

"What were they formerly?—We used to pay 12s. rates, and 3s. they are now.

"You consider the diminution to be in the proportion of 3 to 12? . Yes.—[*Woolridge*, 6689-91].

Much of the saving, as we have said, was in diminished expenses of management:—

"Specify any portion of the rate which was applied apart from the relief of the poor.—There were a variety of workhouses, at each of which there was an establishment; there were paid officers in several of the parishes, assistant overseers, and law expenses.

"Was the amount of the incidental expenses under the old system equal to or greater than the incidental expenses attached to the present?—I believe them to have been very considerably greater than those under the present system."

But more was in the application of the test of destitution, which has saved us all from long years of pauper degradation—from labour lying upon the land like a stagnant pool, instead of refreshing the land like a fertilizing stream. We have escaped this evil. The Report of the Committee, which we subjoin*, shows that it is not likely to be brought again upon us, even by the most strenuous exertions of mischief operating upon folly.

* See Appendix A.

THE INQUIRY.

PART II.

THE BRADFORD AND NOTTINGHAM UNIONS.

THE case of the Union of Bradford, which contains a partly agricultural and partly manufacturing population, was imperfectly gone into by the Committee. In all the general principles of Poor Law administration, it supports the evidence which has been obtained of the operation of the law in the wholly rural districts. It is manifest that, in a great crisis of commercial embarrassment, distress may come upon the working population of a *manufacturing* district, which may require some large and extraordinary efforts on the part of the Guardians of the poor. We believe that they cannot safely interfere to mitigate the evil till the point of destitution shall arrive. At a season of good wages provision ought to be made for such a contingency; but, if destitution should overtake the mass of the population, relief must be afforded under very strict regulations, so as not to interfere with the labour-market and the rate of wages. The evidence from the *Union of Bradford*, and from the *Union of Nottingham* bears upon some of these important points, and we therefore give extracts from each:—

BRADFORD.

The Bradford Union in Wiltshire, was formed in 1835; the population is stated at 12,660, of which about 3352 belong to the town of Bradford, who are employed generally in manufacturing broad cloth. This Union, therefore, has both an agricultural and a manufacturing character. The principal point of interest with reference to this Union, is to be found contained in the evidence of Col. A'Court, one of the assistant Commissioners, who was examined with reference to the applicability of the Commissioners' regulations in a case of great commercial embarrassment, when the number of persons unemployed was too large to render the workhouse test available.

"Do you know that in different parts of manufacturing districts, such as Leeds, Sheffield, Manchester, Birmingham, and other places

similarly employed, frequently an extreme depression of trade comes upon that population?—Certainly; it occurs in every manufacturing district.

“Supposing that state of things to happen—supposing there should be several unfortunate families, as frequently happens in such places as those which I have mentioned, out of employ, and under the necessity of applying for parochial relief, is there any thing in the existing state of the law, or in the directions to the guardians, that would prevent out-door relief being administered to persons so situated?—Certainly not; the 52nd clause of the Poor Law Amendment Act gives them the power to suspend the Commissioners’ orders at once, under a contingency of that kind.

“And under such a state of things, you apprehend that that principle would be acted upon?—I have not a doubt about it; and I believe I may say that where the guardians have recommended that some of the children should be taken into the house, thus departing from the principle laid down, that it has never been refused, under the circumstances stated; I do not believe there is an instance. I have some instances in my Union, in which applications have been made, and they have all been granted at once; and I believe that I am justified in saying that not a single one has been refused.

“If a large bankruptcy had taken place in Bradford, and 300 workmen had been suddenly thrown out of employ, what step would you then take?—Relieve them out of the house; we must do so.

“Describe to the Committee what steps you would take?—I should think that those people who ought to have saved money for a rainy day, and had not done so, should have the offer of the house; those who could not have made provision for a rainy day ought to have relief out of the house; the orders are elastic, and you can contract them or enlarge them according to circumstances.

“Have you, with the board of guardians, the power of suspending that order which prohibits absolutely out-door relief to the pauper?—Without the assistance of the Poor Law Commissioners, the guardians have that power, under the 52nd clause; that section says, that they need not put the law into operation for 30 days; but after it has been in operation, they may suspend its operation, and report to the Poor Law Commissioners.

“Provided also, that in case the overseers or guardians of any parish or union in which such orders or regulations shall be in force, shall depart from them, or any of them, in any particular instance or instances of emergency, and shall within 15 days after every such departure, report the same, and the grounds thereof to the said Commissioners, and the said Commissioners shall approve of such departure, or if the relief so given shall have been given in food, temporary lodging or medicine, and shall have been so reported as aforesaid, then and in either of such cases, the relief granted by such overseers or guardians, if otherwise lawful, shall not be unlawful, or subject to be disallowed; do not the words, ‘if the said Commissioners shall approve of such departure,’ render the relief out of doors, even in

cases of emergency, absolutely dependent on the will of the Commissioners in Somerset House?—Yes; but they may suspend, in the first instance, for 15 days, but they run the risk of the approval of the Commissioners: in the cases described by the honourable member for Leeds, I venture to say that it would not be disapproved of.

“It would at last turn upon the discretion of the Board of Commissioners at Somerset House?—Certainly.

“And there is nothing in the law to prevent their exercising that discretion?—None; in all probability the assistant Commissioner of the district would be sent to the place, in the circumstances you have mentioned; he would make his report, and upon that report the Commissioners would act.

“Take the case of the failure, not of a single master manufacturer, but the failure of the trade, where not only 300, but sometimes as many as 3000 persons in those large towns, become absolutely dependent upon parochial assistance, in that case is there or is there not any impediment to receiving that assistance, if it should be the pleasure of the guardians to give it, and if the Commissioners should, under that exigency, see proper to sanction it?—There is nothing in the world to prevent it.”—[18,155-72.]

The change in the law of settlement has benefited the manufacturing as well as the agricultural population:—

“A man who is established in your manufacture would, if there were a demand for his labour, find employment in the West Riding of Yorkshire or in Gloucestershire?—A great number go to Yorkshire; as we have now less trade, many are now in their hands; the Yorkshire manufacturers have a high opinion of our labourers.

“If you, from the pressure of trade, absolutely discharge a good workman, you must encounter the risk of his finding employment in rival works in the West Riding of Yorkshire or Gloucestershire?—I have been obliged to discharge good workmen that I should be glad to get back again.

“Would you not hesitate before you turned them out of employment?—We certainly never do it till we are obliged.

“But it leads to the circulation of labour; the facility of moving is increased by the new law?—No doubt of it.

“And that is an advantage in favour of the workmen against the master?—To be sure it is; it is in favour of the workmen; I do not know against the master; the master in the west of England might take his workmen from Yorkshire, and the Yorkshire master from the west of England.

“Is it not a check upon the caprice of the master in the discharge of his labourer?—No doubt it is a check upon him, but the master might turn him away for a better workman, in the same manner as the workmen might leave the master’s employ for a better master; the thing adjusts itself.”—[19,244-50—Mr. Saunders.]

NOTTINGHAM.

Mr. Absalom Barnett, clerk of the Union of Nottingham, examined 28th June, 1837.

