

No. 25.

SECOND REPORT

ON THE STATE OF THE DWELLINGS OF THE LABOURING CLASSES
IN CUMBERLAND, DURHAM, NORTHUMBERLAND,
AND WESTMORELAND.

By SIR JOHN WALSHAM, BART.

Newcastle-upon-Tyne, 15th May, 1840.

GENTLEMEN,—In my first report on the state of the dwellings of the labouring classes, I briefly pointed out a few of the general results to be collected from the tables appended to that report under the head of Enclosure A.: I now beg to present you with some additional and more detailed illustrations of the same topics.

I. As to the general state of the dwellings in towns, *Mr. Ingledew*, the chairman of the Newcastle Union, observes:—

“In Newcastle-upon-Tyne the operatives, labourers, and other poor persons occupy generally single rooms, and sometimes two rooms, of old houses of from two to four stories high, situate in the old and closely built parts of the town. Very many of these houses, from the circumstance of every window not absolutely necessary for light being stopped up in order to avoid the window-tax, are ill ventilated; indeed to such an extent is this economy carried, that the stair-cases of some of the large houses thus occupied are nearly without windows.

“One family usually occupies one room only: perhaps a tenth part of the families of these classes may occupy two rooms.

“These houses are seldom provided with privies. The drainage of the town is, however, pretty good, and the roofs of the houses are kept in a tolerably good state of repair; but the windows in many instances are neglected and suffered to go into decay.”

Of the city of Carlisle, *Mr. Rowland*, vice-chairman of the union, reports as follows:—

“Carlisle in its main streets seems tolerably clean; but when you get into private lanes and private yards, there is filth enough. I remember, during the cholera, the inhabitants turned out, and in a body pulled down pigsties, and got various nuisances removed.

“There is one street called *Jollie's-buildings*, three stories high, and one story underground, which is let at high rents, to the poorest description of persons: many of the rooms in the lowest story are used for the reception of ashes and night-soil.

“Carlisle, though it abounds with beautiful walks, generally has them accompanied with filthy, putrid gutters, and there seems no mode of compelling any one to clean them out. The city is surrounded with such nuisances. On the south side, at the foot of *Betchergate*, there is a

gutter, perhaps a mile long, which conducts the filth of that quarter through the fields into the river *Petteril*. The stench in summer is very great. The filth seems to accumulate from want of descent, and probably the whole descent is in the first field next *Betchergate*. If this gutter was paved, and the descent made regular, I have no doubt it would keep itself clean.

“On the west side there is what is called the *Dam*, which formerly had a stream of water constantly flowing through it, but now only occasionally. This dam extends from *Mr. Slater's* cotton-mill through a most populous part of the town, till it empties itself into the *Eden* below the castle. It is a broad shallow stream of filth, proceeding from all the drains in the neighbourhood, and is a convenient place for the inhabitants to empty all sorts of washings into. During the hot months the whole town is frightened that it will generate fever. If water cannot be got, it ought to be narrowed and paved; but who is to do it?

“On the north-west side of the town, a common sewer, into which numerous water-closets, &c. empty themselves, discharges itself into an open gutter under the castle walk, and another open gutter proceeds along the bridge embankment into the *Eden*: the smell from each in summer is intolerable.

“On the north-east side of the town, at the bottom of *Rickergate*, is another stagnant gutter of a most putrid description, which also runs into the *Eden*. The blood from several killing shops runs into it.

“The great cause of dirt and dirty habits in northern towns is the state of the privies used in common by the inhabitants of small houses and single rooms. No one is anxious for the post of keeping them clean, and some individuals really seem to have a pleasure in dirtying them; and when the place gets filthy, they use the outside, or even the foot-paths of the streets.”

The destitution of drainage, as above described, is very fearful; but *Mr. Rowland* is not singular in his denunciations of the evil, nor is *Carlisle* a solitary instance of the want of effective drainage. The late *Mr. Nesbit*, of *Stockton*, one of the best relieving officers in England, (and who has since fallen a victim to typhus fever, caught in the zealous discharge of his duties,) thus reported to me on this point:—

“The drainage is very defective in some of the streets and lanes in *Stockton*. In *Norton* there is a great want of proper sewers. Drains are laid from the houses of the respectable inhabitants, and run into an uncovered ditch on each side of the street. The houses of the poorer inhabitants have cesspools and privies in the yard behind their house, but for want of a drain there is frequently stagnant water. I am informed that attempts have been made to have common sewers, but for want of a law to compel every one to contribute his portion, it could not be done.”

