrey and in Sussex, besides being very frequently found in every other county in which labour-rates are instituted.

The next most frequently used is—

That the occupiers of land shall share among themselves the whole of the agricultural labour (including the surplus).

This plan is almost exclusively followed in Buckinghamshire, but occurs rarely in any other county.

The third, and least common plan of all, is—

That the occupiers of land shall be compelled to employ a fixed number of labourers, according to acreage or rental; and then, in common with the tradesmen and other rate-payers, to employ, according to their respective rental, a share of the surplus labourers.

This plan is only adopted in five parishes with the labour-rates of which we are acquainted; viz. in Aylesbury, Bucks; Farnham and Frensham, Surrey; and Downton and Westbury, Wiltshire.

Although the three plans stated include the principal bases of the agreements, each separate agreement differs in its details from almost every other agreement, though based on the same common plan, as much as each separate plan differs from the other two. Thus it may truly be said, that scarcely two agreements are in all their provisions the same. The details in which consist the differences in the various agreements are:—

The amount of assessment, or the number of acres rendering it incumbent to employ a labourer.

The deduction to be made on the assessments on trade, on houses below a certain rental, on mills, malt-houses, &c., or on occupations under a given number of acres.

The time for which each rate is made.

The amount of the rate.

The mode in which the return of labourers employed is to be made.

The wages to be paid to the labourers.

The description of work people to be considered and allowed for as labourers, and particularly whether farmers working on their own farms, or their sons, and how many, are to be considered labourers.

Yet among modifications as numerous as the parishes resorting to the system, not a single instance will be found in which

classes of individuals do not complain of the peculiar severity with which the labour-rate affects them. The practice seems to be, not a sharing in fair proportions of the burthen amongst all, but a shifting of the burthen from one class to some other.

Under the first plan, either the whole surplus labour is cast upon trade, and the whole of the agriculturists share the advantage; or the larger agriculturists, or those whose proportion of arable land is large, cast the weight upon the small occupier, the occupier of grass land, the occupier, who alone, or with his sons, can do all the labour his farm requires, and the tradespeople and householders. In some cases a strong desire has been shown to place it upon the tithes, and were it not for the number of compositions, it is probable that such instances would have been frequent.

At Stebbing, in Essex, which is under the first plan, the farmers generally are gainers at the expense of trade. The following are replies of the tradespeople.

"I have not an acre of land, nor any employment whereby I can employ an agricultural labourer. The effect is as follows:—

Old System.	£	s.	d.	New System.	£	s.	d.
1 Year's poor-rate.	21	0	0	1 Year's charge for labour	20	0	10
				1 Year's poor-rate	13	10	0
					£33	10	10
				Deduct old system	21	0	0
				Annual loss . . .	£12	10	10

"As I have no profitable employment for agricultural labour, the system has the effect of raising my contributions to the poor from 11s. 8d. to 18s. 6d. in the pound, which I contend is severe and unjust.

"As a proof that it works well for the farmer, and that it does not impose upon him too much labour, the first rate we had, which was a six weeks' rate, was worked out in four weeks, with the exception of about 15l., and the subsequent rate was over-worked by almost every farmer.

"Thomas Jasper."

"It has a very injurious effect on me, as it charges me for labour which I cannot find, unless I stand still myself, in order to have a man to do the work which I can do myself; which I do not hesitate to say is unjust. I am a publican, and have a small garden, which is all the business I have. I am principally concerned in the beer-trade, which in a country place like this is very small; so that I have plenty of time to attend to the concerns of business, without the incumbrance of an agricultural labourer; and I consider that all the money that I pay for labour-rate is as though so much money was given away.

"Thomas King, Victualler, Assessed to the Poor at 6l."

"It affects me in a small trade, and occupier of about two acres of land, rated 2*l.* 10*s.*; trade rated 9*l.* 10*s.* My trade, on the labour-rate, is taken at 5*l.*, which, if I had not the two acres of land, it would be most oppressive, and much worse than the old custom of paying at times 60 or 80 unemployed poor out of the poor-rates.

"In my humble opinion, the labour-rate only ought to be on the land, as I could on my two acres employ double; and I think a man ought to be paid so that he could support himself by his own labour, not to have half from his employer and half from the parish.

"The trade would then have a plenty to do to pay the necessitous poor-rates, loaded as the trade is with taxation.

"Edward Taylor, Shopkeeper,
Assessed to the Poor at 12*l.* 12*s.* 6*d.*"

"To me it proves an evil, because I have but little land, not so much as I can cultivate with my own spade; and then I am obliged to have a man so many days in the labour-rate, or pay so much money as the labour-rate amounts to, though I have not work for myself.

"Jeroboam Ifitch, Gardener and Beer-shop-keeper,
Assessed to the Poor at 2*l.* 10*s.*"

"I am obliged to have an errand lad, by whom I easily work out the labour-rate. But supposing I was inclined to take an apprentice of any respectable individual not belonging to the parish, or not a pauper of the parish, the labour-rate would then have a very injurious effect upon me, as I should be compelled to pay the charge for labour, without an opportunity of working it out, and the consequence would be, that my payments for the relief of the poor would be considerably increased, which I consider would be unjust. I consider that the labour-rate has had a beneficial effect upon the morals of the poor, as well as upon the agricultural interest; but the contrary is to be said as it regards several tradesmen who reside in this parish.

"Robert Monk, Glazier, &c.
Assessed to the Poor at 3*l.*"

The following two being able to work out their rate, are benefited;—

"It has been to me beneficial; as it saves in the poor-rate assessment 4½*d.* in the pound in six weeks, and does not cost me so much for the labour-rate as I paid for errands, &c., before to idlers, who are now better employed. I and a person similarly situated to myself now employ a boy at 2*s.* per week, which is more than our labour-rate amounts to, but less than what we paid before.

"Elisha Mumford, Harness-maker,
Assessed to the Poor at 3*l.*"

"It has benefited me, and all others in a similar situation; as we now get work done for our money, which before we had to pay to support from 50 to 60 men in idleness or useless employ.

"W. Messent, Victualler,
Assessed to the Poor at 7*l.*"

Four farmers do not speak decidedly in favour, but their lean-

ings are favourable; a fifth is likewise favourable, provided a slight alteration be made, giving an allowance to grass farmers. A sixth, John Tarbert, objects decidedly, because he can himself do all the work his land requires, and is therefore precisely in the situation of a tradesman; the labour is of no use to him. M. Choppin and Wm. Thurgood, the one being allowed to return himself, and the other his son, being thus clear of the rate, are benefited.

"I for myself, holding 121 acres of land, which gives to me six and half labourers, and having one-third meadow, of course not requiring the labour, I find myself inconvenienced, and beg to recommend a distinction to be made; such as giving about one man to 40 acres on the pasture instead of apportioning it altogether, as three parts of the year there can be nothing done but what would be injurious to crops upon pasture. The law undergoing a few modifications, I am of opinion will tend to a great general good, in giving employment on the land to the idle and dissolute, as also putting the land into a better state of cultivation. As regards rate-payers in towns and villages, there are but few but have gardens that can dispense with the allotment of one man for one or two days, as their assessments are in general very low.

"Henry Clarke, Farmer,
Assessed to the Poor at 126*l.* 4*s.* 6*d.*"

"I do not consider mine any criterion, on account of the land being in a very bad state of cultivation. I have felt myself under the necessity of employing more than twice the number of labourers than I shall be able to find employment for two or three years hence; but as my residence is in Stebbing, although my occupation is much larger several miles distant, doubtless I shall be able to employ as many or more labourers than will be allotted to me. I approve of the labour-rate, because it keeps the principal part of the labourers' bodies and minds employed, and tends to make them better subjects than their parents, who have been for years unemployed otherwise than at parish work.

"I believe I may say the labour-rate is a system almost universally approved of in this parish. I know of only one person who objects to it; that is Thomas Jasper.

"J. Budge."

"I certainly think it a general benefit to the farmer and labourer, if it was put on a right foundation; but as it now stands it presses heavily upon me, and all others in the same situation, in a most ruinous manner. I am a small landholder, and cannot get a livelihood except I put my hand to the plough; but if the law was so made as to allow all small landholders to be returned as labourers, it would be the most beneficial Act that ever passed; for it cannot be supposed a small holder can employ the same number of men as the great holder, except he and his sons are allowed to work out their proportion of the rate.

"John Tarbert, Farmer,
Assessed to the Poor at 42*l.* 10*s.*"

"It has done me good, as it is a saving to me of 6s. in the year. As I am a small landholder, the parish allow me to return my son a half a man, and that is more than covers my labour-rate.