The Union of Nottingham, in which there is no rural population, consists of three parishes, one of which, St. Mary's, contained 40,000, out of the entire 50,000 of inhabitants, as ascertained by the last census. The Union came into operation in July 1836, so that, between that time and the examination of the clerk of the Union, a twelvemonth had elapsed. No difficulties were experienced in introducing the provisions of the amended Poor Law into the Union of Nottingham. The ground had been prepared for it by the system which had been previously pursued. Mr. Barnett was assistant overseer of St. Mary's from September 1819, and from Christmas of that year he had "never given relief to able-bodied persons without requiring the test either of the workhouse or out-door labour." He thus explains the reasons why this system was adopted:—

"Are the Committee to understand, that since you have had the management of the parish of St. Mary there has been no payment out of the poor-rates, in the shape of allowances to make up wages?—Never, after the first two or three months of my entering upon office.

"Did that practice continue in the other two parishes?—In a very slight degree, as compared with our own; and those parishes were small and manageable.

"Do you think such a practice is in any degree excusable in a manufacturing district, in contradistinction to an agricultural; or is it equally pernicious in the one as in the other?—I do not know whether I can say that it is equally; it is very pernicious; I have seen the most dreadful results, in the reduction of the wages of labour, follow from it. A little before the close of the war, when there was a great diminution in trade, a number of parishes commenced manufacturing hosiery, though stockings were sold at ruinous prices; and the consequence was, that it immediately effected a large reduction in the men's wages.

"Are you speaking of Nottingham?—I am, of Nottingham and the neighbourhood, particularly of Sutton Ashfield.

"In what way do you connect the reduction in wages with the practice of making allowance to the paupers?—This was a case of employing paupers at their own trades; the parish purchased cotton and manufactured goods, which they afterwards sold at a loss of 50 and more per cent.; those goods being brought into the market necessarily reduced the price of labour for that description of goods. I will now explain how it acts in the other case; I am referring to the frame-work knitting trade; the master-workmen take from the hosier or other manufacturer a number of frames, for which they pay a certain weekly rent. In times of depression of trade, it is the interest of the hosier to

keep the frames going, and he will give a partial employment to those frames; if the man can obtain parish allowance, he will obtain his frame rent and keep his workmen together, at the expense of the parish.

"When you say that it is his interest to give a partial employment and keep his workmen together, you mean by that, that it is his interest to prevent their dispersion into other districts, so that he may have them at his disposal when the trade revives?—Partially, and the machinery sustains injury by standing; that is the principal consideration; and besides, if he receives rent for the machinery, it is a loss to him if it is standing still.

"But the consequence of this partial employment is a general reduction of the wages to that class of labourers?—Yes; I was going to state, the master frame-work knitter has a number of frames; he employs journeymen under him, and those journeymen are paid a reduced rate as compared with what he receives from the merchant or principal manufacturer; and if he has not got sufficient work he divides; if he has work for six men, he will give it to 12, each of the 12 men paying the full charges upon the machinery, which is, in fact, a reduction upon the rate of wages; because with goods so manufactured the rent of the machinery furnishes the profit in some cases, supposing the goods so manufactured to be sold at prime cost, or nearly so.

"Then, in point of fact, the goods so manufactured were paid for partly out of the poor-rate?—At that time."—[19,961-68.]

The kinds of labour on which the paupers were employed were various:—

"Sometimes," said Mr. Barnett, "making water-courses, drains, for which they were paid by measure, under superintendence, sometimes bringing land into cultivation, that was, up to that period, perfectly waste, getting the stone out of it, and bringing it into cultivation by the pick-axe and spade and wheelbarrow, the only tools that were made use of; and in one instance, immediately after the panic of 1825, a considerable number of mechanics were employed in repairing and relaying the whole of the pavement of Nottingham market-place; that market-place was laid almost entirely by silk stocking-makers. [19,696.]

The new system was exposed to a severe trial from about the commencement of the present year. In January and February last a depression was experienced in the silk trade, particularly in that of silk gloves. This threw a number of those deprived of work on the poor-rate. "We had a considerable number of applications; all of them were old paupers, that is, those who had been paupers on former occasions, or their children; I am now speaking of able-bodied persons; to all of them I offered the house, except in one week, the applications were so numerous that, with the consent of the Guardians, I relieved them with bread until the meeting of the Guardians." Mr. Barnett continues:—

"During the week to which I have referred there was a very con-

siderable pressure, chiefly from two or three workshops; part of the men appeared to me to come in a sort of combination to solicit relief; in order to meet that pressure, just at that moment, I gave to some eight and to others 16 lbs. of bread, for the supply of their present necessities, till I could make more particular inquiry; at the termination of that week I discovered from a person in the house that there was part-work, at any rate, to be obtained in that particular branch, and that the pressure was occasioned, in some degree, not altogether, by the endeavour of the men to uphold their rate of wages, fearing a reduction, and they had left their frames, some of them; on ascertaining that fact satisfactorily to my own mind, I offered the house to them all, and not above one or two or three came in."—[19,755.]

The depression under which trade was suffering in Nottingham fluctuated, but at last became so severe that a meeting of the inhabitants was held, and a subscription entered into, which, at the time of Mr. Barnett's examination (28th June), amounted to 4500*l*. This money was expended in providing employment for mechanics engaged in the staple trade of the town, not having parochial relief since the 1st of March. The kind of work provided was *the forming of a new road*. The wages paid for this work were less than is earned by a silk-weaver or silk-frame knitter, but not less than what are earned by cotton-stock-making makers. A man with a family received about 8*s*. a-week.

Mr. Barnett is then asked—

"If you had not had this subscription, your workhouse being nearly full, how would you have relieved those who did belong to the Union?—We should have immediately applied—at least I can only state what I should have done—I should have applied to the Board of Guardians to know whether they would authorize the application to the Poor Law Commissioners for a relaxation of the rule prohibiting out-door relief to the able-bodied, and I should also have recommended to the Board of Guardians that the relaxation should be of this kind, that out-door relief in employment should be afforded by the piece or the measure, to be paid partly in food and partly in money.

"When you say by the piece, do you mean manufacturing labour?—No; I mean work that shall not interfere with the ordinary course of labour of any description, that it should not be work on the highways, because that would deprive common labourers on the highways of their employment; it should not be in manufactures, because that would tend to reduce their wages; it should be digging, or, as in this case, forming a new road, or doing work that would not be otherwise done.

"It should be some public work for the benefit of the town and neighbourhood?—Yes, which otherwise would not be effected.

"Had you any conversation with Mr. Gulson, the Assistant-Commissioner, upon this subject?—Yes.

"Did you then contemplate the necessity for some such provision?—Yes.

"Did you receive from Mr. Gulson any assurance that such a proposition would be entertained by him, or entertained by the Poor Law Commissioners?—That it would be entertained by the Commissioners, and would be immediately granted; that assurance was understood all along, that on a representation being made by the Board of Guardians that it was necessary to relax the rule, it would be immediately relaxed.

"The Board of Guardians, knowing of this willingness on the part of the Poor Law Commissioners, in case of extreme necessity, to have recourse to such relaxation, did they use their influence with their fellow-townsmen to raise this subscription, as the safer alternative?—I should not say that the Board of Guardians did it; one or two members of the board were very leading persons in promoting the subscription, but it was never discussed at the board; it originated in a better way, I should say, in the feelings of a few individuals.