And *Mr. Brown*, clerk of the *Teesdale* union, to illustrate the necessity and utility of drainage, states:—

“The residence of the labouring population within the *Teesdale* union, especially in *Barnard Castle* and the more populous villages, is mostly in large houses let into tenements. At least four-fifths of the weavers in *Barnard Castle* live in such residences, and about one-half of all the other labouring poor in the union. The tenements which form

the residences of the weavers and other labourers in Barnard Castle are principally situate in Thorngate, Bridgegate, and the lower parts of the town, and in confined yards and alleys. The houses are many of them very large: I am told of some where there are as many as fifty or more individuals under one roof. There is generally, perhaps, one privy to a whole yard (or onset as they term them), embracing five or six houses. From the crowded state of these dwelling-houses, and the filthiness of many of their inmates, disease would undoubtedly arise more commonly than it actually does; but the river Tees flows at the foot of each yard, running alongside of all the houses in Bridgegate: the impurities are thus speedily carried away, and the evils which might otherwise be expected from the effluvia of vegetable and other bodies in a state of decomposition are prevented: besides which, the houses in general being large, and the poorer class in the upper stories, they are more protected against cold and damp."

II. The state of the common lodging-houses in towns is a subject of almost as frequent observation on the part of my informants as defective drainage. Thus, in regard to Newcastle, *Mr. Ingledew* says:—

"There is a considerable number of lodging-houses in Newcastle, some of the rooms of which are frequently occupied by from 15 to 20 persons each. In these houses the most deplorable scenes of profligacy and depravity are met with, both sexes being crowded together in a manner injurious to both health and morals."

Mr. Fowler, chairman of the Stockton union, speaking of the town of Stockton, observes:—

"A medical gentleman told me in Stockton this morning that, in the common lodging-houses where travelling vagrants are frequently attacked with fever, &c., and in many cases die, the beds are the very next night occupied by fresh inmates, who, of course, are infected with the same disorder."

The late relieving officer for the same town (*Mr. Nesbit*) answered a query of mine as follows:—

"I have frequently had occasion to complain to the magistrates against the lodging-houses taking in so many lodgers, but the law in this respect is so defective that they could render me no assistance. On a Sunday last July, I went to see a man (a travelling musician) who was very ill of the small-pox, and died a few days afterwards. The house contained four small rooms, and was situated in a back yard in a very narrow, confined, dirty lane. There were 40 people in the house, and they were not all in that lodged there. Four months ago I went into a room in the same yard; the room was very dirty; it was 9 feet broad by 15 feet long, and contained four beds, in which slept two men, four women, and thirteen children. I found in one of the beds two children, very ill of scarlet fever; in another, a child ill of the measles; in another, a child that had died of the measles the day before; and in the fourth, a woman and her infant born two days before; and the only space between the four beds was occupied by a tinker hard at work."

Mr. Foreman, master of the Gateshead workhouse, says, in reference to the borough of Gateshead:—

"Leonard's-court, the entrance to which is from the main street, consists of eight houses on each side, each of them containing eight rooms. The footpath on each side of the court is flagged, but the cart-road is not paved, and all the filth that has accumulated since these buildings were erected has been thrown into the street, which has thus been absolutely raised above the level of the flags. In this court there are eight common lodging-houses, and the number of lodgers sometimes amounts to 100; at this time it is 50; eight or ten sleeping in a room upon the most unwholesome straw. The buildings are in general good, but the wretched and filthy state of the houses can scarcely be conceived. From this part many of our applications arise. It is indeed a source of physical and moral disease."

And of Carlisle, it is remarked that—

"It frequently happens in small lodging-houses where Irish and other tramps lodge for the night, that ten families sleep and lodge in one room."

III. With relation to the dwellings of the agricultural and mining labourers:—

Mr. Chrisp, of Alnwick, one of the largest farmers in Northumberland, states:—

"The older cottages in the country, such as were generally built by the farmer for his servants, consist of a rough wall of lime and stone, covered with thatch, and with nothing but an earthen floor, except a flag-stone or two near the hearth. Cottages of a superior description have been latterly erected by the landlord when he agrees to build, being covered with blue slate, the side walls plastered, and the floor of stone flagging; these are much more dry and comfortable, but are still seldom of more than one apartment."