"M. Choppin, Gardener,
Assessed to the Poor at 2l. 10s."

"It has done me good, as it has taken a great many men out of the road, and those who were supported in idleness, which has reduced the poor-rate. The parish allowed me to be returned to labour-rate half a man, which is as much as I require; if the law was made for us small holders to be returned as this parish has allowed them to be, it would benefit all small holders like myself; and, if to the contrary, it would be most ruinous. The labourers feel themselves better satisfied than when they had to go to the overseer for their money, as it makes them more independent.

"William Thurgood,
Assessed to the Poor at 12l. 12s."

The parish of Henfield, Sussex, also under the first plan, is an instance of the large farmers deriving advantage, whilst the small farmer, the occupier of grass land, and the tradespeople, are oppressed.

The following are some of the letters received from the tradespeople and small farmers.

"I am a carpenter in a small way, but do it all myself, not wanting a man. I have also about five acres of meadow land, which only requires a labourer in the summer time, when the labour-rate is not required; therefore I cannot work out my labour-rate in the winter months. I must say, I have never paid so much any year to the poor as last year, being nearly as much again in proportion as the large farmers, 18s. 6d. in the pound to their 10s. A few years back, many of the farmers in our parish paid their labourers half the amount due to them for labour, and sent them to the poor-book for the other half; and I must say that this labour-rate seems intended to act upon the same principle.

"Arthur Brooke."

"I am a gunsmith, but do all the work myself; I have not any garden or any means of employing a labourer. If myself and many of my neighbours who cannot, and having no use for a husbandry man, ought not to pay for labour we do not want; if such is to be the case, many of those who now contribute towards the support of the poor would soon become receivers, by belonging to that class of persons. I cannot think it right that I should pay 18s. 6d. in the pound, while the farmers are paying only 10s. in the pound.

"Peter Ward."

"Being a shoemaker in a small line of business, without any land to employ a labourer on; it has done a hurt to me, having been rated to pay after the rate of 18s. 6d. where the farmers have paid only 10s. I consider that a person without land has no right to be reckoned to pay towards a labour-rate.

"Richard Ware."

"I am convinced that myself and every one, not using land, must feel the inconvenience of paying money for labour to the farmers, that they may apply it towards the wages of the men they employ: the farmers in this parish, last year, paid only 10s. in the pound, while I paid 18s. 6d. They may well exclaim that never was any plan adopted that worked so well, when one farmer in this parish acknowledged that he paid 40l. less, last year, for labour than he ever did before. And with whose money was it paid? why, it was taken out of the pockets of the inhabitants, who could not employ labourers. Would it be at all reasonable for householders, tradesmen, &c., to call a meeting, to say, 'Our rents are due, we have contributed towards paying your men their wages; now, in return, you must assist us in paying our rents?'

"James Wattsford."

"I am compelled to contribute to the poor-rate, in alleviation of the opulent farmer. The churchwardens, as well as the overseers of the parish, are composed of opulent farmers and millers; therefore it is their interest to uphold and support a labour-rate, because they alone are benefited, to the great injury of very many tradesmen, shopkeepers, and others who have no opportunity of employing any surplus labour, and which labour they, the farmers, cannot dispense with; it is a fact well known here, they, the farmers, have discharged their usual labourers, that they might employ the surplus labourers, and deduct their wages from their labour-rate; added to which, the farmers have deducted from their labour-rate for their sons, as part and parcel of their families; and one large farmer in the parish has acknowledged, that his poor-rate cost him 40l. less on account of the labour-rate.

"The plain fact is, the opulent farmers, who can best afford, have paid 10s. on the pound, while the dependent tradesmen and shopkeepers have paid 18s. 6d. for the same time.

"W. Williams."

"I consider it would have been a *decided injury* to me, but that I happen to be in partnership with my father and brother, as surgeons, and using, at the same time, about 20 acres of arable and meadow land; and, therefore, our servants *happening to belong to this parish*, we were allowed to *work*, or rather outset for them, according to the labour scale, which otherwise would not have been permitted. Of course, to all persons who had the means of working out their rate, *in lieu of paying money* (by the employment of the parochial labourers), it must be said to have been a *decided advantage*; whilst to *all the small occupiers of houses, rated for that species of property only, the whole of whom are either small mechanics just able to live by their own individual industry, or widows living on a small income, or little tradesmen*, it was a very great and *unequal impost*, inasmuch as they had to contribute 4s. in the pound more under the labour-rate system, than they ever did before under *the old one*; whilst to those who worked their rate, such as the large and moderately large farmer, it was a *benefit of 8s. 6d. in the pound*.

"Nelson Smith Morgan."

"Large farmers in our parish were quite elated with the labour-

rate; they exclaimed, in raptures, 'the best thing that ever was done.' Why? they paid, in the same period of time, 10s. in the pound, while the shopkeeper, small tradesman, and various householders, not employing a man of any description, nor wanting them, had to pay, under the labour-rate, 18s. 6d. in the pound; and with much difficulty it was prevented being carried on two months after Lady-tide. Some of them declared they would have it all the summer.

"John Hicks."

"Mine is a small farm, and most part of it is marsh land, and in the winter it is frequently under water; that being the case, I have not sufficient employment to enable me to work out the rate. It is the large farmers that receive the benefit from it, as the regular labourers they are in the habit of employing work out the whole of their rate; consequently they pay nothing towards it, and my rate goes to their benefit at my loss; so you see in this case, and many others, it acts unequally.

"T. L. W. Dennett."

"It operates, in my opinion, much in favour of the great farmer, and against the little one. The great farmer always having a set of regular workmen in his employ, will always outset the labour-rate; whereas the little farmer is compelled to do the greatest part of the labour himself, for which no allowance is made from the rates; and the tradesmen, I think, are nearly in a similar situation, not having the power of working out the rate, but at a great loss, as many of the great farmers pay little or nothing, and the little farmer and tradespeople nearly the whole of the rate.

"John Dennett."

"I am a householder, and occupy a small grass farm, and only employ a labourer occasionally, and have been enabled to work out nearly all my rate; therefore I do not consider myself hurt or injured by it.

"When the labour-rate was first proposed in this parish, I voted against it, for this reason; that all the labour population of the parish being put into the rate, consequently the rate falls very unequally on the rate-payers, namely, the householders, little farmers and tradesmen, as many have not employed extra labourers to work out their rate.

"And I am also of opinion that the great land occupiers, by placing their regular workmen, whom they must necessarily employ, in the rate, are reaping the benefit of the same at the expense of the other classes.

"L. D. Smith."

The rate seems to have been enforced even to the injury of the labourer, who is striving to keep from pauperism,

John King says—

"I am a gardener; having no land of my own, I go to work for any person who will employ me; I keep no person to assist me whatever; therefore I have no chance of working out my labour-rate. Now I have desired my neighbour to say, that this labour-rate is an injury to every one except the large farmer."

At Pulborough, in Sussex, the labour-rate, also on the first plan, threw the principal burthen on the tithes. The following is the effect as stated by the incumbent, the Rev. J. Austen:—

"The parish of Pulborough is thus rated in round numbers to the poor-rate: land, 4,000*l.*; glebe and tithes, 1,050*l.*; houses, 950*l.*;—6,000*l.*

"By the 1st resolution one man is to be taken for every 30*l.* rating, 30s. 1,050*l.* for glebe and tithes . . . 35 men.

"By the 2nd resolution, 1s. in the pound is to be paid every six weeks—1,051 shillings; this divided by 6, gives 175 shillings weekly, which will pay at 10s. each . . . 17½ men.

52½ men.

"The glebe and tithes must employ or pay, as all the houses and ratings under 30*l.* are exempt from the 1st resolution; there would still be 60 men left on the highways, of whom the tithes and glebe would pay one-sixth . . . 10 men.

The rectory would thus pay . . . 62½ men.

Besides the common poor-rate of 8s. in the pound.

"Sixty-two men, at 10s. each, weekly—31*l.* and for a whole year, 1,612*l.*, and 420*l.* for the common poor-rate; in the whole, 2,032*l.*"

The Rev. J. Calvert, of Whatfield, Suffolk, speaking of Cosford Hundred, in which that parish is situated, says—

"It is almost superfluous to state the temptation which is thrown in the way of occupiers of land, to combine against the tithe-owner. One instance of this I conceive to have taken place in the parish of Layham; and another is likely to occur in a parish where the tithes belong to a lay impropriator.