"Have you any reason to know that this subscription by the rate-payers was considered a better mode of relief than having recourse to out-door relief under the poor-rate?—Certainly, it has been taken up by the town at large, and by many gentlemen in the surrounding parishes; and some gentlemen connected with the town, from London, have also added liberally to it, for the especial purpose of preserving a large class of deserving, industrious mechanics, men of excellent character, men who, a few years ago, were in very good circumstances, from falling upon the parish rates, by no fault of their own.

"Is the subscription nearly exhausted?—I think it will last, with good management, four or five weeks longer; there is a slight improvement in the trade, and the approaching harvest affords the frame-work knitters in the country an opportunity of getting employment.

"You think the great pressure is over?—I think the worst of it is over; I think that we are past the worst.

"If you are past the worst, you will have been enabled so to pass it without breaking in upon the principle of refusing out-door relief to the able-bodied?—Yes; I do not think, if the subscription were to cease in a month from this time, that we should be enabled to go on without applying to the Commissioners for a relaxation; we could manage so far as the frame-work knitters are concerned, but not with regard to the lace-makers; they are in worse circumstances, with less prospect of obtaining relief.

"Up to this time the principle of the refusal of out-door relief to the able-bodied has been strictly adhered to?—It has.

"Have you any reason to think, if the necessity should continue, that the subscription would not increase in proportion?—We have had some unhappy circumstances connected with the subscription, which I fear are rather unfavourable; some of the men, who are not men of good character, have conducted themselves in an improper manner, and I fear there is reason to apprehend that some of the per-

sons in the town might not be ready to contribute again, though the subscription is in an excellent state at present.

"Have the persons who have contributed to that subscription done so to the amount which would have been demanded from them as rate-payers, if the funds had come from that source?—Very much beyond, I think.

"Many of the wealthiest persons in the town have subscribed more than would have been their share to the poor-rate?—Decidedly; and many of the persons who have sustained the heaviest loss from the distress have subscribed very largely indeed.

"That has been to the relief of the lowest class of rate-payers?—It has been to the relief of those thrown out of employment.

"Amongst the rate-payers there is the class nearest approaching to poverty who pay rates, and who would have been compelled to maintain, or assist to maintain, those receiving relief out of the rate?—Yes.

"This subscription saves their paying to the rate, does it not?—It certainly diminishes the amount which they would have had to pay in the rate."—[19,792-809.]

The case is then put of similar distress to that of Nottingham arising in a manufacturing town, and no subscription being raised. Mr. Barnett is asked—

"Supposing this distress should arise in Leeds, or any other place, and there was no subscription raised, do you think that the poor would suffer more privations under the new Poor Law than they suffered under the old Poor Law?—I should say distinctly not, and I will state why not; the principle adopted is the same, whether you apply the test in-door or out; the advantage of in-door relief is, that it is more simple and easy of application than the out-door, but they are both the same in principle; you take the man's time in exchange for the relief which you give him; you withdraw him from other sources of gaining subsistence, in order to test the sincerity of his declaration of his present want and destitution. Then I should say, to carry the question a little further, I am not sufficiently acquainted with the localities of large towns; they may or may not have the same facilities for providing out-door employment that we have in Nottingham; I am not able to speak upon that, but if they have the same facilities that we have in Nottingham, and ingenious men will soon find some, they might then with great advantage give out-door employment, and they would in that way preserve the labourer from the degradation which is consequent upon his admission into the workhouse.

"From what source would you derive the funds that would be necessary for giving out-door employment?—The rates unquestionably.

"And is there anything in the present state of the law that would prevent the rates from being so applied?—Not anything, in my view of the law,

"That is, with the sanction of the Poor Law Commissioners?—Certainly, the sanction of the Poor Law Commissioners is necessary; I am not aware that the spirit of the present law, so far as the relief goes (I am not speaking of the machinery), is at all different in its principle from the Act of Elizabeth, because the Act of Elizabeth requires the overseers of the poor to provide employment."—[19,858-61.]

Mr. Barnett is afterwards asked how he would apply the out-door test to a population of 40,000 inhabitants, entirely employed in manufactures, and unused to that kind of labour which requires the use of the spade.—

"That," he replies, "was exactly the case at St. Mary's parish; it was a population of 40,000 persons unaccustomed to agricultural labour, unused to the spade, except as some of them had a small garden, and I think it is the case with the Leicester population at this time, and generally they are employed there in breaking stone for the roads, as I am informed.

"How do they perform that labour?—I am not able to answer that; all the stone-breaking that I have employed men in has been paid by the ton; that is, I have used a measure containing half a ton; they are paid in that way.

"Though they show a great inaptness to perform this labour at first, do they, in the course of a few weeks, learn to use their hammer adroitly?—Yes.

"And you had no difficulty in applying the test of out-door relief in the parish of St. Mary?—We had no difficulty which might not be readily overcome; many practical difficulties would arise, but, with a determination to overcome them, they were all overcome.

"In fact, you acted upon that principle for a series of years?—Yes.

"And have found it successful?—Yes.

"As a test of pauperism and a preventive of imposture?—Yes, in both points of view."—[19,927-33.]

His opinion of the practicability of applying the labour-test in manufacturing towns, is thus summed up:—

"Then I may collect from your evidence, that, in a town in which there is an average proportion of ingenuity among the people, there would be no difficulty in applying the out-door-relief test in time of pressure?—I am decidedly of that opinion; I have expressed that on former occasions, some years ago, and I am still of that opinion, that it is the case."—[19,941.]

The principle of the *elasticity* of the law, as applicable to the particular circumstances of manufacturing towns, is thus stated in the sense in which Mr. Barnett understood it:—

"It appears that the test of the new Poor Law is the workhouse; is there any part of the law that you have to administer under this new system by which the other test can be legally applied, as well as the workhouse?—I have not been accustomed to concern myself about the strict legal sense in which words may be employed, and I

may be somewhat obscure in my statement, but my view is simply this, that under the law as it now stands, for I do not understand the Act of Elizabeth to be repealed, it is in the power of the Commissioners either to order the workhouse test, or the labour test, or both; and I think, in times of commercial distress like the present, very usefully the law may be relaxed in certain cases, so as to admit of out-door employment, provided that out-door employment is strictly and rigidly by measure, not so much per day, for I think that a very bad principle indeed; provided it is upon that principle, I think it may be very advantageously employed.

"You have stated that you consider that the principles of the law of Elizabeth, and of the new law, are the same; will you be kind enough to state what you consider the leading principles of the two laws to be?—I, perhaps, inaccurately expressed myself; what I meant to say was this, that it does not appear to me that the Act of Elizabeth is repealed by the new law; I will express myself in that way; I shall be less misunderstood in that way.

"Do not you consider that one of the leading principles of the new law is to cause out-door relief to be altogether withheld from able-bodied labourers and their families?—I do.

"Is any rule or order issued from the Commissioners to Nottingham, directing that out-door relief should be altogether withheld there?—It may be taken to be so by implication; the regulations of the Union do not admit of it; at the same time we have from the Commissioners an assurance that when the necessity arises they are willing to relax the regulation. [19,872-75.]