Mr. Stokoe, clerk of the Hexham union, says:—

"The cottages of the pitmen and lead-miners generally consist of two or more rooms. Those of the agricultural labourers rarely exceed one room, with such division in it only as can be effected by the arrangement of the furniture of the occupant, or by a temporary kind of partition or 'hallan,' all of which, together with the fire-place and its appurtenances, are removed by the tenant on quitting the premises, much of course to the detriment of the building."

Mr. Grey, of Dilston, Receiver of Greenwich Hospital, and one of the most eminent agriculturists of the North, observes:—

"A labourer's cottage usually consists of one common apartment, with a small room and pantry besides. We build them now with a loft for the younger members of the family to sleep in, the access to it being by a step-ladder from below."

Mr. Spedding, vice-chairman of the Cocker-mouth union, &c., points out the probability of a sad result from the *one-room* system:—

"The rural peasantry are clean and comfortable in their homes, but there is a well-known defect bearing directly upon the bastardy department of the Poor Laws, viz., the custom of sleeping almost promiscuously, for want of separate rooms, which is very generally the case in

the superior kind of farm-houses, and I fancy universally in the small cottages."

Mr. Woodman, town clerk of Morpeth, communicates the following remarks on the Rothbury country:—

"The cottages are not generally provided with privies, but the want is not so great as in a town. The natural drainage of the district is generally good. The country is very mountainous, the soil thin and lying upon porphyry or sandstone; the streams flow rapidly upon rocky beds; the little valleys upon the margin of the streams consist of a sharp gravelly soil. The only exception is the tops of the highest mountains, which are often marshy, the soil being a black vegetable mould which retains the water like a sponge. The drainage of the farm-yards is often insufficient, the water from the dunghills being permitted to stagnate in pools close to the doors of the houses. I would here particularly dissent from the opinion so strongly expressed, first by Cobbett, and then by William Howitt, that the labourers in this county occupy miserable sheds; such is not the fact. The cottages consist generally of two rooms, built with stone, and thatched with heath, which forms a warm durable roof: they are not ceiled, and although this may not to the eye present so neat and comfortable an appearance, I am assured it tends greatly to preserve the health of the inmates by the improved ventilation it allows; nor is there any want of warmth, as there may be in a roof of slate or tile. But I am convinced that even where the roof is formed of these materials, a numerous family would be far more healthy without a ceiling, which in many cases almost touches their heads. Any person who in the morning, when the door is first opened, has experienced the mephitic air of a cottage, even of the neatest and cleanliest, such as are met with in a park, must be satisfied of this."

Mr. Trotter, clerk of the Auckland union, thus reports to me:—

"In this district the coal-trade has increased to so considerable an extent within the last few years as to require additional accommodation for the workmen. Houses and cottages have consequently been erected in the neighbourhood of the several collieries. The coalowners are at all times anxious to exhaust as little of their capital as possible in the erection of these dwellings, and gladly avail themselves of the houses erected by individuals at rents averaging from 7 to 10 per cent. on the outlay. The demand is, however, much greater than the accommodation afforded in this way, and the owners of the different collieries are under the necessity of building for themselves. This they do on some convenient plot of ground within a mile and a half from the colliery. The cottages are usually built in rows and squares; and although they are very convenient and substantial in the *inside*, consisting of two well-sized rooms with a small teefall for pots and pans on the back part, still there is a lamentable deficiency on the *outside*, the houses being frequently crowded together in bad situations where the drainage is not effectual. The privies are sometimes used in common for two or three houses, and the ashes and offal are thrown out at a little distance from the door, where, from the imperfect drainage, and the piggeries, which the pitmen frequently put up for themselves in an inconvenient situation, there is an amalgamation of filth and dirt which must be very injurious to the

health of the inhabitants. The cottages are occasionally erected in low situations near the water-side, which is likewise prejudicial to the health and comfort of the inmates.

"In one or two instances within my knowledge, a plot of ground of one-twelfth of an acre has been attached to the pitmen's cottages for their use. I, however, regret to say that I do not think it has answered the benevolent purpose intended. The ground, although used at first, has since been neglected, and I believe has in most instances been abandoned. But there is in general the appearance of comfort in the inside of their dwellings, which are clean and well furnished."