"The clergymen of other parishes within this hundred have, on account of their compositions in lieu of tithes, been exempted from any causes of complaint; I, for one, am a gainer in the diminished rates which I have to pay this year."

The Rev. T. S. Hodges, of Little Waltham, states—

"I cannot conceal from myself the fact, that were the labour-rate a permanent measure, it would very materially affect the value of tithe property, and in fact be a tax upon it to that amount; inasmuch as at present the clergyman's income arises from a tenth of the produce of the land, free of the cost of producing it, whereas the labour-rate would inflict upon him one-tenth of the whole labour of the parish: the hardship would be greater, as he alone would be unable to employ the labour imposed upon him, unless during the harvest-work, the law not allowing him (a law advisable rather to restrain than to enlarge) to occupy more than fifty acres beyond his glebe."

Many expressions will be found in the replies evincing the

desire of the farmers to establish a labour-rate, for the express purpose of reaching the tithes.

Mr. Wm. Venton, a farmer at Lenham, Kent, says—

“I objected, upon the ground that the labour-rate did not embrace all assessable property, and most particularly the tithe, which, as it now stands, is a very great check upon employing a superabundant number of labourers.”

The attempt to throw the weight of pauperism upon particular classes has been as successful under the second plan, under which the agriculturists divide the whole labour amongst themselves, as it has been under the first plan.

The tradespeople, not being assessed to the labour-rate under the second plan, will in no instance be found to complain; if, indeed, they are not as extensively benefited as particular classes of the agriculturists, they are at least slightly benefited by a reduction of the poors' rates consequent upon a portion of the receivers having been withdrawn from the parish pay table.

Under this plan in the parish of Great Kimble, we find the large occupiers of arable land casting the burthen on the grass farmers and on small arable farmers, who with their children can perform the requisite labour. The distribution in this parish is made according to assessment; a double injustice to grass land, which requires least labour, and on that very account pays the highest rent, and is subject to the highest assessment. If the distribution of labourers had been by the acre, the grass farmer would have received as many labourers as the arable farmer, whilst he has employment for only half the number; by the distribution according to rental he is compelled to take twice the number of labourers allotted to the farmer occupying an equal quantity of arable land, he therefore receives four times as many labourers in proportion to his wants. The following are answers received from Great Kimble:—

“I cannot like the name of a labour-rate, as I know I cannot get a living with it. I have got a living for a large family without it for 50 years, on a small farm of 61 acres. I know that a labour-rate will soon ruin small farmers, like myself, if the grass land is to take the same quantity of labourers as the arable land. There must be twice the work on arable land as on grass, therefore they ought to have twice the labourers. Grass in our parish is taxed higher than the arable, therefore with a labour-rate they will have more men, and not so much work.

“If there is a labour-rate allowed by Act of Parliament, I hope it will be only for the winter half-year; for I know the large farmers would like to have their harvest done by the parish. And if there is a labour-rate allowed, I ask to be allowed my sons as labourers on the farm, according to the scale in the parish, without being beholden to the overseers, to allow just who they may think proper, as was the case

last winter. If renting farmers like myself are not allowed to count their sons, I ask the Commissioners, how are they to live? If it be possible, I beg the labour-rate will be done away with, and still let us be free.

“John Pleased.”

“The labour-rate is to me very injurious, as it compels me to take men which I have no employ for. I occupy only 49 acres of grass land, and have two sons, and not got half work enough for ourselves, while I am compelled to take a man and a boy; the boy's pay I about save, by paying less poor-rates; the man's wages is all loss to me; therefore it injures me 8s. per week.

“I consider the arable farmer ought to take double the men as grass farmers do, to make it on a fair scale. If there is a labour-rate allowed, I hope there will be a fair difference made between arable land and grass land, and I hope all renting farmers will be allowed to count their sons as labourers, on their fathers' farms, according to the scale in the parish, without being beholden to the overseer to allow just whom he thinks proper. I do not ask for them to be allowed as do not work; if sons are not allowed, it must soon ruin men like myself with families. The labour-rate will undoubtedly soon ruin small concerns; the inclosures have ruined three parts of the little farms, and the labour-rate will soon ruin the remaining few farms.

“Edmund Callam.”

“I occupy seven acres of grass land, and have not half work enough for myself; therefore the labour-rate compels me to pay for other men's labour which cannot do without them.

“John Hughes.”

“I have only six acres of grass land, and have two sons. The labour-rate wrongs me very much, as I cannot get any employ for my sons, as my neighbours will not employ my sons, as they cannot be allowed by the overseer.

“Therefore while there is a labour-rate, we three are obligated to live on our little, and have a boy to do our little work for us; without this rate we could get a little work at times.

“John Langstone.”

Princes Risborough, likewise under the second plan, affords an instance of the occupiers of rich soil making an acreage disposition of the labourers equally upon lands of all qualities, although the parish includes a large tract of sheep-walk. By this means of course the burthen is thrown upon two or three sheep-walk occupiers, who, with the occupiers of all other qualities of land, are compelled to receive one man to 35 acres. The degree of injury thus inflicted in Princes Risborough may be judged of by the fact, that in the parish of Westbury, Wiltshire, only one man is allotted to 400 acres of sheep-walk, whilst one man is given to every 30 acres of arable land, and one to every 50 acres of meadow.

The following is an extract from the letter of J. Grace, occupier of 600 acres of sheep walk in Princes Risborough.

"The parish of Risborough contains about 5000 acres, part of which is very good land, and a part very bad; the occupiers of the good land are more numerous than those of the poor land. Myself and another hold nearly 600 acres each, of nearly the worst land in the parish: you may therefore easily see that we are out-voted in the select vestry, who agreed that the labour-rate should be levied, not by value, but by acreage; thus making land, now occupied, a considerable extent of it, as sheep-walk, and consequently producing no labour at all: what is not so applied is of poor quality, and cannot produce so much, and require so much labour as the best land, which produces a larger bulk of corn and straw. I therefore considered this mode of levying the labour-rate very unfair, and, with others in the same situation, objected to it; but we were out-voted by the rest of the select vestry, who were occupiers of good land, and would not consent to a fair allowance."

In this parish the little farmers league with the large farmers; it is not the large farmer shifting the burthen upon the small farmer, but the occupiers of rich land, both the large occupiers and the small occupiers casting the burthen upon a few occupiers of extensive sheep-walk.

Even under the third plan, on the face of which great fairness appears, the same system of burthen-shifting will be found to prevail. At Farnham, in Surrey, where the third plan was used during the last year, and is now in use, two provisions formed the basis of the agreement. The first—

"That for every thirty acres of *pasture, wood, and arable land*, and for every six acres of hop ground, the occupier shall find constant employ for one man, before he will be permitted to work out his portion of the above rate."

Here no allowance is made for the smaller quantity of labour required for pasture and for wood lands; no exemption is made of the small holder occupying less than twenty acres of land, exempted in many parishes on the express ground that he is *bonâ fide* a labourer, and capable of performing all the labour that his little holding requires. No mention is made of the sons of the small farmer who, with himself, are more than sufficient for working his farm. Thus, then, we find that under the terms of the agreement, a large share of the burthen may be cast upon the holder of meadow, the holder of woodland, the holder of less than twenty acres with or without sons, or the small holder with two or three sons.

The second provision enacts—

"That all persons who are assessed to this rate, and are not occupiers of land, may participate in the benefit of the rate by *making terms with the occupiers of land to work out their rate for them.*"

Under this provision, a further burthen is necessarily cast

upon traders. It appears, that the agriculturists generally worked out the rate for those not holding land, at one-half of the wages awarded by the parish. Mr. Pain, an extensive grower of hops in that parish, says—

"Rate-payers, who had no land, were allowed to get their portion of the labour-rate worked out by any farmer who had previously complied with the terms of the agreement, and it has generally been done at one-half. Every such rate-payer might have had his rate thus worked out if he had chosen; very many have done so, amongst others, the proprietors of the large and small tithes, and thereby have directly effected a saving of half the amount."

Thus the trade portion of the surplus labourers is awarded to the large agriculturists at half wages, trade bearing the other half. This agreement, in fact, partakes of the unfairness of the first plan, as oppressing the tradespeople, and of the unfairness of the second as oppressing the small agriculturists and the owners of meadow land.