The concluding evidence of Mr. Barnett, as to the manner in which the new Poor Law is working its way, and the character of the opposition to it, is worthy of considerate perusal:—

"Does it seem, from your experience, that the Poor Law, as at present administered, is gaining in favour or losing?—I should say that, up to the period of the excitement which has been produced by resistance to it in other places, it was gaining in favour, and I think it may be considered rather now as gaining than losing; but I need not state that there is in Nottingham, as in all other places, a good deal of excited feeling upon that subject, and other subjects in connexion with it.

"Do you think that that excited feeling is the cause of any odium that may have come upon it, and not anything intrinsically wrong in the system?—Certainly, and I will give most striking evidence of that; the excited feeling, when it was announced that this Committee was formed, induced the calling of a special vestry meeting for the appointment of a committee to inquire into the working of the Poor Law in the town of Nottingham; in the parish of St. Mary a committee of 16 persons was appointed, wholly independent of the Board of Guardians; that committee attended several days at the workhouse, and saw every individual within the house, and visited all the apartments, and examined the nurseries, and they have not made a single unfavourable

report; nor indeed could they, for, in point of fact, they had not a single complaint made to them, nor anything in the shape of complaint, nothing deserving of their notice. [20,113-14.]

"Are the rate-payers opposed in general to the measure?—No.

"Who are the persons that are opposed principally?—I must make an observation that has a political bearing, if I am to answer that question.

"It is not the labourers?—No.

"Do the labourers feel very much aggrieved by it?—I believe not; we had no complaints till the time of this Committee being formed.

"It has been made a political handle of?—Yes, by both parties; the extremes on both sides."—[20,129-33.]

Or late, violent speeches have been made and petitions presented against the introduction of the new Poor Law into large towns and manufacturing districts. "The law," it is said, "was intended to remedy the abuses of the allowance system adopted in the southern counties; here there are no such abuses: the rates have been well managed, then why introduce the new Poor Law?"

Others again exclaim against the alleged severities of the law, and treating it as peculiarly oppressive to the labouring man, clamour for its entire repeal.

To answer these persons completely, it is scarcely practicable to do it briefly; but it is denied that any districts are so entirely free from abuses as the opponents of the measure assume; and supposing those districts to be well managed with relation to their existing means, the reply is, that good management ought to give way to the management which is better; afforded by the improved means of management by large Unions.

The first consideration, however, is, what is and will be the effect of the New Law upon the condition of those labourers who live in towns or in the manufacturing districts?

In those places where there is at present no allowance system, the immediate effect of the improved administration of relief is to advance the condition of the class of operatives, by repressing the profligacy and improvidence of those of the class by whom its general character is degraded, and the individual members inconvenienced or injured.

The following cases afford instances of the profligacy which the restoration of a sound administration of the Poor Laws will tend to repress. The first is an extract of a letter from an Assistant Commissioner*:

"I was at Nottingham workhouse the other day, a very pretty girl came in with a child in her arms, and was thus questioned—

* We copy this from *The Hertford Reformer*—a paper containing much valuable information on the subject of Poor Laws.

"What is your business?—I want relief, Sir.
 "How old are you?—SIXTEEN yesterday, Sir.
 "Is that your child?—Yes.
 "How old is it?—Four months.
 "Are you married?—Yes.
 "Where is your husband?—In the town.
 "How old is he?—Nineteen.
 "How long after marriage was that child born?—Next day after we were married.
 "What is your husband?—A lace weaver.
 "What wages did he earn when you married?—26s. per week.
 "Why do you apply for relief?—He is out of work.
 "How long has he been out of work?—One week.
 "What is he now doing, and why does he not come here to apply himself?—He left me yesterday; he says he cannot maintain himself now, and so he fetched me a thump of the head yesterday, and pawned every thing, and told me I must take care of myself and my child, for he would have no more to do with us now he is out of work.
 "Can you tell us where to find him?—No, for he is gone off with just such another.
 "You must come into the workhouse.—Very well, Sir, I cannot help it, but I have no other course; for though we were earning 25s. or 30s. together, we spent it all, and now we have not a farthing."

One of the parish officers of Spitalfields, when giving evidence as to the former vicious modes of administering relief within that parish, cited the following instance of the frauds which were committed:—

"The first day I was in active office (25 May, 1831,) a woman named Kitty Dailey, came to me for relief on account of the illness of her child. She came without her child. I knew this case, as the doctor said that something ought to be given to her on account of the child being ill of the small pox. I gave her sixpence to serve until I had an opportunity of visiting her. In the course of the day, between the hours of 10 and 2 o'clock, about forty or fifty applications were made to me for relief. Usually it is the practice of parish officers to give away money on the representations and the appearance of the parties; indeed it is scarcely possible for a tradesman who has a retail shop to avoid giving away considerable sums of money, as the applicants excite the sympathy of his customers, and if he does not comply with their demands, they (the paupers) may, and do, raise mischievous tumults, and injure his business by their clamours and obstructions. They did injure my business in this way, and must injure the business of any man who does his duty. However I determined to give no relief on the mere representations of the parties: I therefore took down the names and addresses of the applicants for the purpose of visiting their residences. In the course of the forenoon three women came to request relief, and each brought in her arms a child which she said had the small-pox. The child was muffled up very carefully. One woman showed me the arm of the

child; the other showed me the face of the child which she had; the third gave me a glance of the face of the child which she had. It appeared to me strange that there was so much small-pox about, but when I saw the face of the third child, it immediately struck me as being the same child that had been shown to me before, though it was now in a different dress. On visiting the places where the parties said they lived, it was found that about one-third of their statements of residence were falsehoods: no such persons were to be found. The names of some on the list were immediately recognized by the beadle as "Overseer-hunters," persons who make it their business to seek out and impose upon new overseers. Ultimately relief was not given to more than about twenty: the remainder, after much exertion, (which had never been undertaken before) having been ascertained to be cases of imposition. Few tradesmen who had the inclination would have had the time to go through the same investigation, which I dare say was even then very imperfect. I found nowhere the three mothers who had each come with the infant afflicted with the small-pox, but on visiting the residence of Kitty Dailey, there I found the very same infant I had last seen, and it was dressed in the same dress. She did not deny the fact that it was the same child that had been brought that morning in three different dresses by three different women. I accordingly gave her no relief.

"Subsequently I pursued my investigations into the cases of other applicants for relief, and struck off many cases of fraud.

"My mode of investigation was, generally, to visit the residences of those persons I suspected (which by the way was most of the paupers) on the Saturday. I never made inquiries elsewhere than of the parties on the spot. But on the Saturday they expect us, and I had generally some cause to doubt the appearances of their dwellings on that day. In general those who wished to impose upon us, over-coloured the picture; and certainly the pictures they drew were often very appalling. One Saturday one of the churchwardens accompanied me, and visited ten places; the scenes of distress were quite frightful; there were two cases which appeared to be cases of extreme misery. In one house, that of a man named Bag, a man with a wooden leg residing in Pelham-street, we found him there sitting as if in despair; he said he had no work, and had no food that day or since the evening before. His wife was afflicted with a bad leg: she was in bed, and stated that she had not been able to get out of bed for six weeks. The room was in a miserable plight, it was dirty and wretched. I looked into the cupboard and found no provisions there. The appearance of the place was such that the churchwarden could not forbear giving the man some pecuniary relief at once. The other case was one of a man named Ansler, of Red Lion-street, who had for some time before been chargeable to the parish as an out-pauper. We found the appearance of the place most deplorable. There was no appearance of food or comfort, and the children were ragged, dirty, squalid, and wretched. I told the wife to tell the husband to apply to me for relief in the evening, when I would give him relief, as I intended to do, being fully convinced of the necessity of giving relief by the picture of extreme misery which I had wit-

nessed. The husband and wife came together to my house in the evening. I expressed my regret that they should be obliged to come to the parish, and asked if the husband had no prospect of getting work; he declared he had neither work nor any prospect of getting any at present; I judged by his appearance that he had been drinking, and said 'Well, call upon me in the morning, and I will see what I can do for you.' They said that they were very much obliged to me, and went away apparently quite pleased, although according to their representation they were absolutely in a state of starvation.