Mr. Coulthard, relieving-officer of the Chester-le-street union, states:—

"There can be little doubt that where there are sufficient sleeping-rooms for the proper separation of the sexes, the moral habits of the inmates will assume a very different tone from that of the same description of inmates who have only a single room for all domestic purposes.

"The pitmen's houses generally, in my district, are neat and well furnished, the furniture usually consisting of a good feather-bed, mattress, sheets, blankets, quilts, and a counterpane and hangings, the foot-poles mahogany, carved in the modern style, a double chest of drawers, a clock, a handsome looking-glass, and half-a-dozen chairs, with other cottage requisites, which altogether will cost from 20*l.* to 40*l.* The pitmen's cottages generally present the agreeable appearance of neatness, economy, and comfort; and on Sundays and holidays, their dress is quite as neat as their cottages.

"Of the workmen employed in the iron-manufactory, the cottages of the moulders, blacksmiths, and wrights, together with their furniture and external appearance, are much the same as the pitmen's. But the rest of the workmen do not present the same agreeable appearance: their furniture and dress are inferior to those above described; and I think they stand lower in the moral scale of society. This, perhaps, may in some degree be attributable to the nature of their employment, which is extremely hot, and which will of course have a tendency to create thirst; consequently they spend more time and more money at the ale-tap than those whose employment is in a more moderate temperature. Besides, many of the men employed about the iron-works and cinder ovens are what are here called "tramps" from different counties of England, Scotland, and Wales, who have contracted a sort of restless habit, and who consequently have not the same motive for endeavouring to secure domestic comfort as those whose comforts depend almost entirely upon the locality of their employment."

Finally, *Mr. Archbold*, clerk of the Houghton-le-Spring union, also says:—

"Pitmen's cottages at most of the new collieries are better built than those at the old ones, and the situation of the villages is decidedly better chosen, being usually upon sloping ground, by which means water does not stagnate and filth of all kinds is swept away by a shower of rain. With very few exceptions, the pitmen's rows (as they are called) at old collieries, are built upon dead levels, and where the drainage, &c., it is not attended to, the filth is often suffered to accumulate till it be-

comes a great nuisance. I would particularly point out South Hetton and a colliery village near Kelloe in support of my views."

IV. I mentioned in my first report, that I proposed on a future occasion to consider in detail how far we have it in evidence that cases of fever or other disease are attributable to the want of drainage and cleanliness in the cottages or tenements of my district. The returns with which you have been furnished by the medical officers will, no doubt, have placed you in possession of a large amount of exact information on this subject; but I do not therefore think it superfluous, with reference to a question of so much importance, to extract from the communications that have been made to me such additional particulars as may contribute to produce a correct impression of the magnitude and extent of the evils arising from these sources. I have, however, been able to meet with but few cases in which any reports of the Boards of Health, established during the prevalence of the cholera, have been preserved; and I have included in the subjoined extracts all the information that I have obtained from such reports:—

Mr. Ingledew, of Newcastle, states that—

"Cases of fever often occur in, and are attributed to, the old ill-ventilated and damp houses, rendered worse by the want of cleanliness on the part of the occupiers."

Mr. Chrisp, of Alnwick, observes:—

"I have frequently heard medical gentlemen attribute disease to want of drainage and ill-ventilated damp cottages. The village of Shilbottle was noted as being scarcely ever free from typhus fever; but three or four years ago, upon this being represented to the noble proprietor (the Duke of Northumberland), an old quarry, constantly standing full of stagnant water, was filled up, and disease has not been so prevalent since."

Mr. Atkinson, the very intelligent and well-informed relieving-officer of Berwick upon Tweed, reports:—

"One of our paupers recently died of fever, in a house situate in a lane called the Narrow Lane, and very properly so, as its breadth is not nine or ten feet. In this lane, and I think in the same house, the cholera originated a few years ago, and also the typhus fever, by which so many deaths have occurred in Berwick lately. In consequence of the death above alluded to, I have had to remove three children to the workhouse to avoid the fever, and I brought the matter under the consideration of the Board of Guardians yesterday, for the purpose of getting their permission to allow me to get these premises fumigated and properly cleaned with hot lime, &c. It is much to be regretted that the justices have no legal authority to make it compulsory on landlords or their agents to see that the houses which are occupied by so many families are kept in a state of cleanliness, and to provide privies and ash-pits suitable to the extent of the premises and number of families."