The following is the statement of a rate-payer:—

"When the labour-rate was first introduced, I had hoped it would have been beneficial to all parties; but if it is to be continued as it is now acted upon in this parish, it will increase rather than diminish pauperism. Almost every person in the town now has something to do with the pauper labourer; he must either keep a man in idleness, or send him to work upon some farm, and pay half his wages. Such a system as this is both monstrous and disgraceful on the part of the farmers, and, if continued, will make the men worse instead of better, because there is no hope of their being freed from the thralldom of pauperism.

"The labour-rate was adopted, because, as the farmers would have it, there was more labourers than could possibly be employed upon the land. Now, supposing there was 30 men too many, the fair proportion would be to allot 20 to the farmers, and 10 to the town; the town people would have taken the 10, and employed them the best way they could; but the farmers now turn round and say, 'No, we can employ your 10 in addition to our 20, if you will pay half the amount of their wages; and if you will not agree to that, you must pay the whole amount of the labour-rate assessed upon you.' What can be more convincing than this, that here is not a man too many? I intend, when another labour-rate is proposed, to make a strong objection to such shameful proceedings as this.

"*William Mellersh.*"

The Farnham labour-rate, however, appears to have been among the most successful experiments of the kind, which may probably be attributed to the following clause, and to the fairness with which the arbitrators have performed their duty.

"Sixth. That Messrs. J. M. Paine, Charles Knight, J. Lidbetter, George Smith, and William West, be, and are hereby appointed arbitrators to determine in case any dispute should arise between the parish

officers and the parties who apply to work out their rate; and likewise that they be, and are hereby appointed to make such alteration in the application of that part of the second resolution which relates to the quantity of land upon which a labourer must be constantly employed, as they may consider just and reasonable, in order to obviate any particular grievance which may arise from its strict and literal enforcement, and that the decision of any three of such arbitrators shall be final and conclusive."

But what can be said in favour of a legislation which depends for its success on the impartiality of persons empowered to decide on matters in which they themselves have a strong and immediate pecuniary interest, which enables three persons out of a population of 5858, to make a decision which shall be final and conclusive as to the quantity of land upon which a labourer must be constantly employed: which enables them to decide, as they appear to have done, that the sons of farmers are labourers, but that gardeners, grooms, or assessed servants are not?

In an adjoining parish, Frensham, the third plan was also tried; but instead of each occupier of land being compelled to take labourers according to his acreage, as at Farnham, he was compelled to take one man for every 20*l.* assessment; and in this parish no restriction was placed upon those who did not hold land as to the disposal of their share of the surplus labour. Against this agreement no complaints were made by the tradespeople. The small farmers having sons who work as labourers upon their farms, seem numerous in this parish, and upon them the burthen appears to have fallen. The following are statements made by that class:—

"I have sons (eight) enough to do the whole work on my farm (about 60 acres), and to be compelled to pay for labour, the consequence would be, I must bring my own children in idleness, to employ and pay others; and in that case it must be injurious; and in all cases of small farmers, if the farmer cannot do the labour without hiring (when there is a family) it is impossible in the present state of things for that man to live and pay his way.

"William Mayhew."

"The resolutions of the parish exclude the sons of farmers above one from working out the labour-rate, although they be actually employed as labourers by their parents. I have three sons, and am under the necessity of sending them to work as labourers. It therefore places on me two more labourers than it does on many of my neighbours, who hold an equal farm with me and have no family. Such proceedings are very injurious to the working farmers, who have a family, and would on me and all others, so situated, I think, end in ruin.

"Stephen Baker."

"It will be a great good to the great rich farmers; no doubt they sing, 'O, be joyful!' that all others not of like caste are obliged

help pay their labourers. But to all little farmers and others, it will be a great evil and tax; I know two or three little farmers who have sons grown up, and do all their business; now, is it not a hard case they should be obliged to hire a labourer or two to work out their rate, or pay 25 per cent. more than their opulent neighbours pay, as a full rate is made, and 25 per cent. deducted on such persons as work out the whole rate? Since this labour-rate has been in operation, the poor-rates have been the same as usual. I have paid since October last three 5*s.* rates in the pound, and perhaps another will be brought forward before next October.

"James Keel."

It may be assumed that there are not any grass farmers in this parish, as no complaint is made by any such person. Had there been such, the injury to them would, as we have seen, have been great, labourers being forced on them on the precise ground that they do not want them.

The parish is thus described by Mr. Mason:—

"The parish of Frensham is an agricultural parish. The land is of a very similar quality throughout, and there is scarcely a rate-payer who is not in the occupation of land, or otherwise in a situation to give employment. These circumstances afforded peculiar means of equalizing the burthen, and yet success was not obtained."

The agreement at Downton, in Wiltshire, is also under the third plan; the labourers being apportioned according to assessment. The following is the statement of Mr. R. H. Hooper, a select vestryman of that parish:

"There ought to be a difference between a farm that is chiefly of arable and one with a large proportion of meadow land, as those occupying the former admit, that both with their quota of regular and freemen, they have barely sufficient, while those occupying the latter state that they have considerably more than they can find work for: it can be accounted for only in this way; the meadow lands, standing three times as high on the rate as arable land, are in consequence obliged to employ three times the number of regular labourers, although they do not want so many, as there is no ploughing, sowing, carting manure, or threshing required on meadow land."

It is evident from this that the burthen rests upon the grass farmer, and no doubt also on the small arable farmer, who by himself or with his sons can perform the labour which his farm requires.

Great oppression upon an individual rate-payer, or upon a class of rate-payers, may likewise be exercised by the overseers determining by whom each labourer shall be employed. Mr. Griffin, of Send and Ripley, says—

"A few days ago I hired a strong, healthy, middle-aged labourer,

at 10s. per week; the next day, a little old man came and told me the overseer had sent him instead of the man I had agreed with."

We might continue to illustrate the unfairness with which the system is conducted, until we had exhausted the parishes from which we have received information on the subject: for in each parish the surplus labourers are thrown chiefly upon one class by a combination amongst the other classes. The small occupier, who, by himself or with his children, is able to perform the labour necessary to his little farm, will however, in the great majority of cases, be found to be the severest sufferer, whether the labour-rate be upon the first plan, the second or the third. The only small occupiers who seem content are those without sons, and whose farms are sufficiently extensive to require their own time in superintendence. This class will invariably be found to prefer the system, and the reason is admitted by themselves; viz. that they save in poor-rate, and do not receive under the labour-rate more persons than are sufficient to do their work. In some instances they state that they do not receive under the labour-rate as many labourers as they previously employed.

It may perhaps appear strange, that perpetrating, as they usually do, such serious injury upon the largest portion of the rate-payers, labour-rates should have been so extensively adopted; the explanation is, that the large farmers are benefited, and that in an agricultural parish they command a majority in vestry.

Mr. Bullen of Kelvedon, Essex, says—

"There was no occasion in this parish, nor would it have been done but for a junto of powerful landholders, putting down opposition by exempting a sufficient number, to give themselves the means of a majority."

Unfortunately, the power is often vested in the very class which has the least inducement to make a good use of it—those who hope to find in paupers an abundant supply of cheap labour. The Rev. R. Johnson, of Lavenham, Suffolk, says,—

"I am told that language to the following effect has been made use of in this neighbourhood: *i. e.* 'The more men unemployed the better, and the higher the poor-rates the better for us; the landlords must reduce their rents in proportion, and we shall be benefited by employing men at such wages as we choose to give them.'"

The small farmer, who, by himself or with his sons, can perform all the labour he requires, gains nothing by the real or apparent cheapness, for he employs none. The tradesman, too, is similarly situated; he must lose by pauperism, and, unlike the farmer, to whom local connexion is of no importance, is tied to the spot, and must bear all the evils which belong to the parish, for, to leave it would be to leave his bread. He is likewise very

frequently a small proprietor, owning his house, and a few acres of land.

In many cases the large occupiers have been enabled to carry the plan by intimidation. A rate-payer in a parish in Surrey, whose name and residence, from fear of injury to him, are suppressed, says,—

"I am bound by the overseers or guardians of the parish (who have influence over trade) not to vote against a labourer's rate, or to lose their work or custom."*

Again, Mr. Hicks, of Henfield, says—

"There are very many small farmers in this parish, who, from fear of losing their little farms, or of offending their more wealthy neighbours, or from not understanding how the labour-rate would operate, consented to give it a trial. The result has been that several have proved the expenses 25 per cent. more than before the existence of a labour-rate. There are smiths, coopers, harness-makers, &c., who, from fear of offending, abstained from making their objections."