On the Sunday morning I renewed my visit to most of those whose residences I had visited on the afternoon previous. The first case I visited was that of this man, Ansler. I opened the door and then knocked, when I found they were in bed; and in great haste she ran to a table which was standing in the middle of the room, and covered it over with a cloth; but in her haste to get away, and confusion, she pulled the covering off, and exposed to my view a large piece of beef, a piece of mutton, and parcels of tea, sugar, bread, butter, &c. The man called from the bed, 'B—t 'em, never mind, you know they belong to your father.' I told them that was enough, and immediately left the place. They have never applied to the parish for relief since.

"When I visited the house of Bag, I found Mrs. Bag out of bed and at her breakfast; she had her tea and he had his coffee. I saw a neck of mutton on one shelf, and two loaves on another shelf of the cupboard, which was empty on the day before. I went into his workshop, (he was a silk-dresser) which I found full of work. The man swore horribly, and I left the place. I do not know that he ever again applied to the parish.

"My impression now is, that nearly the whole of the cases which we have visited on the Saturday, were found to be each partially or entirely similar cases of imposition. This man, Bag, must have concealed his work under his bed, and idled away the whole of the Saturday, in order to make up the miserable scene which we first witnessed.

"In some instances we have found the provisions actually concealed between the sheets or blankets of their beds. Such instances were frequently presented on other visits.

"I found it necessary, on entering their dwellings and going up any common staircase, not to make the least noise, to approach them by stealth, or the scrutiny would have been defeated. I think in all cases where the door was fastened, the parties were impostors. At those places where the door was fastened it was necessary to kick very gently at the bottom of the door, as if it were a child at the door. A knock or tap at the door as from a man, would have been the signal for preparation for disguise. In a recent visit made to a number of applicants, every one was found at the time to be a case of imposition.

"It is quite common to find the applicants full of work were they had declared they had no work whatever, and were starving. In one case I went up gently and opened the trap-door of a weaver's loft, and found him deeply engaged with work of the best sort."—*Supplement to Report of Commissioners of Inquiry.*

The sound practical view of the operation of an abusive system of poor-rates—of its tendency to degrade *some* workmen at the expense of the whole class—is shortly stated in the following evidence before the Commissioners of Inquiry of a respectable working man:

"Are you acquainted with the operative classes?—Yes; having been a journeyman printer 20 years, and one-half of the time foreman, and having been in different situations in our own societies, as well as connected with various other societies of operatives, I believe I am well acquainted with them.

"In what way do they regard the fact of any one of their body receiving parochial relief?—I know that none but the worst characters would ever think of applying for parish relief; and that the respectable workmen consider it disgraceful. The other day, a list of those who received out-door parish relief was brought to a printing-office to be printed. One of the men saw on the list the name and address of one of the journeymen in the same office. This man was challenged with the fact, which he did not attempt to deny. He had been receiving as much as 6s. or 8s. a week out-door relief, during two years, for four children, although he had been in receipt of 36s. a week steady wages during the same time. The men stated the circumstance to the employer, and he was discharged.

"Did they request that he might be discharged?—The proceeding was tantamount to that, and of course the master acceded. * * *

"Do you find any effect produced by men obtaining parochial relief readily, when they are out of work, or have anything the matter with them?—I have always seen that men who have had parish relief have been very careless of work and of their money ever afterwards. It has also acted very mischievously on the benefit societies, as these men would never contribute to them. We had a large and very good society of our own, which failed some time ago, and I have known the societies of other trades fail: and it has been a common complaint amongst us, that but for the parish they would have stood firm. I am myself confident, that but for the parish they would have stood firm."

A little consideration will show the sound view which the respectable workmen took of their own interests in expelling the pauper from amongst them.

Inasmuch as mechanics and most classes of labourers in towns work together in shops and associate together, every respectable workman has an interest in the respectability of those with whom he lives. If from profuse parochial allowances one workman in a shop receives money which others do not get, as it comes ill so it goes ill, and is invariably spent in drink. The sober workman is then sure to be plagued by the weakness and disorders of the drunkard. The labourer who has the prospect of out-door unconditional relief from the parish commonly becomes an indolent fellow whose labour is slave labour, to which he is only to be

urged, if not by the lash of the whip by the lash of the tongue. The good workman, who would give good work in return for good wages, who is confined to the same workshop with such demoralized men, wears his heart out in trying to get through his work, and is condemned to a perpetual struggle against the effects of their indolence and vice. The conduct and example of the pauperized workman have a pernicious effect upon all the domestic and social relations of the respectable classes of workmen. In the example cited (p. 203), the poor girl who applied for relief in consequence of the desertion of her vagabond husband, was in all probability the daughter of a workman.

It is of the highest importance to the labouring classes that their Friendly Societies, Annuity Societies, Savings' Banks, and other provident institutions, should succeed. When, by mismanagement in the parish providing for all natural and insurable contingencies, a workman is induced to spend the whole of his earnings, and refuse to contribute to a Friendly Society, the respectable and independent workman, who would by such means obtain independent support, is thus injured either by the society on which he depends being weakened, or possibly by his being himself deprived of that relief which combined subscriptions can alone attain. Not only is the drunkard himself a loss to the rest of the honest workmen, but he is the occasion of more extensive loss, by deterring others who are not drunkards from contributing. The independent workman may thus be rendered dependent on charity in the hour of need; and all who have experienced it must know well that, be it disguised how it may, medical relief by officers who are not directly dependent on the good opinion of those whom they serve, is rarely good relief. The medical officer of a sick club, besides being selected by the club, and being dependent on the good opinion of the members his employers, is acquainted with their habits, and is so far the better qualified to treat their disorders. He is at all times accessible to them, and it is proved by the experience of the workmen of the East India House, that the severity in duration of sickness is diminished nearly one-half by taking it in time. The respectable workmen may, as sufferers, complain of the depraved nature of their fellows, but it is the parochial mismanagement which has demoralized them, by holding out that they need take no care for the morrow. On moral grounds alone, it may be said, that had all of the poor's rates that were not expended for the relief of the blind, old, lame, orphans, and cases of an extraordinary destitution which there were no means of insuring, been thrown into the sea, the labouring classes would have been gainers to an incalculable amount. In short, when all the

points which have been stated respecting the social evils and misdirected relief, and those which we shall present on the subject of wages, are fully considered by the honest and industrious workman, he cannot fail to see the beneficent tendency of the new law to raise the depressed by forcing them to exercise their own energies, and to protect and advance the prosperous. He will hail every Assistant Commissioner or agent for carrying it into execution, as people threatened or afflicted with a pestilence would hail the presence of physicians.