Mr. Sinclair, the able auditor of the Berwick union, communicates the subjoined important facts:—

"In 1832 I was secretary to the Board of Health for Berwick, and I well remember that nearly all the cases of cholera which happened (and the mortality was two out of every three) were of persons occupying single rooms in the dirty and closely-populated parts of the town: and so also during the last summer, several cases of typhus fever occurred in Berwick, which mostly terminated fatally: the persons so attacked were of the labouring class, and lived in single rooms."

Messrs. Reed and Brunton, clerks of the Sunderland union, report that—

"Infectious diseases and fevers are more frequent amongst the habitations of the poor than the more commodious houses of the rich; and there can be no question that diseases, if not absolutely engendered by bad drainage and the want of proper ventilation in places densely inhabited (which there is every reason to believe is the case), are at all events greatly aggravated and rendered more destructive of health and life, and less manageable by medical treatment. This was made apparent in the winter of 1831-2, when the town was visited with cholera. On that occasion there were some instances of the people residing in the airy parts of the town being attacked with the disease, and falling victims to it, but they were rare; and for the most part, the ravages of the disease were confined to the badly ventilated and densely inhabited parts of the town."

Dr. Mordey, of Sunderland, writes thus:—

"This town was found, when the cholera broke out amongst us, in a very deplorable state, both as to the wretchedness of the poor and the filthy condition of the streets and lanes, more particularly in the parish of Sunderland. The dwellings were crowded, filthy, and bore every appearance of extreme want, and it was found that many people were existing on the lowest possible scale of nourishment, and clothing was deficient amongst them. The streets and lanes were equally neglected and filthy, nay disgusting, as every impurity was allowed to remain exposed, and many people were found who had accumulated quantities of manure in their houses. The moor was allowed to remain undrained, the exhalations from the ditches were noxious, and if the disease did not make greater havoc amongst us it was mainly owing to the sea-breeze passing freely over the moor, ventilating and purifying the streets and lanes exposed to its influence."

"This town, owing to its situation, is well adapted for being well-drained, but either from negligence or ignorance, there are no common sewers of any extent, except those in the High-street. The scavenging is loosely and badly performed, through the careless inspection of the surveyors, and with the exception of the High-street, the streets are seldom or never swept, and if they are, the mud is allowed to remain in heaps until it is retrodden to its former state. There appears to be little or no arrangement made for the accommodation and convenience of the poor, which makes their habits filthy and disgusting. Much might be done by the corporation insisting upon the narrow lanes being kept more orderly and cleanly."

Mr. Grey, vice-chairman of the Stockton union, observes:—

"Upon the first appearance of the cholera a committee was formed to

take such measures as were deemed most expedient for the health of the town; but their exertions appear to have been directed altogether to the abatement of public nuisances, and considerable improvements were effected in sewers, drainage, &c. under their superintendence. Dr. Keenlyside informs me that many of the dwellings of the lower classes were found in a most filthy and unwholesome state, and were white-washed and otherwise cleansed by order of the medical attendants at the public expense."

Mr. Fowler, still speaking of Stockton, adds:—

"The medical men, in their reports to the Board of Guardians, have frequently stated fever to have arisen from the want of proper drainage. I have endeavoured to prevail upon the owners of one street in particular in Stockton to make a drainage, but without effect. The street is hardly ever free from fever."

Mr. Brown, of Barnard Castle, continuing his report, states that—

"A surgeon of great intelligence and practice in the town of Barnard Castle has always found the most obstinate cases of typhus and other epidemics, and also rheumatism, to prevail amongst the houses on the west side of the principal street. These houses slope towards the moat of the old castle, which is not sufficiently drained; and the thick and high walls of the ruins of the castle retain the damp and prevent the accession of the western winds to the moat and many of the houses. In the interior of the castle, now used as a garden, there is a stagnant pond which ought to be drained off; this pond is nearly opposite the yards which are full of the residences of the poorer classes, and called the Swamp. Disease is often found to exist in these yards, and the surgeon I have referred to attributes to it the dampness of the moat (upon or on the margin of which the houses are built) and to the pond before mentioned. All the houses on the west side of the street have one step, and some more, down from the street. I am also told by the same surgeon that very many of the cases of fever and rheumatism which he attends may be fairly traced to the dampness of houses or want of sufficient drainage of the ground previously to building, and their being built below the level of the adjoining ground, by which the moisture is thrown into them."