In many instances, after having tried the system for a year or two, a majority of the rate-payers have succeeded in discontinuing it. So strong, however, is the apparent promise of a labour-rate, that even those who complain bitterly of its oppressive nature, according to the plan adopted in their own parishes, conclude with admiration of the principle, "provided it can be carried into operation with an equal pressure upon all." No one, however, has yet pointed out any means for effecting the desired "equal pressure," which means have not been tried in some other parish, and there proved ineffectual.

A Bill was introduced into Parliament during the last Session, for amending the 2 and 3 Will. IV. c. 96. The principal object of this Bill was to enforce the adoption of the third plan, that by which each occupier is compelled to employ men in proportion to his acreage (reference being had to the description of cultivation), before he is considered as taking a share of the surplus labourers. The intention of the Bill, however, as to the equalization of the burthen would probably have been defeated by the wide discretion which it gave to the rate-payers, under the provision,

"That every occupier should take one able-bodied labourer for so many acres of arable land as may be determined by the majority aforesaid of the rate-payers in vestry assembled to require one such labourer for the proper cultivation of the same, regard being had to the description and quality of the land; and also that every such occupier shall employ one able-bodied labourer for so many acres of grass land, one for so many acres of wood land, and one for so many acres of hop ground, in his occupation as shall respectively be determined by the majority as aforesaid, before he shall be permitted to claim any ex-

* Answers from Surrey, App. (D).

emption from the payment of his proportion of the said rate, or derive any benefit or assistance therefrom."

Under this provision, the arable farmers, if the majority of votes, might make the grass land, the wood land, and the down land take the same amount of labour as the arable land; or the farmers, generally combining against trade, might vote, that after the farmer should have received one man, or even less, to every 100 acres, the remaining labourers should be considered surplus, and be distributed amongst the rate-payers generally, according to assessment.

A plan for remedying all unfairness in the distribution of the labourers, has been proposed in a circular letter issued by Mr. Hillyard, the President of the Northamptonshire Farming and Grazing Society.

Mr. Hillyard's scheme resembles the first plan, that generally used in Surrey and Sussex. It proposes to obviate the objections to an assessment distribution by a graduated scale, intended, of course, to represent the exact proportion of demand for profitable labour possessed by each of the rate-payers. But the data upon which the calculations are founded appear to be arbitrary. Mr. Hillyard says, "Occupiers of houses above 5l. to be rated at one-third of the amount of the poor-rate." Such houses then ought to have as much real demand for the one-third allotted to them, as arable land has for the three-thirds. But the assertion is wholly unsustainable. The proposition may appear liberal, but it appears so only because to rate householders in the same sum as landholders would be the height of injustice. Again, he proposes that "Occupiers of pasture or woodland be rated at one-half of the amount of the poor-rate." Grass land is generally rated twice as high per acre as arable, and therefore, if burdened with labourers in proportion to one-half of its assessment, would be bound to employ as many labourers per acre as arable, though requiring only half as many. Again, "Occupiers of land, one-half or more of which is pasture, the remainder arable land, to be rated at three-fourths of the amount of the poor's-rate." Supposing the pasture to exceed one-half, in the degree that it exceeded the half, the burthen would increase in unfairness. Lastly, "No land to be deemed pasture that has not been constantly in grass for seven years and upwards." This is a proposition for a seven years' injustice. If legalized, it would act almost as a prohibition of laying down land.

A nearer approximation towards preventing the oppression of any class of rate-payers would be to ascertain the average number of labourers required by each mode of cultivation, and then to enact that one man be employed by—

- acres of arable land,
- acres of pasture,
- acres of down,
- acres of liops,
- acres of woodland,

and for smaller or larger quantities of land in proportion.

That the owners of water meadow should be exempt during the time their lands are under water.

That every farmer should take one man for every — horses.

—	—	— oxen, cows,
		&c.
—	—	— sheep.
—	—	— pigs.

That farmers and their sons who work as labourers should be acknowledged as such, and allowed for accordingly.

And that after this apportionment had been made, the remaining labourers should be apportioned amongst the employers of labour in proportion to their assessment to the poor's rate.

This would be as near perhaps as a statute could reach; all further adjustment must be left to the parishioners themselves. And yet there remains abundant room for disagreement and oppression. Between the farmers, as to the quality of arable land; is land that requires little labour in its cultivation to be burthened, and that which requires much to be comparatively exempt? Again, What shall be considered pasture or meadow land, is land laid down for grass to be charged as arable, and if not, how can a farmer be prevented from pretending that his land is laid down when he intends to plough it at the recurrence of the season? Who shall determine where down land ceases and meadow begins? Who shall determine when water meadow is in a fit state to admit labour upon it? What shall constitute "working as a labourer?" Is the farmer who works one day in the year as such to be exempt, or is the man who can prove that he worked twelve hours a day during a whole year, with the exception of a few days, to be denied his claim to be reckoned a labourer because he did not work those few days? Again, as between the farmers and the rate-payers generally. The farmers may vote all the arable land in the parish inferior, and requiring a less quantity of labour; they may vote the pasture to be down land, or a species of poor marsh, or unfit to bear labour; they may vote that all farmers and their sons have performed the labour necessary to include them as agricultural labourers, and such occurrences might follow as are described in the following communication from Mr. Griffin of Send and Ripley:—

"Farmers having any number of sons were allowed to rate them

as labourers out of this rate, so that we have now yeomanry paupers, hunting, shooting, and riding about the country, enjoying themselves on labourers' allowances."

With the utmost care of the legislature, most of these means of oppression must remain open. The legislature cannot arrange the detail requisite for every parish even for one year, and on the details depends the working of the general provisions.

Even were it possible to prevent injustice between the rate-payers of the same parish, it would be impossible to prevent injustice between parish and parish. In almost every labour-rate which we have seen, a provision exists expressly prohibiting employment to labourers who have not a settlement. Indeed, many persons avow their object to be the expulsion of non-parishioners. At Thorney Abbey, Cambridge, the number of labourers remaining in the parish gives only one man to 60 acres.

Mr. John Pask says—

"The labour-rate has done good, by excluding strangers from the parish at a period of the year when they were not wanted, and by giving employment to the labourers belonging to the parish."

Mr. William Stanford, of Henfield, Sussex, states—

"There are some parishes who speak highly of a labour-rate, viz, such parishes as have not enough of their own poor to do all the labour within their parish; although they may have had several of their own out of employ, occasioned by some farmers employing out-parishioners; but by confining their resolutions in the labour-rate to their own parishioners, those who employ men belonging to other parishes are compelled to discharge them."

The parishes from which the least dissatisfaction is expressed will generally be found to be of this class. Polstead, in Suffolk, is an example; in that parish the resident parishioners amount only to three and a fraction for each 100 acres. Lemer is another instance, and so is Nuthurst, in Sussex.

Mr. J. W. Smith, of Nuthurst, says—

"We have about 2600 acres of land in the parish, and but 85 labourers *belonging to it*, which is not sufficient to do the work."

But those parishes whose labourers have sought employment elsewhere, and are driven back, make loud complaints.

Mr. Newman, of Crawley, in Sussex, complains of the evil thus inflicted upon his parish: he says—

"There has been no labour-rate in the parish of Crawley, in consequence of there not being sufficient agricultural land to employ half the labourers; and I am sorry to say, owing to the labour-rate in the adjoining parishes, our labourers have been sent home, and we have been compelled to support them in comparative idleness ever since the above rate was adopted, and must continue to do so under the present system."

The advantage thus unfairly gained, however, has in many cases been of short duration.

Mr. William Stanford, of West Grinstead, Sussex, says—

"As soon as we could arrange, a rate was made for the better employment of the poor in this parish, and continued in force until the 15th of April last, and certainly enabled us to get through the first part of the winter with less men out of employ than we otherwise should have done. After Christmas, we began to feel the effect of other parishes adopting a labour-rate, and confining themselves to their own parishioners, in consequence of which several labourers came home, and, although men of good characters, had no chance of finding employment but on the parish account."

A still more serious injury appears to be caused to parishes not having a labour-rate, when a portion of its occupiers hold land in a labour-rate parish. To make room for the labourers imposed on them by that parish, they discharge their own parishioners, preferring, of course, a smaller burden in the form of a poor-rate, to a greater one in that of a labour-rate.

The following communication from Mr. Glascock, churchwarden of Castle Hedingham, Essex, will show the extent of evil to that parish from the practice.