If the law had been devised by an assemblage of working men, intending to advance the condition of their own class without injuring others, they could scarcely have framed any enactments more conducive to that object. In fact, for the first time in the history of legislation, workmen themselves were examined, and their opinions and practice were consulted for the guidance of the Legislature. It has been seen that the principle of the new Administration is, that relief should be ineligible to any one who can maintain himself by the exercise of his own industry, or from the fruits of his own former labour. As it is the principle which the workmen had years ago established in the administration of their own funds as members of Benefit Societies, that the man who had declared upon the box should either be wholly on the box, and do no work at his trade, or should be wholly off the box, and depend upon his own resources; so it is the principle of administration adopted by the new law, that a man who declares himself an applicant for parochial relief, shall be wholly on, or wholly off the poor's box; or, in other words, shall receive no relief in aid of wages. The following evidence was elicited by one of the Commissioners of Inquiry.

Mr. Tidd Pratt was examined on this point. Under the 10 Geo IV., c. 56, which was brought into Parliament at the instance and with the concurrence of delegates from the Friendly Societies, composed of the labouring classes throughout the country, he has examined and certified about three thousand sets of regulations for different societies, all of which, with the exception of about two per cent., were framed by the members. He was asked—"In these institutions, is the condition of a member receiving relief, or living without work, ever allowed to be as eligible, on the whole, as the condition of a member living by his work?"—He answered, "In most cases the allowances made by the societies are so adjusted as to make it the interest of every member not to receive relief from the society so long as he can earn his usual wages. The average allowance which they make is about one-third of what a member can earn. Thus, if the average earnings of the members of a benefit society were 17. 4s.

a week, the allowance in the case of sickness would be, *on an average of the whole time of the sickness*, about 8s. a week. During the last session Mr. Slaney brought in a Bill for the purpose of sanctioning the formation of societies for the relief of members when out of employment. At his instance I made inquiries amongst some of the most intelligent and respectable of the labouring classes as to what should be the extent of allowance to those who were out of work. I suggested to the parties that one-half the usual wages might be a proper allowance. The unanimous reply of all the operatives with whom I conversed on the subject was, that an allowance of one-third would be ample, and that more than that would only induce the members to continue on the society rather than endeavour to find work."

If a committee of labourers of any class had freely and fairly framed and enacted the new poor-law regulations, in the same manner as they have framed the regulations of their clubs, they would have framed and enacted them much more strictly and better than has ever been done by persons of superior classes. They would not have allowed to the indolent pauper meat three times a-week, whilst there were millions of industrious workmen who do not taste meat from month to month; nor would such a committee have sanctioned a clamour for beer and fermented liquors, whilst in the families of unprosperous but industrious workmen, only water is drunk as a beverage. In fact, those workmen who have acquired wealth, and as members of Vestries or Boards of Guardians, have become administrators of the law, have generally been distinguished for their greater strictness in its execution; they have understood what is for the true interest and advancement of their class. They well know, that at any time, it is false humanity, (and like most of what goes by the name, if it is anything, the immediate relief is in its ultimate effect real cruelty), so to administer relief as to keep the applicant hanging upon the box. The foregoing statement has related only to the districts where rates are not regularly paid in aid of wages, where no extraordinary abuse prevailed, where the introduction of the machinery of the new law would only occasion a more systematic administration of relief by paid officers, with the checks against jobbing and speculation afforded by an improved mode of accounts and a responsible audit.

But there are no districts where the wages of labourers are entirely unaffected by the abusive administration of the southern counties. In townships of Lancashire, what is called the roundsmen system was found established. In Nottinghamshire, Leicestershire, in Durham, and in other northern districts, the practice had taken root. In the manufacturing districts, where

the abuses have not been exhibited in any extraordinary malpractices, the enforcement of the new law is requisite to guard against their introduction.

To form a notion of the evil to be guarded against, some attention should be paid to what is meant by the evils of the allowance system. Those evils we have already pointed out at length; but we cannot avoid recurring to them.

No intelligent workmen—none who understand the circumstances which chiefly affect their condition, need be told that any thing which cheapens the labour of one part of a class of workmen, injures or brings down the wages of the rest of the class; nor is it necessary to explain that the labour is cheapened by retaining in the market more labourers than are wanted. The agricultural labourers examined before the recent Committee of the House of Commons showed, in some of their answers, that they understood the effects of a redundancy of labour.

When, during a period of distress, allowances in aid of wages were given from the poor's-rates, no doubt the authors of that practice conceived that they should thereby increase the labourer's income; and for a time, and under some circumstances, that effect was certainly produced. But it was soon found that in the same proportion as rates were paid in aid of wages to any class, in the same proportion did the farmers reduce the wages of those relieved; and as a necessary consequence, by cheapening the price of the labour of those who were not relieved. When the market rate of wages was 12s., and 4s. was paid by the parish to the married labourer, the farmer did not give 12s. but 8s.; instead of getting 12s. from his employer, the labourer got only 8s., and had to appear as a beggar and a pauper before a parish board, to get the other 4s. The farmer, who paid only 8s. to the married man, would give no more to the single man who was as good a workman, and ought to have had 12s. We refer to the evidence of the mischievous operation of the law, in this respect, on the wages of the agricultural labourer.

Mr. Barnett states, as the ground of his support of the law, the mischievous effects of the same malpractices at Nottingham. By this process, in a manufacturing district, goods were made up partly at the expense of the parish, by allowances in aid of wages; and a manufacturer in Yorkshire might have found himself undersold, and his workmen discharged, not because they were less skillful, or their goods inferior in quality, but because the poor's-rates in Gloucestershire had been misapplied by the overseers and given in aid of wages. The central control, which is decried by fanatics in Yorkshire, is the best protection both of workmen and masters against such abuses.

The information as to the general state of wages in districts where the poor's-rates are high or low, is corroborative of the conclusions deduced from the known operation of the law in particular cases. Some time ago, when an inquiry was made into the labour in factories, and the exact return was obtained of the wages of every person of many thousands employed, some valuable results were obtained, which are stated in the following evidence:—

WAGES OF OPERATIVES.

Dr. James Mitchell examined.

"You have been employed under the Factory Commission as actuary, to make out the results to be derived from the returns made from the various factories?—I have.

"From their returns have you had the means of knowing the wages paid in the various parts of the United Kingdom?—The returns from the factories are extremely numerous, and by classifying them according to the districts of the kingdom from which they come, and the description of manufacture in which they are engaged, and working out the results, I have formed tables exhibiting the wages paid to persons of both sexes at every different age, in the different descriptions of manufacture in the different parts of the kingdom.

"Have you observed, in the course of your calculations, whether there was any connexion between the rate of wages and the amount of the poor's-rate in different parts of the kingdom, and if so, what has been the result?—I can state, of my own knowledge, only the facts as I find them on the face of the very numerous returns submitted to me, from all the factories throughout the kingdom, and from them it appears that where the poor's-rate is lowest, the wages are highest. Where the poor's-rate is highest the wages are lowest. Where the poor's-rate is intermediate, neither high nor low, the wages are intermediate also.