Mr. Mounsey, clerk of the Carlisle union, says in his report to me—

"I know of no cases of fever or other diseases attributed to the bad state of repair of the dwellings; but when the cholera raged in Carlisle there were the greatest number of cases in the dwellings near the English and Irish Damside, which was attributed to the imperfect supply of water down the dam race, into which all the drains and sewers in that part of the town empty themselves; consequently there was then and still is a great quantity of stagnant water and filth, which cause a most disagreeable effluvia in the neighbourhood. In fact it is much worse now than it was at that time, the Corporation dam across the river Caldew having given way, by which the dam was supplied with the surplus water from the mills: it is at present the greatest possible nuisance. The cases of cholera began near Messrs. Cowan's mill, and raged down

the damside, few cases occurring in any other part of the town. There is also the greatest proportion of fever cases in this neighbourhood. Common sewers or drains are also very much wanted in all the other parts of the town."

Mr. Brisco, chairman of the Whitehaven union, writes:—

"At Low Mill there is now a family of the name of Jackson suffering from typhus fever, arising, I consider, from want of ventilation and damp situation, and from the room in which they live being above a room filled with potatoes, which decay very fast from the place being so damp. There is no plaster between this potatoe-room and the inhabited room above. Another family at Low Mill has had the fever, and one of them, a girl, the mother of an illegitimate child, has died of typhus. This case of fever, I consider, has arisen from the family (consisting of nine persons) inhabiting only one room and two closets, the whole space within the outer walls being not more than seven yards by five, and also from there being a low wet pigsty and dunghill within two yards of the door, so that no air could come in at the door except over the stench of the sty and the fermentation of the dunghill. The name of this family is Rothery. The whole of the population at Low Mill inhabiting the row of cottages are constantly more or less suffering from diseases, arising, I think, from the following causes, viz., the great number living in each house, the dampness of the houses, owing to their being built against high ground behind, and the constant wet state of the ground close before their houses, about five yards broad, arising from a total deficiency of drains, and from a row of wet pigsties across this space, containing pigs or ashes, or manure. The only circumstance which saves them from some awful visitation is the river passing close beyond the row of pigsties."

Mr. Woodman, of Morpeth, in reference to the same point, says:—

"The only instance I am aware of in this neighbourhood of a contagious disease prevailing to any extent was at Ulgham, about 1832. The disease, as I am informed by my friend, Dr. Hedley, was typhus fever, and commencing at one house in the village, gradually spread from house to house until every cottage at both sides of the lower end of the village was attacked with it. Now at the eastern or lower part of the village is a piece of very flat marshy land, and beyond it a pool of stagnant water: these, I have no doubt, were the origin of the miasma; and as far as its influence extended, the disease spread, while the upper end of the village, which is perfectly dry, was entirely exempt from disease."

Mr. Foreman quotes the following description of the state of the town of Gateshead, written at the time of the visitation of the cholera; adding that he is quite sure that there is no change for the better:—

"It is impossible to give a proper representation of the wretched state of many of the habitations of the indigent, situated in the confined streets called Pipewellgate and Hillgate, which are kept in a most filthy state, and to a stranger would appear inimical to the existence of human beings, where each small, ill-ventilated apartment of the house contained a family with lodgers in number from seven to nine, and seldom more than two beds for the whole. The want of convenient offices in the neighbour-

hood is attended with many very unpleasant circumstances, as it induces the lazy inmates to make use of chamber utensils, which are suffered to remain in the most offensive state for several days, and are then emptied out of the windows. The writer had occasion a short time ago to visit a person ill of the cholera. His lodgings were in a room of a miserable house situated in the very filthiest part of Pipewellgate, divided into six apartments, and occupied by different families to the number of 26 persons in all. The room contained three wretched beds with two persons sleeping in each; it measured about 12 feet in length and 7 in breadth, and its greatest height would not admit of a person's standing erect; it received light from a small window, the sash of which was fixed. Two of the number lay ill of the cholera, and the rest appeared afraid of the admission of pure air, having carefully closed up the broken panes with plugs of old linen."