"The labour-rate was not adopted in this parish, although it has been tried in all the surrounding parishes except Little Yeldham, and is now in force in Great Yeldham, Gestingthorpe, and Great Maplestead. The result has been, that in these parishes there has been no demand for the labourers of this parish; that some of our labourers who were employed by farmers holding land in this and one of the labour-rate parishes, have been discharged; and that farmers whose principal occupations are in the labour-rate parish have employed in our parish the labourers of the other parish to our prejudice, so that, as is truly observed by Mr. Stubbins, overseer of this parish, the surplus labour of other parishes has been thrown upon Castle Hedingham. The facts from which you will draw your conclusion are these; Mr. —'s principal labourers in this parish are from Great and Little Yeldham; Mr. —, on 114 acres in this parish, has but two men belonging to this parish, the rest are all from Gestingthorpe, whom under the labour-rate he is obliged to employ; Mr. — has discharged one man; he had discharged two belonging to this parish, alleging that he must employ a certain number of Gestingthorpe men, and he has not work for all, and a Gestingthorpe man is now actually residing in this parish and having work in this parish. Mr. — is also obliged to employ Gestingthorpe men. Mr. — has been also called upon to employ one Yeldham man."

A witness residing in Hurstperpoint, in Sussex, occupying land in that and in two adjoining parishes, in the former of which only has the labour-rate been adopted, admits that he has pursued this course. He says, speaking of Hurstperpoint, the labour-rate parish,—

"I hold 33 acres of land in the parish, half arable and half meadow; also I have about 450 acres in two adjoining parishes, and I employ some labourers in those parishes out of this parish, because they are not very full of paupers. In neither of those parishes (which are, Albourne, a small parish, and Woodmancoat, a larger one) has the labour-rate been employed."

Having thus shown the operation of the labour-rate system on the rate-payers, we will now consider its effects on the labourers: effects of far greater importance, both as applying to a much more numerous class, and as influencing not only their prosperity but their morals.

There appears to be no doubt that the adoption of a labour-rate has, in many instances, produced an immediate improvement in the condition and character of a portion of the labourers within its operation.

It must be remembered, that working on the roads and in the gravel-pits is considered by the labourers as wholly useless, and therefore only inflicted upon them to gratify the malice of the overseers; in some cases, perhaps, of the rate-payers generally. And this opinion is no doubt often strengthened by the incautious and petulant remarks of an overseer, who feels himself surrounded by difficulties in the performance of his office, and being an uneducated man, has not perceived that the vicious, as the victims of ignorance, are truly objects of compassion, and therefore deserving of all the lenity which is compatible with their own good, and the good of society. Considering themselves the victims of persecution, it is not wonderful that ignorant men should thus be impressed with vindictive feelings towards the rest of society, and become thoroughly vicious. Under such circumstances almost any alternative would prove to be, and would by them be considered, an improvement in their condition. A feeling of contentment is thus created which no doubt exhibits itself in more moral conduct, and in increased industry.

John Boxall, a labourer, at Frensham, Surrey, says,—

"It has completely allayed that feeling of discontent which was so general a short time ago, by the improved mode of employment it has given to a great number of us. The value of our labour is all we want."

Mr. John Marchant, of Hurstperpoint, Sussex, says,—

"When they work for the parish in such numbers, they corrupt each other (being chiefly the worst labourers), but when divided amongst the occupiers of lands and houses, they become better men in every sense."

Mr. Morgan, of Henfield, says,—

"I believe *we all agree* that the peace and morality of the lower orders were much improved during its continuance."

Mr. Long, of Farnham, says,—

"From the circumstance of no young men having been brought before the magistrates for any disobedience or misdemeanor, it may be inferred that they have become even steadier under their improved condition."

Mr. Hooper, of Downton, Wiltshire, says,—

"Previous to its employment, large numbers of men were congregated together, either at the gravel-pits, the roads, or some other public work, badly paid, not overlooked, and, consequently, daily becoming more indolent, discontented, and insolent; but by distributing them to the different farms, these evils were got rid of."

The Rev. Richard Blunden, of Alton, Hampshire, says,—

"I have no doubt the labour-rate, dismissing the pecuniary saving from our view, has been very advantageous both to the morals and the comfort of the labourers in this parish, and would have been much more so was it not for the pernicious operation of the present beer bill. In reference to the morals of the labourers, it disperses them from their consultations in *the gravel-pit and on the road*, where was concocted the means by which they might rob the preserves of game, hen-roosts of their inmates, and gardens of vegetables."

Another circumstance may likewise account for the change in the state of mind of this portion of the labourers; they generally obtain increased wages.

B. Pease, Holywell,—

"Agricultural labourers receive a benefit from the labour-rate, as they are employed and paid better than they would be when they are employed at parish work."

J. Cranfield, Holywell,—

"As it respects agricultural labourers, they receive a benefit from the working of the rate; for they are employed, and paid better than they would be were they on the parish."

W. H. Paine, Farnham,—

"The labourer now finds little difficulty in procuring work, and generally gets better wages than before."

But this partial improvement appears to be dearly purchased. We have seen that the first act of a labour-rate is to expel every unsettled labourer. No matter how long he may have been a steady and faithful servant; no matter how good a workman. He is not a parishioner, and however much he may be attached to his employer, and to the spot, he must give up his employment, and go where he is not known, and where none but parish work may be found him.

Mr. Robert Aichison, of Westbury, Wilts, says,—

"An effect of the system has been severely felt in our part of this parish, (which is almost exclusively an agricultural district, and remarkable for the sobriety and good behaviour of the labourers)—namely, that it has obliged several of my farming neighbours to discharge workmen of

approved character and tried fidelity, (some of whom had been brought up on their estates from their youth,) simply because they did not happen to have a settlement here, and take in their places men less qualified and not so trustworthy. With some of these persons I have had opportunities of conversing, and have felt much pained to observe the sad consequences of the breaking up of that mutual attachment which had for so many years subsisted between their masters and themselves."

Mr. Lacy, of Farnham, Surrey, speaking of out-parishioners, says,—

"There are cases where good labourers and old servants have received their discharge."

Mr. Clapson, of Hellingley, Sussex,—

"I employ two men who do not belong to this parish, and if I were forced to employ my proportion of those who belong to this parish, I must of necessity discharge the two above mentioned. This case is very common in this neighbourhood, and I have no doubt but the labour-rate would cause the removal of many of the best workmen in the country."

The Rev. F. Calvert, of Whatfield, Suffolk,—

"Labourers being able to obtain employment only in the parishes to which they belong, are often obliged by a labour-rate to leave situations in which they may have maintained themselves by industry many years, in order to remove to their own parishes, where they must, in all probability, become paupers."

H. Barker, of Henfield, Sussex,—

"The labour-rate has had this effect; those who have had their servants for years in their employ, in our parish, have sent them home to their parishes, because they would employ those belonging to the parish."

Mr. Stanford, of West Grinstead, Surrey,—

"The adoption of any plan that will, in its effect, remove good and industrious workmen from their present employers, and send them home to their own already burthened parishes, must be attended with the worst of consequences, that of destroying the morals and principles of the men, and bringing utter ruin on the parishes."

Mr. Hicks, of Henfield, Sussex,—

"It is very plain that such a bill may have the effect of cruelly injuring the industrious labourer under a kind but distant master, by sending both him and his family home to their parish; and whatever parish might hereafter become burthened with poor, the labourers would have no hope of distant employment, because the universal cry would be, 'We have a labour-rate, and it obliges us to employ or pay (exclusively) our own parishioners, whether they are good workpeople or bad.' It surely must be an error to attempt to remedy surplus agricultural labour, by driving men home to their parishes by indirect means;

and then compelling the farmers to employ them through parish vestries and bench boards of agriculture!

"It has been customary in Sussex to hold out rewards to labourers who could bring up their families without parochial relief; but such a system as the labour-rate would entirely prevent so desirable an object; they would soon become slaves instead of free."

The following are the replies of four labourers residing at Ifield, Sussex, but not belonging to that parish.

"It is an injury to the labouring classes in general, as the farmer and the gentleman are alone benefited by it, and not the labourer. In particular, people situated like myself, out of their own parish, are driven from their work and their homes to their parish, and are wholly dependent on the overseers for employment, when, but for that, they might be earning a comfortable living, with a very little assistance. This has been the case with many families since the labour-rate commenced, and should it continue, the injury will be great to many an industrious labourer.

"James Edwards."

"I inform you, as a labourer, that if a labour-rate had taken place in this parish as proposed, it would have been an injury to me. I inform you that I am an out-parishioner, and nothing to depend upon but my daily labour. Not belonging to the parish, I find it difficult to get employ, and, in addition to being out of employ, I have the rate myself to pay, and the system, in its present form, will certainly injure me.