"Where are the operatives best paid?—In Lancashire, and there the amount raised for poor's-rate does not exceed 4s. 4d. per annum for every one of the whole population.

"Can you give an abstract from any of the tables which you have calculated, showing the comparative wages paid for the same description of manufacture?—Yes: the woollen manufacture is carried on in the West Riding of Yorkshire, in the West of England, and in the North of Scotland. The following abstracts will show the prices paid for males at different ages, and for females.

Weekly Wages of Males.

DISTRICTS.	Below 11	11 to 16	16 to 21	21 to 26	26 to 31	31 to 36	36 to 41	41 to 46	Poor's Rate per head, 1831.
York, W. R.	s. d. 2 0	s. d. 4 4½	s. d. 9 9	s. d. 19 6½	s. d. 22 5½	s. d. 22 6	s. d. 22 6½	s. d. 22 0	s. d. 5 7
Wiltshire . .	s. d. 1 9	s. d. 2 10½	s. d. 6 4½	s. d. 11 6½	s. d. 13 10½	s. d. 15 5	s. d. 18 7½	s. d. 14 8	s. d. 16 6
Aberdeen . .	s. d. 2 6	s. d. 4 11	s. d. 7 9½	s. d. 14 5	s. d. 14 10	s. d. 16 6½	s. d. 14 10	s. d. 13 9½	s. d. 0 0

DISTRICTS.	46 to 51	51 to 56	56 to 61	61 to 66	66 to 71	71 to 76	76 to 81	81 to 86	
York, W. R.	s. d. 22 0½	s. d. 21 0½	s. d. 21 11	s. d. 20 3	s. d. 16 8½	s. d. 15 3	s. d. 0 0	s. d. 0 0	s. d. 5 7
Wiltshire .	s. d. 14 10	s. d. 14 10½	s. d. 12 2	s. d. 11 2	s. d. 7 5½	s. d. 6 6	s. d. 0 0	s. d. 0 0	s. d. 16 6
Aberdeen .	s. d. 15 1½	s. d. 15 2½	s. d. 12 4½	s. d. 14 0	s. d. 10 1½	s. d. 11 4	s. d. 12 0	s. d. 0 0	s. d. 0 0

Weekly Wages of Females.

DISTRICTS.	Below 11	11 to 16	16 to 21	21 to 26	26 to 31	31 to 36	36 to 41	41 to 46	
York, W. R.	s. d. 2 5	s. d. 4 6½	s. d. 6 5½	s. d. 7 0	s. d. 7 4½	s. d. 7 2½	s. d. 7 7	s. d. 6 10½	s. d. 5 7
Wiltshire .	s. d. 2 3	s. d. 2 9½	s. d. 4 9	s. d. 6 0½	s. d. 5 1½	s. d. 6 11½	s. d. 6 2	s. d. 6 0½	s. d. 16 6
Aberdeen .	s. d. 3 4½	s. d. 3 7	s. d. 5 1½	s. d. 5 7½	s. d. 5 5	s. d. 5 4½	s. d. 5 6½	s. d. 5 0	s. d. 0 0

DISTRICTS.	46 to 51	51 to 56	56 to 61	61 to 66	66 to 71	71 to 76	76 to 81	81 to 86	
York, W. R.	s. d. 7 1½	s. d. 7 5½	s. d. 6 3½	s. d. 3 5½	s. d. 0 0	s. d. 0 0	s. d. 7 0	s. d. 0 0	s. d. 5 7
Wiltshire .	s. d. 5 9	s. d. 5 8½	s. d. 5 6	s. d. 5 3½	s. d. 5 1½	s. d. 4 0	s. d. 0 0	s. d. 0 0	s. d. 16 6
Aberdeen .	s. d. 5 3	s. d. 4 11½	s. d. 4 4½	s. d. 0 0	s. d. 4 6	s. d. 3 3	s. d. 0 0	s. d. 0 0	s. d. 0 0

"It will be seen that the money paid for wages at Aberdeen is more than in Wiltshire; and taking into account the cheapness of living in that part of the kingdom, the condition of the operative is there far more comfortable.

"What has been the amount per head of the population raised for the relief of poor in these several districts?—In Aberdeen compulsory relief to the poor is totally unknown. In the West Riding of York and in Wiltshire the rates raised for the relief of the poor per head for the population in 1801, 1811, 1821, and 1831 have been as follows:

COUNTIES.	1801	1811	1821	1831
	£. s. d.	£. s. d.	£. s. d.	£. s. d.
West Riding of York. .	0 6 7	0 10 0	0 6 9	0 5 7
Wiltshire	0 13 10	1 4 2	0 14 8	0 16 6

"Can you show a similar result from any other manufacture?—Yes, the silk manufacture will show the same thing, but as females are chiefly employed in the silk factories, I shall only state these wages of the females in four districts of the kingdom (Derbyshire) and some factories in the neighbouring counties, Norfolk, Suffolk, and Essex,—in Somersetshire, and Paisley in Scotland. It ought to be mentioned that below 11 and after 36 exceedingly few are employed, so that it is only from 11 to 36 that the amount of wages is to be considered a criterion of the general condition of the operatives.

Weekly Wages of Females.

DISTRICTS.	Below 11	11 to 16	16 to 21	21 to 26	26 to 31	31 to 36	36 to 41	41 to 46	Poor's Rate per Head, 1831.
	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.
Derby	1 11	3 6½	5 11	7 0	7 7	7 0½	6 4½	5 4½	5 7
Norfolk, &c.	1 5	2 7	4 0½	5 0	4 11	4 4	6 5	9 0	15 4
Somerset . .	0 10	2 6	4 10½	5 2½	5 1	5 11½	6 0	4 10	8 9
Paisley . . .	2 3	3 8	5 6	7 4	6 9½	7 8½	6 9½	6 9	0 0

DISTRICTS.	46 to 51	51 to 56	56 to 61	61 to 66	66 to 71	71 to 76	76 to 81	81 to 86	Poor's Rate per Head, 1831.
	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.
Derby	5 4½	5 1½	5 9	4 11	5 0	4 5	4 6	5 0	5 7
Norfolk, &c.	9 9	0 0	0 0	0 0	0 0	0 0	0 0	0 0	15 4
Somerset . .	5 10½	0 0	5 6	3 6	6 1	5 0	0 0	0 0	8 9
Paisley . . .	0 0	0 0	0 0	0 0	0 0	0 0	0 0	0 0	0 0

"Will you state what has been the amount raised for the relief of the poor in these districts in the years above mentioned?—I do not know the precise amount raised at Paisley, but as compared with any part of England it is exceedingly small. The following is the amount raised at the four different periods mentioned, in Derby, Norfolk, Suffolk, Essex, and Somerset."

	1801	1811	1821	1831
	£. s. d.	£. s. d.	£. s. d.	£. s. d.
Derby	0 6 9	0 10 1	0 8 2	0 6 7
Norfolk	0 12 5	0 19 11	0 14 10	0 15 4
Suffolk	0 11 4	0 19 3	0 17 9	0 18 3
Essex	0 12 1	1 4 8	0 17 7	0 17 2
Somerset	0 8 10	0 12 2	0 8 7	0 8 9

In different parts of this district, different causes may be assigned for the depression of wages; but the general coincidence of the low wages with high poor's-rates, as a consequence of mal-administration to a great extent, at the time the returns were made, or before the new law was brought into operation, is corroborated by other evidence.