The Rev. H. Lowther, speaking of Workington, mentions that—

"The houses of those who fell [in the cholera] were generally of the most filthy description, many of them having pigsties close to their rooms."

Mr. John Steel, of Cockermouth, clerk to the magistrates, adds, that—

"With very few exceptions, the cholera selected the indigent, living in crowded, ill-ventilated places, more particularly if in low confined situations on a level with the water."

And to conclude this section, Mr. Thomas Miller, relieving officer of Wigton, thus reports his experience:—

"I may particularly name Golden Square, where fever often prevails. One room, a few steps below the street, is subject to be flooded every rainy day, and from this cause is never dry. The family who occupy it have been constantly on the sick list."

V. Respecting the improvement apparent in the condition of labourers who occupy improved tenements in superior situations, I have several communications in point:—

Mr. Wilson, relieving officer of Newcastle, reports that—

"Prudent labourers in full employment generally occupy better tenements, and the condition of their families is consequently superior to those living in poorer tenements, although earning the same amount of wages."

Mr. Bell, relieving officer of Alnwick, states that—

"The general condition of labourers who occupy improved tenements in superior situations is in every respect superior to that of labourers under the bondage system.* Some of the above description of labourers are also engaged on the bondage terms, but they merely avail themselves of this to secure constant employment."

* Since this Report was written, a very able and interesting "Appeal in Behalf of the Peasantry of the Border," has been published by the Rev. Dr. Gilly, which forcibly exposes the wretchedness of the bondager's habitation, at the same time that it upholds (most justly) the other advantages of the bondage system.

Mr. Grey, of Dilston, observes:—

"An improvement in their dwellings, and better accommodation, contribute much to the cleanliness and comfort of the families, and give them habits of order and neatness. I have often observed labourers' families, when moved from a bad cottage to a better, exert themselves to gain advantage by their superior accommodation, in the improvement of their furniture, and in the greater order and cleanliness of all their establishment."

Mr. Pyle, of Earsdon, a medical officer of Tynemouth union, says:—

"I have always observed that the condition of the labourer is improved by his proximity (in point of dwelling) to a higher class, especially when the latter take an interest, and exercise an influence, over him: in such cases he is more happy, more contented, and a more respectable member of society than the labourer who is less advantageously situated. Of this we have instances here as elsewhere."

Mr. Sinclair, of Berwick, communicates that—

"The improvements in the cottages in rural districts are so recent that no visible change in the condition of the labourers can yet be stated. In town, the rooms occupied by mechanics are undoubtedly better; and the wages being higher, the general condition of such persons, both as to furniture and clothing, is of a higher grade. My knowledge does not enable me to point out individual cases, but still I have a general knowledge of the inmates of tenements in town."

Mr. M. W. Swinburne, of South Shields, observes that—

"Very great improvement is perceptible in the dwellings of those who have separate sleeping apartments and requisite conveniences. In general the ventilation of cottages and tenements is bad, but this is much to be attributed to the habits of the poor, few of whom fully understand the comfort of a clean and wholesome dwelling."

Mr. Tweddle, relieving officer of Darlington, details the following interesting circumstance:—

"The tenements of the labourers are very much of the same description, the principal difference being in the size of the garden, which when large enables the labourer to feed a pig and sometimes to keep a cow; and the larger the garden, the greater are the industry and sobriety of the occupier."

"With respect to cottage gardens, I think it right to name a circumstance which took place in one of the townships of this Union. About eight years ago, a piece of boggy ground, left by will to the poor of the township, not worth 5s. per acre, was drained by the vicar of the place at an expense of about 15*l.*, and divided into eight gardens, containing 30 perches each. These gardens were let to eight cottagers with large families, who previously to that time were, with the exception of one, constantly in receipt of the parish funds during winter. The rent fixed for each garden was 10s. clear of taxes, tithes, and rates, and premiums of 5s. and 3s. were offered for the best and second-best cultivated patches. As soon as they obtained possession, they set to work with alacrity and perseverance. The first crop produced was only a medium one, failing principally from the land being drained too late in the spring

season, which prevented them from getting it planted with potatoes at the proper time; but the next year, and every year since that time, the crops have been most productive and beneficial to the cottagers, enabling them to supply their families with potatoes and vegetables, and also to keep a pig. Besides, a spirit of rivalry is kept up to this day by the premiums, each trying to excel his neighbour in the neatness and productiveness of his little farm. And to crown the whole, a spirit of independence immediately arose among them, so that with the exception of one, who was taken seriously ill this summer, and continued so for some time, neither the overseer nor the relieving officer has had occasion to visit their abodes with a view to administer relief for the last eight years."