"William Razzle."

"I do not belong to this parish, therefore I cannot say anything in the behalf of the labour-rate, as it appears that it prevents all out-parishioners getting a day's work, so that it is a harm.

"Richard Smith."

"I am afraid the labour-rate is of no good to me, as I do not belong to the parish; I am afraid it will throw me out of work, and drive me home to my parish for employment, and I think it of little use for out-dwellers.

"James Stradwick."

But the evil to the labouring population is not confined to the non-parishioners. The ultimate effect of a labour-rate, or, in other words, of a measure which forces individuals to employ labourers at a given rate of wages, must be to destroy the distinction between pauperism and independence. Our inquiries have convinced us that it is only by keeping these things separated, and separated by as broad and as distinct a demarcation as possible, and by making relief in all cases less agreeable than wages, that anything deserving the name of improvement can be hoped for. But under the labour-rate system relief and wages are confounded. The wages partake of relief, and the relief partakes of wages. The labourer is employed, not because he is a good workman, but because he is a parishioner. He receives a certain sum,

not because it is the fair value of his labour, but because it is what the vestry has ordered to be paid. Good conduct, diligence, skill, all become valueless. Can it be supposed that they will be preserved? We deplore the misconception of the labourers in thinking that wages are not a matter of contract, but of right; that any diminution of their comforts occasioned by an increase of their numbers, without an equal increase of the fund for their subsistence, is an evil to be remedied, not by themselves, but by the magistrates; not an error, or even a misfortune, but an injustice. But can we more effectually maintain this state of feeling than by proclaiming that, at the expense of the landlord, the tithe-owner, the small farmer, and the shopkeeper, all the labourers of the parish are to be kept at the ordinary wages, or nearly the ordinary wages of the district, in a state free from anxiety, restriction, or degradation, however great their numbers, however little their diligence, or however reckless their profligacy or their improvidence?

The following is the labour-rate scale of wages used at Princes Risborough:—

" Each able-bodied labourer above 25 years of age, 8s. weekly.		
	from 20 to 25	" 7s.
Lads	from 18 to 20	" 5s.
	from 16 to 18	" 4s.
	from 14 to 16	" 3s.
	from 12 to 14	" 2s. 6d.
	from 10 to 12	" 2s.

The scale used at Farnham, Surrey, is curious, as showing that a youth of seventeen, and a man above seventy-five, are held equally capable.

" Boys from 12 to 15 years old, 2s. 6d. per week.		
	from 15 to 18	" 5s.
	from 18 to 21	" 7s. 6d.
Men	from 65 to 75	" 10s.
	from 65 to 75	" 7s. 6d.
	Above 75	" 5s.

It is true that these are *minimum* scales, but we know the tendency of the *minimum* to become a *maximum*.

In some parishes in Suffolk an attempt is made to pay each labourer according to his comparative value, and consequently the labourers are divided into classes, each class having a separate rate of wages. At Polstead, in Suffolk, the labourers are classed at 9s., 8s., 7s., and 6s. per week; boys at 5s., 4s., 3s. and 2s. It is, however, probable that these classes have reference to age, and number in family, rather than to the comparative value of the labourer's work. The following is the list circulated amongst the rate-payers at Polstead:—

" That the following labourers be entitled, when so employed, to the respective wages as under-mentioned:—

Men at 9s. per Week. (Here follow about 80 names.)		
Labourers	at 8s. per Week	5 names.
Labourers	at 7s. per Week	7 names.
Labourers	at 6s. per Week	7 names.
Boys	at 5s. per Week	5 names.
Boys	at 4s. per Week	7 names.
Boys	at 3s. per Week	14 names.
Boys	at 2s. per Week	6 names.

The following are opinions expressed by rate-payers as to the probable effect of the labour-rate upon the habits and morals of the independent labourers. Mr. Joseph Sexton, of Westbury, Wilts, says,—

" One evil connected with the labour-rate is omitted, I believe, by all; that its operations bring many industrious labourers on the parish, who otherwise never would have been paupers. Every kind of labour is done in some way or other by the stem-men, and consequently there is nothing left for the usual labourer, and there is no alternative but for him to go to the parish for relief: thus the independent labourer becomes a pauper. There are many instances of this nature in the parish from the plan last year.

" Another evil is, the plan throws out of employ many who come on the rates; and it is impossible to prevent this unless all men would act conscientiously. As soon as the stem-system commences, immediately farmers do not want so many regular labourers; these are consequently paid off, and placed on the stem. I met with a case this week to illustrate this fact: an industrious young man, who had been a soldier, and married a wife abroad, was discharged; he returned to his parish (Westbury), but did not apply for relief. His wife, who is a respectable woman, with himself, slept on straw; they endured the greatest privation rather than go to the parish. At length he got regular employ at 9s. per week. He now became comfortable; he furnished his house, and everything was going on well, till the stem commenced, when he was informed he could not be employed any longer; and he could not get labour till he consented to be stemmed at 3s. per week, for which he labours about three days. He is now off the parish again by his industry, but he told me the stem was 4l. out of his pocket, last year, only for labour.

" The consequences are injurious; when once a person is registered on the parish book, he loses his independence, and generally is not anxious to return to labour. The stem is finished; the work is all done; he then goes to the overseer and demands his allowance; the parish is burthened; the man is degraded; he forms associations with other paupers; idleness and corruption of morals go together; family ties are broken; misery enters the family, and a great deal of the parish money goes to the beer-shop. Thus the number of paupers are increased, the rates are increased, and we are all involved in greater expenses, with less trade to support them."

The Rev. F. Calvert, of Whatfield, Suffolk,—

"Piece-work must be generally discontinued where farmers have so many labourers quartered upon them, that they have not employment enough to supply their increased number of hands with piece-work, nor sufficient capital to pay the increased weekly wages if they could find such work for them.

"A consequent diminution of the industry of all labourers. A gentleman, who is a neighbour of mine, and one of the principal occupiers in the hundred, tells me, that it is his opinion there would not be found, under the operation of a labour-rate continued two or three years, a single industrious man in the whole neighbourhood.

"Single men obtaining constant work under a labour-rate, in whom habits of improvidence have already been fixed by the existing system of pauperism, spend the greatest part of their increased earnings at beer-houses."

Mr. Brand, of Kelvedon, Essex,—

"I believe it has done harm to the rate-payers, by making the labourers less laborious, by giving them less encouragement and more cause for discontent, by not giving an adequate compensation to the industrious man, and assuring the idle a certainty of employment."

Mr. Meade, of Princes Risborough, Bucks,—

"But it is not advisable that all the labourers be paid their wages by the labour-rate, as many employers wish: such a proceeding will render the men all paupers, and destroy the little respectability and independence that yet remains; and at the same time gradually deprive the proprietors of the soil of all rent whatsoever, as at Cholesbury."

Mr. J. Grace, of the same parish,—

"The effect of a labour-rate would be good, as far as regards the profitable employment of the labourers, instead of congregating together as they now do on the roads; but for no other purpose do I think it desirable, or likely to improve the condition of the labouring class; because it holds out no stimulus to encourage the working sort, but puts them on a level with the idle, who will never move from the parish as long as they can demand a certain income from it."

Mr. Hooper, of Downton, Wiltshire,—

"They never try to get employment, but now look constantly to the regulator, and are little desirous to please. The labourer is aware that he is a pauper; that when he has served one master a few days or weeks, he shall be sent to another, and so changing from master to master, he acquires no interest with any."

Mr. Goodman, of Thorney Abbey, Cambridge,—

"It has made my labourers, who belong to this parish, regardless of civility and of giving satisfaction in their work, and been the cause of their not remaining so stationary and attached to the place where they have had employment during the winter as they otherwise would be; they knowing and saying it is not now necessary, as it used to be, for

them to care about pleasing their master by staying with him during harvest, as when the winter sets in, he, or some other farmer in the parish, must find them constant work at not less than 10s. per week; and the consequence is, that most of my labourers belonging to this parish, whom I employ in the winter, leave me in the months of May, June, and July, and the chief part of my harvest-work is done by strangers, who know nothing of my ways, and I nothing of their characters, which, to say the least of, is to me very objectionable."

Mr. Hennant, of Thorney Abbey, Cambridge,—

"If I complain of the little work done, or its being ill done, the reply is, (interlarded with the grossest blackguardism,) 'Oh, we don't care a ——; if you don't like it as it is, you may do your work yourself; for if you discharge us, you must keep us, or have others of the same sort in our stead.'"