It may be objected that for periods of severe distress the new administration of relief is inapplicable to the manufacturing districts. The answer to this objection is, that although in times of extraordinary pressure it may be necessary to change the *mode* of giving relief, and to give out-door relief when the workhouse is full, yet that it is at no time necessary to change the *principle* upon which relief is to be given. As the stewards of a Friendly Society would, when there came an unusual flood of claimants upon the box, if they did their duty to the other members, apply the principle with increased firmness, so the stewards of the poor's-rates would on such occasions increase their vigilance. Because, First, the lax administration of relief on such occasions is a bounty on improvidence during periods of prosperity, and is injurious to the labouring classes themselves. Secondly, it often occasions many to remain as competitors in places where there is often only work for a few, and thus it is injurious to the labouring classes themselves. The illegal allowances in aid of wages to the hand-loom weavers, in various parts of Lancashire, have tended to retain them in an employment, which is hopeless of efficient improvement to themselves—in a condition equally burthensome to the rate-payers. In Spitalfields, weavers have been retained hanging about the parish, when new workmen were created elsewhere, in

consequence of a change in the seat of the manufacture. The following extract shows the ordinary practice arising out of the allowance system, which was doubtless produced by a period of extraordinary suffering in a northern district, where we have been told that no such practices have taken root:—

“The fruits of this system of allowance to able-bodied labourers are exhibited in a practice adopted in this place by the master manufacturers in the carpet weaving line, which forms a principal occupation of its inhabitants. The masters take a number of boys into their employment on the footing of apprentices; not, however, bound by any indenture. These they employ just as long as they like, with wages fourpence in the shilling lower than those of regular journeymen. While business continues pretty brisk, they keep the journeymen in work along with these boys; but whenever they get what is termed a *bad order* from their London correspondents, the journeymen are turned off immediately. They are thus thrown on the parish at every moment of stagnation. Weavers are frequently known to *get their web out* (finish their web in the loom) on Friday or Saturday, and come for relief to the parish on Monday night. ‘In Barnard Castle,’ my witness said, ‘this system is becoming horrible.’ He added ‘that the parish was made use of like a depôt for soldiers;’ meaning that workmen were billeted on the parish whenever they were not required on active service.”—*Extracts of Evidence collected by the Commissioners of Inquiry*, p. 173. *Mr. Wilson's Report, Durham.*

Thirdly, a firm adherence to correct principle is needful on such occasions for the protection of the rate-payers, who generally suffer by the prevalent causes of distress.

We have been corroborated in our opinions, if any corroboration were wanting, by knowing the manner in which the distress of the manufacturing population in the parish of Darwen, near Bolton, was relieved in the year 1826. From the testimony of residents we know that by the firm administration of relief, the labourers were thrown upon their own resources: that whilst by the exertion of their energies they ceased the more speedily to be burthensome, the demand for labour improved and wages doubled; that the investment of capital increased five-fold; and that rent doubled: thus exhibiting the operation of the great mutual interests of labourer, capitalist, landlord and rate-payer, in their mutual prosperity.

This effect of the new law, in diminishing the duration of a pressure upon the rates, is shown in the parish of Spitalfields.

There are now but few weavers in the parish of Spitalfields, properly so called; the greater proportion of them inhabit the parish of Bethnal Green, which has been placed under the management of a Board of Guardians. The following is the

account of the weekly number of inmates of the workhouse, and of the weekly payments of out-door relief during the month of April, as compared with the amounts paid during the corresponding months of the last year.

Weeks in April.	Total number of In-door Paupers.		Total number of Out-door Paupers.		Total amount of Out-door Relief.	
	1836	1837	1836	1837	1836	1837
First . . .	497	720	2907	1905	£. s. d. 93 14 9	£. s. d. 81 6 8
Second . . .	499	730	2904	1899	93 16 9	90 7 5
Third . . .	475	734	2901	1868	96 3 9	90 17 11
Fourth . . .	503	744	2914	1880	94 3 0	84 15 5

The amount of money distributed in out-door relief during the last month, it will be observed, is greater in proportion to the numbers relieved than the amount distributed during the corresponding period of the former year. The following return of the number of paupers relieved, and of the amount of relief distributed in 1830, will serve for comparison with the pressure at the present time. We are warranted in expressing our belief that under the old mode of distributing relief nearly as great a number of receivers of rates would have appeared on the books at the present time.

Weeks in January, 1830.	Total number of In-door Paupers.	Total number of Out-door Paupers.	Amount of Out-door Relief.
First . . .	1267	5364	£. s. d. 162 18 6
Second . . .	1325	5283	162 5 6
Third . . .	1374	5481	165 18 6
Fourth . . .	1380	5442	166 18 6

The number of looms thrown out of work then was believed to be about the same as during the present time, namely about 7000.

But there is a great class to whom the old law dealt with peculiar atrocity. A man was industrious, abstinent, and frugal; he rose early and he toiled late; he worked hard and he fared hard: he did this that he might save the means of keeping him-

self independent, or of obtaining comforts in his old age, or of providing for his wife or children: but the overseer or other administrators of the law, especially those who call themselves humane, forcibly took from the savings of this man and gave it to the man who, having neither toiled nor been frugal and provident, became a beggar. The hard-working and industrious man would, from his savings, have given his industrious wife better clothing, but that by order of the magistrate his hard-earned savings were taken from him to clothe and maintain the pauper prostitute: the industrious and toiling man would have provided better food and advanced his own children, but, by the abuse of the law, his savings were levied that the prostitute might first be paid to maintain her bastard. Thus it was; and where the new law is not yet carried into complete effect, thus it is, that the hard-working rate-payer or small owner is dealt with for the maintenance of vice: this is perpetrated under the cloak and name of charity, which in almost every degraded pauper covers an enormous sin.

The small rate-payers are many: the large ones are few: and those who intend to tax the rich, thus oppress an industrious multitude.

Such being the injurious effects of the old modes of administration upon the welfare of some of the manufacturing labourers, we will now advert to the new mode of administering relief; for it is not the law or the right to relief which is altered, but the mode of relief which is altered. The law of Elizabeth hath provided, that relief should be given to those having *no* means to maintain them; that law remains the same as heretofore: the chief alteration in the mode of giving relief is, that whilst the relief given is such as those who are destitute and in danger of perishing for want must deem a benefaction, it will not be found by the indolent preferable to honest industry. The persons who are destitute will receive ample food, with meat three times a week; whereas millions of hard-working people do not taste it once. Is this provision inhumane to the destitute? The inmates may quit the house whenever they please upon giving three hours' notice. Is that imprisonment? When the recent distress visited the manufacturing labourers of Nottingham, the Guardians, in order to make room for the able-bodied applicants, wished the old women to receive out-door relief, and offered them wherewithal to provide for themselves, but they could not be bribed to quit the house. The evidence brought forward by Mr. Walter, against the new administration of relief, proved that the aged were better provided for than under the old system. The change which wears the semblance of severity, but which, in its result, is really

benevolent, is in throwing the able-bodied and the indolent upon their own resources, and forcing them into honest courses of industry.

In our analysis of the evidence relating to these subjects, in the Agricultural Unions, will be found the most ample details of these beneficent arrangements.