Mr. James Gray, clerk of the Chester-le-Street union, states that—

"Where the situation of the labourer is attended to in regard to his domestic comforts and conveniences, it has a most decided effect upon his habits both as regards industry and the fostering of a spirit of independence."

Mr. Mounsey, of Carlisle, reports that—

"Agricultural labourers, living in the country, with a comfortable cottage and garden, are certainly much better off than those living in Carlisle and earning little more than a common weaver without being able to get agricultural employment for their families, many of whom are brought up to weaving. There is little doubt that spinners and mechanics with families between 10 and 18 years of age earn more wages than labourers with families of the same age, but their means of expenditure make them worse off. Weavers living in the country and earning the same wages as those in the town are, generally speaking, industrious and much better off than those in the town. The increased comforts of a country labourer, with a more comfortable dwelling, better fed and clothed, his family always under his eye, and contented with his situation in life, tend to elevate him much above town labourers, and to withdraw him from public-houses and the habits of intemperance to which they lead. His example, too, together with the advantages of a village-school, has a salutary influence on the habits and morals of his children, and ensures to their parents in return a little pecuniary assistance in their old age."

Mr. Hasell, chairman of Cumberland and Westmoreland, writes in reference to the neighbourhood of Penrith, that—

"There must be a few exceptions in all cases of this sort, but I should say that, generally speaking, the country cottages in this district are of a superior description, placed in healthy situations, kept very clean by the labourers' wives, who are very active and industrious, and that there are no circumstances about them likely of themselves to create disease."

Mr. Benn, agent to the Earl of Lonsdale, corroborates Mr. Hasell; he says:—

"Most of the cottages in this district have a day-room, two bed-rooms, pantry, and other conveniences. Many of our cottages are fitted up from ancient tenements belonging to the yeomanry who have sold their estates, and the land having been laid to other farms, the buildings make very roomy and comfortable dwellings. The condition of our

labourers is of course much better than that of those less advantageously situated."

And lastly, Mr. Brisco, referring to Whitehaven, observes:—

"In this district there are no cottages with a day-room, scullery, pantry, three bed-rooms, and convenient receptacles for refuse, and for fuel; but my father, Sir W. Brisco, living in the Wigton Union, has provided these accommodations for his labourers, and the consequence has been an astonishing improvement in all respects, particularly in the labourers' cleanliness and sobriety."

To the instructive facts which the above unexceptionable evidences supply, it would, I conceive, be quite superfluous to add further explanatory comments or more detailed illustrations; I only permit myself, therefore, to place summarily before you the points, as I apprehend them, that these evidences necessarily tend to establish, viz.:—

1st. That in *urban districts* the want of drainage is as notorious as it is alarming.

2ndly. That lodging-houses are but receiving and reproducing agents of the most abominable nuisances—both physical and moral.

3rdly. That the generality of the cottages of labourers, and, to a certain extent, of the house-rows of miners, although suffering far less from defective drainage and ventilation than town tenements, have yet their own peculiar (but easily remediable) evils: among which, however, that of the sleeping-room, common to the labourer's whole family—men and women, girls and boys—is the most serious.

4thly. That to bad drainage and ventilation the worst ravages of the cholera are traced by several of my witnesses; whilst the popular voice ascribes to the like causes (and seemingly with one accord) the continuous existence and fatal consequences of fever in particular places.

5thly. That labourers who occupy a better class of cottages in well-chosen situations are generally allowed to be more cleanly and more healthy—more industrious and independent also—than those less favourably situated; in support of which interesting point let me, in conclusion, beg your attention as well to the statement of Mr. Tweddle, of Darlington (one of the best relieving officers in my district), as to Mr. Brisco's very valuable testimony respecting the success that has attended Sir W. Brisco's endeavours to elevate the condition and habits of his peasantry through the medium of improved habitations.

I have the honour to be, Gentlemen,

Your very obedient servant, J. W.