Mr. Stephen Cadby, of Westbury, Wilts,—

"The greatest evil, in my opinion, is the spirit of laziness and insubordination that it creates; if you remonstrate with these men, they abuse or injure, certain, however their conduct, they shall receive their money."

Mr. John Harris, of the same parish,—

"Knowing they must receive a certain sum per week, they seldom come to work till seven o'clock, and generally leave by four, and if you remonstrate with them, you only get abuse."

While such are often the effects of a labour-rate on the industry of the labourers, it is equally unfavourable to their frugality and independence. We have already dwelt on the oppression of refusing employment to the labourer who has saved any property. Under the system which we are now considering, the possession of property, or even the mere abstinence from pauperism, becomes sometimes a ground for further taxation.

The following are the replies of some working men who are assessed to the labour-rate:

Those of Ifield, Sussex, say,—

"I have built a small cottage on the waste land, given me by the lord of the manor, and I have not employment at all times at my trade, that is, bottoming sieves and chairs, and rake-making; and when I am out of employ, the farmers will not employ me, because I have got the cottage. Therefore, to send me a man for me to employ, I think an imposition. I pay the highway tax, poor tax, and tithe, which taxes were quite as high when the labour-rate prevailed.

"William Lidbettle."

"I am a journeyman bricklayer, and when the labour-rate came into operation last winter, I was myself out of employment; it therefore cannot be supposed that I had any thing to set a man to work at, as the large farmers in this neighbourhood can at any time of the year employ the labourers who are out of work to advantage. I, myself, as well as

others, are of opinion that the labour-rate should be chargeable only on the farmers, and not on cottagers such as myself.

"James Still."

"To persons situated like myself, it is an injury to us, as we have men sent us, and we have no employment for them. I employ no men, and I work at farming-work myself, and only hire a small cottage; therefore the money for labour is paid out of our own pockets, nearly useless. It appears that the poor-book in our parish has been quite as high all the same.

"Thomas Elsey."

Those of Boddicot, Oxfordshire, say,—

"As to myself, in the winter I have not work half my time, and have nothing for a labourer to do, and it is a grievous thing for me, and it has done a deal of harm to us poor house-dwellers; many of us can scarce get our living.

"Joseph Lovell, Painter."

"A labour-rate will do me an injury, as I am a labourer, and receiving no more than 9s. per week, with an infirm wife, sometimes not able to wait on herself. My cottage and garden contain five poles only; my rent 3*l.*; and each rate 2s.; therefore I have no employment for a labourer.

"The mark X of John Adkins, Labourer,
Assessed at 1*l.* 10s."

"I am a poor labourer, and receiving no more than 10s. per week to support myself, wife, and two children, and occupy a small cottage, with a garden but a few yards square, and have nothing for a labourer to do. My poor-rate is 2s.; therefore a labour-rate would be an injury to me, and in the shape of a double poor-rate.

"John Stanley."

"It will do me an injury, as I am a poor labourer, and receiving no more than 10s. per week for my labour, and that to support myself, wife, and three children, and to pay a rent of 4*l.* per annum for my cottage, with a small garden, containing altogether, by admeasurement, eight poles. My poor-rate is 1*s.* 3*d.* each rate. A labour-rate would be a double poor-rate, as I have nothing for a labourer to do. Thus it will be seen, that a poor-rate considerably distresses me in attempting to pay it, and am worse in circumstances than many that receive parish support.

"John Adkins, jun. Maltman."

Samuel Barnett, of Westbury, Wilts, says,—

"I feel myself much aggrieved by it. I rent a small quantity of land, 4½ acres, for which I have paid last year nine grants and a half of poor's rates, at 7*s.* 3*d.* per grant. This, Sir, is exclusive of rent and every other tax. These men are sent to me when I want labour myself, and one of them I offered half his week's wages of 5*s.* to go about his business; but he refused it, and I was compelled to find him employ at a serious loss to myself; because, as he was a clothworker, and I an agricultural labourer, he did not understand his work."

Thomas Mercer, of Hursterpoint, says,—

"I think it pressed very hard. I am a labouring man in agriculture, and have nothing to depend on for support but my labour. I am charged with poor-rates which I can ill afford to pay, and I was also charged to the labour-rate, and hired a man to outset my quota, although at the same time I was out of employ myself."

A further objection to a permanent labour-rate system, is the great additional difficulty which it will create in the already arduous task of Poor-Law amendment. When the direct employers of labour have for some time been sanctioned by the Legislature in extorting from others the payment of a part of the wages of their labourers, when the best class of labourers, those who are not settled in the place of their employment, have disappeared, when what now remains of repugnance to relief or of degradation in accepting it has been destroyed by its being merged in wages, when all the labourers have been converted into a semi-servile populace, without fear but without hope, where can we look for the materials of improvement?

On these grounds, we believe that the labour-rate system, or any other system of forced employment by individuals at a compulsory rate of wages, if it ever become extensive and permanent, will purchase at the expense of enormous and lasting mischief and injustice, whatever immediate advantages it affords.

Our preceding remarks apply principally to agricultural parishes, to which, as we have already stated, labour-rates have as yet been confined. But a manufacturer has as much inducement to tax the rest of the parish for his own benefit as a farmer; in fact, he has a much greater inducement. As an extensive employer of labourers, his advantage over the farmer is as great, or still greater, than that of the farmer over the rest of the community. If we suppose there to be in the same parish, a clergyman, a farmer, and a manufacturer, each rated at 200*l.* a year, it is probable that the manufacturer would be found to employ at least 100 men, the farmer about ten, and the clergyman two. In such a case, the gain to the manufacturer from a labour-rate would be ten times as great as to the farmer. We see therefore no reason for hoping that, if labour-rates become more frequent, they will continue to be confined to the agricultural districts.

It is true that, although some of the objections which we have stated apply to all the labour-rates which we have seen, a rate might be framed which should be free from many of them. The rate might apply only to the occupiers of land, leaving out-houses and tithes. It might be assessed on the land, not according to acreage or rent, but according to the real demand of the occupier for labour, arable being taxed more heavily than pasture, and

pasture than wood. A distribution of this last kind is made in the Lenham rate. And, lastly, the distinction between those having and those not having settlements in the parish might be given up. But, in the first place, a labour-rate so qualified as this would scarcely ever be adopted; and, secondly, the worst ingredient of the system would continue. The line between the pauper and the independent labourer would be *pro tanto* obliterated; and we do not believe that a country in which that distinction has been completely effaced, and every man, whatever be his conduct or his character, ensured a *comfortable* subsistence, can retain its prosperity, or even its civilization.

REMEDIAL MEASURES.

THE most pressing of the evils which we have described are those connected with the relief of the Able-bodied. They are the evils, therefore, for which we shall first propose remedies.

If we believed the evils stated in the previous part of the Report, or evils resembling or even approaching them, to be necessarily incidental to the compulsory relief of the able-bodied, we should not hesitate in recommending its entire abolition. But we do not believe these evils to be its necessary consequences. We believe that, under strict regulations, adequately enforced, such relief may be afforded safely and even beneficially.

In all extensive communities, circumstances will occur in which an individual, by the failure of his means of subsistence, will be exposed to the danger of perishing. To refuse relief, and at the same time to punish mendicity when it cannot be proved that the offender could have obtained subsistence by labour, is repugnant to the common sentiments of mankind; it is repugnant to them to punish even depredation, apparently committed as the only resource against want.

In all extensive civilized communities, therefore, the occurrence of extreme necessity is prevented by alms-giving, by public institutions supported by endowments or voluntary contributions, or by a provision partly voluntary and partly compulsory, or by a provision entirely compulsory, which may exclude the pretext of mendicancy.

But in no part of Europe except England has it been thought fit that the provision, whether compulsory or voluntary, should be applied to more than the relief of *indigence*, the state of a person unable to labour, or unable to obtain, in return for his labour, the means of subsistence. It has never been deemed expedient that the provision should extend to the relief of *poverty*; that is, the state of one, who, in order to obtain a mere subsistence, is forced to have recourse to labour.

From the evidence collected under this Commission, we are induced to believe that a compulsory provision for the relief of the indigent can be generally administered on a sound and well-defined principle; and that under the operation of this principle, the assurance that no one need perish from want may be rendered more complete than at present, and the mendicant and vagrant repressed by disarming them of their weapon,—the plea of impending starvation.